

IN RE: JEREMY L. LAPOINTE

BBO # 679220

NO. BD-2023-037

Order (Term Suspension) entered by Justice Kafker on April 25, 2023, with an effective date of May 26, 2023.¹

The respondent was suspended for six months, with conditions, for neglecting a personal injury case and causing harm, lying to his client, and fabricating a document.

SUMMARY²

In an answer and stipulation, the respondent admitted the misconduct and rule violations charged in the petition for discipline. The misconduct arose in connection with the respondent's representation of a personal injury plaintiff. He failed to take significant action on the case, failed to provide documents to the insurer, and failed to file the case within the statute of limitations. He also lied to his client repeatedly, including telling her that the insurer had made a settlement offer. He paid the client \$9,000 via a check drawn on his firm's operating account, purportedly from the insurer in settlement of the client's claim. When the client requested documentation, the respondent fabricated a letter to mislead her into believing that he had actually settled her claim with the insurer. The letterhead he used was misleading. The respondent's conduct violated Mass. R. Prof. C. 1.1, 1.2(a), 1.3, and 1.4, 7.1, 7.5(d), 8.4(c) and 8.4(h) and caused harm to the client.

In mitigation, the respondent suffered from several serious medical conditions and depression during the representation and was hospitalized for medical reasons, which contributed to the neglect.

The parties stipulated to a six-month term of suspension, with the following conditions: that the respondent cooperate with an assessment and recommendations by Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers and its Law Office Management Assistance Program; and that the respondent petition for reinstatement and prove his fitness to practice at a reinstatement hearing. Specifically, the parties agreed that a reinstatement hearing was appropriate so that before resuming practice, the respondent can show that he has adequately addressed the problems that led to his misconduct.

By vote dated April 10, 2023, the Board of Bar Overseers recommended a six-month suspension with the above-described conditions.

On April 25, 2023, Justice Kafker ordered the respondent suspended for six months with the above-described conditions, including a reinstatement hearing.

¹ The complete order of the Court is available by contacting the Clerk of the Supreme Judicial Court for Suffolk County.

² Compiled by the Massachusetts Board of Bar Overseers' Office of General Counsel based on the record filed with the Supreme Judicial Court.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

SUFFOLK, SS.

SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT
FOR SUFFOLK COUNTY
NO: BD-2023-037

IN RE: Jeremy L. LaPointe

ORDER OF TERM SUSPENSION

This matter came before the Court, Kafker, J., on an Information and Record of Proceedings pursuant to S.J.C. Rule 4:01, § 8(6), with the Recommendation and Vote of the Board of Bar Overseers (Board) and the stipulation of the parties filed by the Board on April 21, 2023. Upon consideration thereof, it is ORDERED that:

1. Jeremy L. LaPointe is hereby suspended from the practice of law in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for a period of six (6) months, with the condition that the lawyer cooperate with the an assessment and any recommendations by Lawyer Concerned for Lawyers and its Law Office Management Assistance Program. In accordance with S.J.C. Rule 4:01, § 17(3), the suspension shall be effective thirty (30) days after the date of the entry of this Order. The lawyer, after the entry of this Order, shall not accept any new retainer or engage

as a lawyer for another in any new case or legal matter of any nature. During the period between the entry date of this Order and its effective date, however, the lawyer may wind up and complete, on behalf of any client, all matters which were pending on the entry date.

It is FURTHER ORDERED that:

2. Within fourteen (14) days of the date of entry of this Order, the lawyer shall:

a) file a notice of withdrawal as of the effective date of the suspension with every court, agency, or tribunal before which a matter is pending, together with a copy of the notices sent pursuant to paragraphs 2(c) and 2(d) of this Order, the client's or clients' place of residence, and the case caption and docket number of the client's or clients' proceedings;

b) resign as of the effective date of the suspension all appointments as guardian, executor, administrator, trustee, attorney-in-fact, or other fiduciary, attaching to the resignation a copy of the notices sent to the wards, heirs, or beneficiaries pursuant to paragraphs 2(c) and 2(d) of this Order, the place of residence of the wards, heirs, or beneficiaries, and the case caption and docket number of the proceedings, if any;

c) provide notice to all clients and to all wards,

heirs, and beneficiaries that the lawyer has been suspended; that he is disqualified from acting as a lawyer after the effective date of the suspension; and that, if not represented by co-counsel, the client, ward, heir, or beneficiary should act promptly to substitute another lawyer or fiduciary or to seek legal advice elsewhere, calling attention to any urgency arising from the circumstances of the case;

d) provide notice to counsel for all parties (or, in the absence of counsel, the parties) in pending matters that the lawyer has been suspended and, as a consequence, is disqualified from acting as a lawyer after the effective date of the suspension;

e) make available to all clients being represented in pending matters any papers or other property to which they are entitled, calling attention to any urgency for obtaining the papers or other property;

f) refund any part of any fees paid in advance that have not been earned; and

g) close every IOLTA, client, trust or other fiduciary account and properly disburse or otherwise transfer all client and fiduciary funds in his possession, custody or control.

All notices required by this paragraph shall be served by

certified mail, return receipt requested, in a form approved by the Board.

3. Within twenty-one (21) days after the date of entry of this Order, the lawyer shall file with the Office of the Bar Counsel an affidavit certifying that the lawyer has fully complied with the provisions of this Order and with bar disciplinary rules. Appended to the affidavit of compliance shall be:

a) a copy of each form of notice, the names and addresses of the clients, wards, heirs, beneficiaries, attorneys, courts and agencies to which notices were sent, and all return receipts or returned mail received up to the date of the affidavit. Supplemental affidavits shall be filed covering subsequent return receipts and returned mail. Such names and addresses of clients shall remain confidential unless otherwise requested in writing by the lawyer or ordered by the court;

b) a schedule showing the location, title and account number of every bank account designated as an IOLTA, client, trust or other fiduciary account and of every account in which the lawyer holds or held as of the entry date of this Order any client, trust or fiduciary funds;

c) a schedule describing the lawyer's disposition of all client and fiduciary funds in the lawyer's possession,

custody or control as of the entry date of this Order or thereafter;

d) such proof of the proper distribution of such funds and the closing of such accounts as has been requested by the bar counsel, including copies of checks and other instruments;

e) a list of all other state, federal and administrative jurisdictions to which the lawyer is admitted to practice;

f) the residence or other street address where communications to the lawyer may thereafter be directed; and

g) any and all bar registration cards issued to the lawyer by the Board of Bar Overseers.

The lawyer shall retain copies of all notices sent and shall maintain complete records of the steps taken to comply with the notice requirements of S.J.C. Rule 4:01, § 17.

4. Within twenty-one (21) days after the entry date of this Order, the lawyer shall file with the Clerk of the Supreme Judicial Court for Suffolk County:

a) a copy of the affidavit of compliance required by paragraph 3 of this Order;

b) a list of all other state, federal and administrative jurisdictions to which the lawyer is

admitted to practice; and

c) the residence or other street address where communications to the lawyer may thereafter be directed.

5. The lawyer's reinstatement to the practice of law in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts shall be pursuant to S.J.C. Rule 4:01, § 18(4) and (5).

By the Court, (Kafker, J.)

/s/ Maura S. Doyle

Maura S. Doyle, Clerk

Entered: April 25, 2023