

BEFORE THE HEARING BOARD
OF THE
ILLINOIS ATTORNEY REGISTRATION
AND
DISCIPLINARY COMMISSION

In the Matter of:

ERIC J. RYAN,

Attorney-Respondent,

No. 6275824.

Commission No. 2025PR00020

COMPLAINT

Lea S. Gutierrez, Administrator of the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission, by her attorneys, Morgan B. Handwerker and Matthew D. Lango, pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 753(b), complains of Respondent, Eric J. Ryan, who was licensed to practice law in Illinois on November 28, 2001, and alleges that Respondent has engaged in the following conduct which subjects Respondent to discipline pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 770:

ALLEGATIONS COMMON TO ALL COUNTS

1. At all times alleged in this complaint, Respondent owned and operated The Law Office of Eric J. Ryan, LLC (“Respondent’s law firm”).
2. At all times alleged in this complaint, Respondent maintained a client trust account at Old Second National Bank, ending in 3529, entitled Client Trust Account Law Offices of Eric J. Ryan, LLC (“client trust account”). The client trust account was used by Respondent as a depository of funds belonging to Respondent's clients, third parties, or presently or potentially, to Respondent.

FILED
3/20/2025 11:35 AM
ARDC Clerk

3. At all times alleged in this complaint, Respondent maintained an operating account at Old Second National Bank, ending in 3511, entitled Law Offices of Eric J. Ryan, LLC (“operating account”).

4. The operating account was used by Respondent as a depository of funds presently or potentially belonging to Respondent or Respondent's law firm.

5. At all times alleged in this complaint, Respondent was the sole person responsible for signing checks drawn on his client trust account.

COUNT I

(Conversion of escrow funds Estate of Ardash Marderosian; Dishonesty)

6. The Administrator realleges and incorporates paragraphs 1 through 5 above as if set forth verbatim herein.

7. On or about May 7, 2015, Steven Marderosian (“Marderosian”), as administrator of the Estate of Ardash Marderosian and Respondent agreed that Respondent’s law firm, would represent the Estate of Ardash Marderosian in connection with the case *Estate of Ardash Marderosian v. Burgess Square Healthcare Weiser Cordero, MD & Julie Farrell, MD*, 2016 L 000769 which, at the time, was pending in the Circuit Court of DuPage County (“lawsuit”).

8. Marderosian and Respondent agreed that Respondent would be paid one-third (1/3) of any settlement proceeds received on behalf of the Estate of Ardash Marderosian in connection with the lawsuit.

9. On June 19, 2018, Marderosian, as administrator of the Estate of Ardash Marderosian, entered into a settlement agreement in connection with the lawsuit, as set forth above. The parties agreed that Burgess Square Healthcare would pay the Estate of Ardash Marderosian \$30,000.00 as and for settlement in connection with same.

10. In connection with that settlement, Burgess Square Healthcare issued check number 1397, dated July 6, 2018, payable to the order of “The Law Offices of Eric J. Ryan as Attorney for the Estate of Ardash Mardarosian” in the amount of \$30,000.00.

11. On July 26, 2018, Respondent deposited check number 1397, which represented the settlement funds, into Respondent's client trust account.

12. On July 27, 2018, Respondent transferred \$10,000.00, allegedly representing his attorney’s fees, into Respondent's operating account as payment for Respondent's work in connection with his representation of the Estate of Ardash Marderosian.

13. On June 27, 2019, prior to any authorized disbursement of the \$30,000.00 in settlement funds, the balance in Respondent's client trust account fell to \$0.07, as Respondent had used almost the entire \$30,000.00 of settlement funds for his own business or personal purposes.

14. At no time did Marderosian authorize Respondent to use any portion of the remaining \$30,000.00 in settlement funds for Respondent's own business or personal purposes.

15. Respondent's conduct in using the \$30,000.00 constituting settlement funds received in connection with his representation of the Estate of Ardash Marderosian without authority constitutes conversion.

16. At the time Respondent used the \$30,000.00, as set forth above, Respondent knew that he was using those funds without authority. At the time

Respondent used the \$30,000 in settlement proceeds for his own business and personal purposes, he acted dishonestly because he knew that he was using those funds without authority.

17. By reason of the conduct described above, Respondent has engaged in the following misconduct:

- a. failing to hold property of a client or third person that is in the lawyer's possession in connection with a representation separate from the lawyer's own property, by conduct including converting \$30,000.00 of the settlement funds to his own business or personal use, by causing the balance in Respondent's client trust account to fall below the amount then belonging to the Estate of Ardash Marderosian, in violation of Rule 1.15(a) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010); and
- b. conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation, by conduct including knowingly converting \$30,000 of the settlement funds to the Respondent's own use, without authorization, in violation of Rule 8.4(c) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010).

COUNT II

(Dishonesty - Providing Estate of Ardash Marderosian with a doctored bank statement)

18. The Administrator realleges and incorporates paragraphs 1 through 17 above as if set forth verbatim herein.

19. On March 21, 2023, Catherine Marderosian, Marderosian's sister and an heir to the Estate of Ardash Marderosian, sent an email to Respondent which, in part, requested that he provide proof that the settlement funds remained in his client trust account.

20. In response to Catherine Marderosian's email, on or about March 22, 2023, Respondent produced what he claimed to be a statement from his client trust account dated February 28, 2023, which purportedly showed an opening balance of \$52,451.50 and a closing balance of \$48,431.51 in his client trust account.

21. On January 14, 2025, Administrator served a subpoena upon Old Second National Bank for certain records in connection with this matter.

22. On or about February 3, 2025, Old Second National Bank produced documents responsive to the Administrator's subpoena as set forth in paragraph 21, including account statements for Respondent's trust account for the time period of June 1, 2018, through December 31, 2024.

23. The statement from Respondent's client trust account dated February 28, 2023, produced by Old Second National Bank shows an opening balance of \$1.50 and a closing balance of \$1.51.

24. Respondent knew that the statement as described in paragraph 20 was false because he or someone at his direction altered the statement for the purpose of deceiving Steven and Catherine Marderosian. When Respondent altered his client trust account statement and sent it to Steven and Catherine Marderosian, he did so dishonestly.

25. By reason of the conduct described above, Respondent has engaged in the following misconduct:

- a. conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation, by knowingly providing altered client trust account statements to Steven Marderosian and Catherine Marderosian, in violation of Rule 8.4(c) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010).

WHEREFORE, the Administrator respectfully requests that this matter be assigned to a panel of the Hearing Board, that a hearing be held, and that the panel make findings of fact and law, and a recommendation for such discipline as is warranted.

Respectfully submitted,

Lea S. Gutierrez, Administrator
Attorney Registration and
Disciplinary Commission

By: /s/ Morgan B. Handwerker
Morgan B. Handwerker

Morgan B. Handwerker
Matthew D. Lango
Counsel for Administrator
One Prudential Plaza
130 E. Randolph Drive, Suite 1500
Chicago, Illinois 60601
Telephone: (312) 565-2600
Email: mhandwerker@iadc.org
Email: ARDCeService@iadc.org