

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

In the Matter of:

WILLIAM BURNETT RAINES,

Respondent,

No. 6211852.

Commission No. 2024PR00050

COMPLAINT

Lea S. Gutierrez, Administrator of the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission, by his attorney, Richard Gleason, pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 753(b), complains of Respondent, Willaim Burnett Raines (“Respondent”), who was licensed to practice law in Illinois on May 4, 1993, and alleges that Respondent has engaged in the following conduct, which subjects him to discipline pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 770:

(Initiating and Engaging in Conversation that was Prejudicial to the Administration of Justice)

1. In 2014, Respondent was elected Judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County. As a judge, Respondent maintained a position of trust, power, and authority over others, including the parties to the matters heard before him and their counsel, police officers, court reporters, and other court personnel and Cook County staff.

2. At all times alleged in this complaint, Respondent remained a judge in the Circuit Court of Cook County. On January 11, 2022, the post-conviction matter of People v. Myles, case number 93 CR 01003, was heard on Respondent’s court call for the purpose of the parties providing to the court a status on discovery. The hearing was livestreamed via video-conferencing capabilities present in Respondent’s courtroom. Respondent was physically present in his

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courtroom, as were other courtroom personnel, including Cook County Assistant State's Attorneys and Cook County Assistant Public Defenders. The petitioner Mr. Myles's attorneys, Jennifer Bonjean and Sam Kennedy, were present remotely. The Assistant State's Attorney representing the People of the State of Illinois in the Myles matter, Todd Dombrowski, was also present remotely.

3. After the Myles matter was called, the parties informed Respondent of a pending discovery dispute and engaged in argument on the topic. Respondent instructed the parties to return on February 10, 2022 to report again to the court on the status of discovery. Both parties thanked Respondent, and Respondent replied, "you're welcome." Ms. Bonjean, Mr. Kennedy, and Mr. Dombrowski then ended their remote connection to Respondent's courtroom.

4. Respondent, mistakenly believing that the virtual feed of his courtroom had ended, then engaged in a conversation with the Assistant State's Attorneys and Assistant Public Defenders physically present in his courtroom about the just-concluded Myles matter, and, specifically, about Mr. Myles's attorneys, Ms. Bonjean and Mr. Kennedy. During that conversation, Respondent, referring to Ms. Bonjean, stated: "Did you see her going nuts? Glasses off, fingers through her hair, the phone's going all over the place. It's insane." Respondent further stated that Ms. Bonjean's behavior "was entertaining" for him and inquired: "Can you imagine waking up to her every day? Oh my God." Respondent further stated, "You know what? I couldn't have a visual on that if you paid me. There you have it."

5. During the conversation described in paragraph four, above, Respondent also mocked and ridiculed Attorney Sam Kennedy. When a question was raised regarding who Attorney Sam Kennedy was, Respondent stated, "That's her [Ms. Bonjean's] man child."

6. Ms. Bonjean learned of Respondent's comments described in paragraphs four and

five, above, later in the day on January 11th. Ms. Bonjean then filed a motion to preserve the livestream recording of Respondent's courtroom from January 11, 2022. On January 13, 2022, after Ms. Bonjean filed the motion, the presiding judge of the 5th District of the Circuit Court of Cook County, the Hon. Erica Reddick, reassigned Mr. Myles's matter to the Hon. Carol Howard.

7. On January 17, 2022, in connection with the allegations above, the Judicial Inquiry Board charged Respondent in case number 22 CC 2 with conduct that was prejudicial to the administration of justice and that brought the judicial office into disrepute, in violation of the Code of Judicial Conduct, Illinois Supreme Court Rule 61, Canon 1; Rule 62, Canon 2(A), and Canon 3(A)(2), (A)(3), and (A)(9).

8. On January 18, 2022, the Chief Judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County placed Respondent on restrictive duties. On November 6, 2022, Respondent resigned from his position as a judge. On December 2, 2022, Illinois Courts Commission dismissed the pending case against Respondent, finding that it lacked jurisdiction to hear the matter as Respondent was no longer a sitting judge.

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

- a. conduct that is prejudicial to the administration of justice, by conduct including making critical and other derogatory remarks to Assistant State's Attorneys and Assistant Public Defenders about Ms. Bonjean and Mr. Kennedy following a court proceeding in which Ms. Bonjean and Mr. Kennedy had appeared before Respondent, in violation of Rule 8.4(d) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010).

WHEREFORE, the Administrator 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, conclusions 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/ *Richard Gleason*
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