

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

In the Matter of:)
)
 Jason Lawrence Spangehl,)
) Commission No. 2024PR00074
 Attorney-Respondent,)
)
 No. 6304053)

ANSWER

Jason Spangehl, Attorney-Respondent, hereby submits this Answer to the Complaint filed by Lea S. Gutierrez, Administrator of the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission, by her attorney, Tammy L. Evans, pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 753(b), and respond as follows:

1. All allegations in the complaint are admitted.
2. At the time of the events describe in the enumerated items from 2-15 the respondent was suffering from a psychotic episode brought on by long-term prescription usage of Adderall, and precipitated by the death of his father in July 2023.
3. This psychosis manifested as narcissistic paranoid delusions primarily centered on the few people with whom he had regular personal contact.
4. The Respondent expresses extreme remorse for all his actions cited in the complaint. He recognizes that he should have sought treatment sooner, and availed himself of ARDC resources, but did not realize he was delusional until November 2023.
5. In November 2023, the Respondent had become unreasonably paranoid about his family, friends, and clients. Beliefs would shift from day to day and while still delusional, he realized that he was too unstable to continue acting as an attorney, specifically that Rule 1.16 prevented him from continuing to practice:

RULE 1.16: DECLINING OR TERMINATING REPRESENTATION

(a) Except as stated in paragraph (c), a lawyer shall not represent a client or, where representation has commenced, shall withdraw from the representation of a client if:

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(2) the lawyer's physical or mental condition materially impairs the lawyer's ability to represent the client;

6. However, Respondent did not convey that to his clients. In December 2023, Respondent intentionally failed to complete his continuing education and registration process, closed his office, and used his expired license as an excuse to extricate from his remaining cases, and expressed his intent to make restitution in all cases. Respondent acknowledges that he was attempting to hide his mental state by providing an alternative excuse.
7. Respondent's mental condition continued to deteriorate, believing himself the target of attempts to kill him, until at his wife's pleading on January 10, 2024 he voluntarily submitted himself for mental health care at Carle hospital in Urbana. He was transferred to Streamwood Behavioral Health near Chicago where he was institutionalized. He was taken off Adderall and prescribed the antipsychotic Abilify. On January 27, 2024 he was released.
8. While time in the institution had convinced Respondent that he was not being targeted, his broader paranoid delusions had not resolved, just lost focus. He continued to be overwhelmed by visions of conspiracies that warped from day to day.
9. The Respondent acknowledges that he wrote the post described in Count II, and that he was in an agitated and paranoid state, and is deeply remorseful. Respondent acknowledges that his words were wrong and hurtful. He has had no professional contact with the judge, and has no personal animosity toward her. He was also under the impression that no one viewed his Facebook posts.
10. However, as a newly released mental patient, the Respondent's posts were being monitored by local law enforcement, who visited him to assess his intent. Then as now, the Respondent offered his apologies. The Respondent also recognized that he should not be offering opinions about judges, lawyers, or anyone in an unstable mental state, and promised to no longer do so. Respondent reiterated this commitment in his subpoenaed testimony in March 2024.
11. In June 2024, Respondent's delusions began to resolve, meaning that he began to recognize they were not based in fact. He continues to see a psychiatrist regularly.
12. In July 2024, Respondent inquired to the ARDC regarding his status and the status of the investigation. He attempted to make restitution at that point but acknowledges that his restitution to L.B. was insufficient. He still wants to make additional restitution but has no contact with L.B.

13. In August 2024, Respondent completed his continuing education requirements and applied for reinstatement to the bar.
14. From September 2024 until the present, the Respondent has again been assisting clients with immigration cases.
15. Prior to or since the events described here, Respondent has never been the subject of a client complaint.

While Respondent cannot contradict the facts as presented in the Complaint, it is his hope that you will take this context into consideration as intended: (1) as an expression of regret for these actions, (2) a disclamation of any malice toward any of the victims, and (3) as an expression of sincere intent to comply with whatever decision as to discipline you think warranted.

On January 15, Respondent contacted the ARDC Attorney regarding her Motion to Deem, expressing his intent to admit all charges, and seeking to consent to whatever sanctions will allow him to take responsibility for his actions and resolve those to the satisfaction of the ARDC and his prior clients.

She encouraged filing this response so we can discuss a consent agreement. We pray that you accept this filing late, offering the excuse of excusable neglect, as calls from panicked immigrants are at an all time high.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jason L. Spangehl
Attorney
ARDC #6304053

By: /s/ Jason L. Spangehl
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