

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

In the Matter of:

DAVID WILLIAM LAWLER,

Attorney-Respondent,

No. 6303793.

Commission No. 2024PR00077

COMPLAINT

Lea S. Gutierrez, Administrator of the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission (“Commission”), by her attorney, Rachel C. Miller, pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 753(b), complains of Respondent, David William Lawler ("Respondent"), who was licensed to practice law in Illinois on November 4, 2010, and alleges that Respondent has engaged in the following conduct which subjects him to discipline pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 753(b):

ALLEGATIONS COMMON TO ALL COUNTS

1. In December 2021, Respondent formed a real estate holding company, Lawler and Maze, LLC (“holding company”) with a friend, Justin Maze (“Maze”). At the time, Maze served as the Circuit Clerk of Williamson County.

2. On June 12, 2024, Respondent entered into a pre-trial diversion agreement with the United States Department of Justice, in which Respondent “agree[d] that [he] knowingly aided and abetted the crimes of making one or more false entries in the books and records of SouthernTrust Bank in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1005.” Prosecution of

FILED
12/16/2024 8:35 AM
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Respondent was deferred for 18 months while he completed conditions of the agreement, including that he continue to make timely payments on any outstanding loans.

COUNT I
*(Knowingly Signing False Loan Documents –
August 2022 transaction with Brandon Zanotti)*

3. Prior to March 26, 2022, Respondent and Maze agreed to purchase, through their holding company, seven commercial real estate properties owned by Results Home Buyers 2, LLC, of which Brandon Zanotti (“Zanotti”), an Illinois-licensed attorney, was a partner.

4. Prior to March 26, 2022, Respondent, Maze, and Zanotti agreed to finance the purchase of the commercial properties through SouthernTrust Bank (“SouthernTrust”), a community bank with locations in Marion, Vienna, and Goreville. Respondent, Maze, and Zanotti worked with Steven Cook (“Cook”), president of SouthernTrust, to finance the loan.

5. Prior to March 26, 2022, Respondent, Maze, Zanotti, and Cook agreed to complete documents stating that Zanotti, through Results, would sell Respondent and Maze’s holding company seven properties for a purchase price of \$545,152 and a cash down payment of \$109,030.

6. Respondent, Maze, Zanotti, and Cook agreed that, despite drafting documents stating the purchase terms as described in paragraph five, above, the actual purchase price would be \$436,122 and no down payment would be paid.

7. On August 12, 2022, Respondent signed commercial loan documents stating that the purchase agreement for the commercial properties was \$545,152, including a cash down payment of \$109,030.

8. Respondent’s representation, described in paragraph seven, above, that he and Maze purchased the commercial properties for \$545,152, including a cash down payment of

\$109,030, was false, because he knew that the actual purchase price for the properties was \$436,030 and did not include a cash down payment.

9. Respondent knew at the time he signed the commercial loan documents described in paragraph seven, above, that the entries were false.

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

- a. knowingly assisting or inducing another to do so, or do so through the acts of another, by conduct including assisting Zanotti in obtaining a commercial real estate loan from SouthernTrust when the loan was based on false loan documents, in violation of Rule 8.4(a) of the Rules of Professional Conduct (2010);
- b. committing a criminal act that reflects adversely on the lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness as a lawyer in other respects, by conduct including knowingly aiding Zanotti and Cook in creating false bank documents and thereby violating Sections 2 and 1005 of Title 18 of the United States Code, in violation of Rule 8.4(b) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010); and
- c. engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation, by conduct including knowingly making the false statement described in paragraph seven, above, in violation of Rule 8.4(c) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010).

COUNT II

*(Knowingly Signing False Loan Documents –
August 2022 transaction with Steven Fowler)*

11. The Administrator realleges and incorporates paragraphs one through nine, above.

12. Prior to August 12, 2022, Respondent and Maze agreed to purchase four commercial properties from Steven Fowler ("Fowler").

13. Prior to August 12, 2022, Respondent, Maze, Fowler, and Cook agreed to complete loan documents stating that Respondent and Maze, through their holding company, would purchase four properties from Fowler for \$413,000, including a cash down payment of \$82,600.

14. Prior to August 12, 2022, Respondent, Maze, Fowler, and Cook agreed that despite drafting documents stating the purchase terms as described in paragraph 13, above, the actual purchase price would be \$330,400 and no down payment would be paid.

15. On August 12, 2022, Respondent, Maze, and Fowler, with the assistance of Cook, signed loan documents stating that Respondent and Maze, through their holding company, would purchase four properties from Fowler for \$413,000, including a cash down payment of \$82,600.

16. Respondent's representation in the loan documents described in paragraph 15, above, that he and Maze would pay Fowler \$413,000, including a cash down payment of \$82,600, was false, because he and Maze had not provided a down payment of \$82,600.

17. Respondent knew at the time that he signed the loan documents described in paragraph 15, above, that they were false.

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

- a. committing a criminal act that reflects adversely on the lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness as a lawyer in other respects, by conduct including knowingly aiding Zanotti and Cook in creating false bank documents and thereby violating Sections 2 and 1005 of Title 18 of the United States Code, in violation of Rule 8.4(b) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010); and
- b. engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation, by conduct including knowingly making the false statement described in paragraph 15, above, in

violation of Rule 8.4(c) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010).

COUNT III

*(Knowingly Signing False Loan Documents –
November 2022 transaction with Nathan Pierce)*

19. The Administrator realleges and incorporates paragraphs 11 through 17, above.
20. Prior to November 17, 2022, Respondent and Maze agreed to a purchase a residential property in Marion from Nathan Pierce (“Pierce”) for \$107,500.
21. On November 17, 2022, Respondent, Maze, and Pierce, with the assistance of Cook, signed loan documents stating that the purchase price of the residential property was \$107,500, that Respondent and Maze paid Pierce \$21,754.04, and that SouthernTrust financed \$86,000.
22. Respondent’s representation in the loan documents, described in paragraph 21 above, that he and Maze provided \$21,7654.04 was false, because he knew that he and Maze had not paid Pierce \$21,754.04.
23. Respondent knew at the time he signed the commercial loan documents described in paragraph 21, above, that the statements were false.
24. By reason of the conduct described above, Respondent has engaged in the following misconduct:
 - a. committing a criminal act that reflects adversely on the lawyer’s honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness as a lawyer in other respects, by conduct including knowingly aiding Zanotti and Cook in creating false bank documents and thereby violating Sections 2 and 1005 of Title 18 of the United States Code, in violation of Rule 8.4(b) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010); and
 - b. engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation, by conduct including knowingly making the false statement described in paragraphs 7 and 8, above,

