

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

In the Matter of:

MICHAEL DANIEL ROBINSON,

Attorney-Respondent,

No. 6319460.

Commission No. 2025PR00062

COMPLAINT

Lea S. Gutierrez, Administrator of the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission, by her attorney, Rory Patrick Quinn, pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 753(b), complains of Respondent Michael Daniel Robinson, who was licensed to practice law in Illinois on May 26, 2015, and alleges that Respondent has engaged in the following conduct which subjects him to discipline pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 770:

COUNT I

*(Lack of Diligence and Failure to Refund Unearned Fees – L.J. Matter)*

1. At all times alleged in related to this complaint, Respondent was the principal attorney of the law firm of Michael D. Robinson & Associates, L.L.C., in Chicago, primarily practicing in the area of healthcare law, specifically seeking benefits or appealing the denial of healthcare benefits.

2. At all times alleged in this complaint, Respondent maintained and was the sole signatory on an IOLTA client trust account, ending with the digits 7613, at Chase Bank. That account was titled “The Law Firm of Michael D. Robinson & Associates, L.L.C. IOLTA Account” (“IOLTA Account”) and was used by Respondent as the depository of funds belonging

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to Respondent's clients, their lienholders, other third parties or, presently or potentially, to Respondent.

3. On June 9, 2022, Respondent and an individual with the initials L.J. that Respondent would represent L.J. in an appeal for Social Security Disability benefits with Lincoln Financial. They agreed that L.J. would pay Respondent a security retainer of \$5,000, against which Respondent would bill L.J. for legal work at an hourly rate of \$325. L.J. paid Respondent \$5,000 by check, and Respondent deposited the check into his IOLTA Account on July 12, 2022.

4. Between June 9, 2022 and January 17, 2023, Respondent did not send L.J. any bills requesting payment for any actions Respondent claimed to have taken in pursuit of L.J.'s claims against Lincoln Financial, or specifying what services Respondent had provided L.J. in connection with that matter, when those services, if any, were provided, or how long it would take Respondent to provide them.

5. On November 13, 2022, Respondent told L.J. that he would send L.J.'s appeal to Lincoln Financial the following day.

6. As of December 29, 2022, Respondent had not sent an appeal to Lincoln Financial relating to L.J.'s claims against the company. Between November 21, 2022 and December 29, 2022, L.J. sent Respondent five requests for a copy of the appeal that he incorrectly believed, based on Respondent's November 13, 2023 statement, that Respondent had sent to Lincoln Financial. Although Respondent was aware of his client's requests for information, he never responded to them.

7. On January 17, 2023, L.J. emailed Respondent a termination letter and a request for a refund of his \$5,000. Respondent received the message shortly after it was sent, was aware

from its contents that he had been terminated as L.J.'s lawyer, and knew that he had not, to that point, provided L.J. with legal services having a value of \$5,000. As of November 5, 2025, the date this matter was voted by a panel of the Commission's Inquiry Board, Respondent had not returned any unearned funds to L.J. The services Respondent provided to L.J., if any, do not warrant his retention of the entire fee.

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

- a. failing to act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client, by conduct including failing to take any meaningful action between June 9, 2022 and January 17, 2023, in furtherance of L.J.'s matter, in violation of Rule 1.16(d) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct;
- b. failing to promptly comply with reasonable requests for information, by conduct including failing to provide L.J. with information or documents regarding any service he had provided on behalf of L.J. in response to L.J.'s requests for that information, in violation of Rule 1.4(a)(4) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct; and
- c. failing to promptly deliver to L.J. funds in his possession that L.J. is entitled to receive, by conduct including failing to return any unearned portion of \$5,000 of funds received from L.J. when requested, in violation of Rule 1.16(d) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct.

#### COUNT II

##### *(Failure to Cooperate with a Disciplinary Investigation)*

12. On February 23, 2023, L.J. submitted a request to the ARDC requesting that the Administrator investigate Respondent's handling of L.J.'s claim against Lincoln Financial and his failure to return any unearned legal fees to L.J.

13. On December 19, 2023, in connection with the Administrator's investigation of L.J.'S complaint against him, Respondent appeared virtually for a sworn statement conducted by

an attorney with the Commission's Intake division. During that sworn statement Respondent testified that he could refund L.J.'s funds, had considered terminating the attorney-client relationship and returning L.J.'s funds prior to receiving the ARDC request for information, and admitted that not all of the \$5,000 was earned.

14. On April 9, 2024, counsel for the Administrator emailed Respondent a message to the email address Respondent provided when he registered with the ARDC and had used in previous communications with the ARDC. That message requested that Respondent produce IOLTA Account information identifying the account into which Respondent deposited the \$5,000 fee paid by L.J. to Respondent and for additional documentation including: email correspondence with Lincoln Financial, any work product, and any text messages between Respondent and L.J., regarding Respondent's handling of L.J.'s claim against Lincoln Financial.

15. As of May 9, 2024, Respondent had not submitted a written response to the Administrator's April 9, 2024 request for information.

16. On May 9, 2024, the Administrator sent Respondent a second message to the email address Respondent provided when he registered with the ARDC. That message requested a response to the Administrator's April 9, 2024 email and referred Respondent to his responsibilities to respond to the Administrator's requests for information under Commission Rule 53 and Rule 8.1(b) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct.

17. As of March 18, 2025, Respondent had not submitted a written response to the Administrator's April 9, 2024 request for information.

18. On March 18, 2025, a Commission investigator personally served Respondent with a subpoena requiring Respondent to appear for a sworn statement on April 16, 2025 at 10:30 a.m. that would be conducted via Microsoft Teams.

19. At 9:56 a.m. on Wednesday April 16, 2025 Respondent emailed counsel for the Administrator and requested a continuance of the April 16, 2025 sworn statement. Respondent stated in his request he had a “written statement that I can read into the record and will transmit the same” and that he needed a continuance until “at least Friday.”

20. On April 16, 2025, at Respondent’s request, counsel for the Administrator agreed to continue Respondent’s appearance in response to the subpoena to April 23, 2025 at 10:30 a.m. That same day, Respondent replied “[t]hank you very much” to counsel for the Administrator’s email agreeing to the continuance, but did not appear for the sworn statement on April 23, 2025. Respondent’s attendance at the April 23, 2025 statement was never waived or excused.

21. On July 8, 2025, the day before the Inquiry Board was scheduled to consider the investigation of Respondent’s handling of matters involving L.J. Respondent emailed counsel for the Administrator and stated he was sending a refund check for \$5,000 to L.J. that day by certified mail. At the July 9, 2025 meeting of the Inquiry Board, the panel deferred voting a complaint to allow Respondent time to demonstrate to the Board that he had returned any unearned fees to L.J.

22. On July 24, 2025, L.J. received a purported refund check numbered 1049 dated July 8, 2025 in the amount of \$5,000 that was payable to L.J. and drafted on Respondent’s IOLTA Account from Respondent, and attempted to negotiate the check by depositing it into his own bank account on the same date. On July 28, 2025, Respondent’s bank rejected the check due to Respondent’s account being dormant.

23. On August 27, 2025, counsel for the Administrator emailed Respondent at the email address Respondent provided when he registered with the ARDC. The email explained what happened to the check Respondent gave L.J. when L.J. attempted to negotiate it, and

instructed Respondent how to rectify the dormant account. Respondent received that message shortly after it was sent.

24. As of September 9, 2025, Respondent had not responded to the Administrator's August 27, 2025 message.

25. On September 9, 2025, a Commission investigator personally served Respondent with a subpoena requiring him to appear for a sworn statement before the Administrator at the ARDC's Chicago office located at 130 East Randolph Street on September 30, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. with a certified check or money order made payable to L.J. Respondent did not appear in compliance with the subpoena on September 30, 2025, nor did he produce any documents or request that his appearance be rescheduled. Respondent's appearance in response to the subpoena has never been waved or excused.

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

- a. knowingly failing to respond to a lawful demand for information from a disciplinary authority by conduct including failing to respond to the Administrator's April 9, 2024 and May 9, 2024 emails, and failing to appear for his April 23, 2025, and September 30, 2025 sworn statements, in violation of Rule 8.1(b) 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/ Rory Patrick Quinn  
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