

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

In the Matter of:

STEVEN MESSNER,

Attorney-Respondent,

No. 3122711.

Commission No. 2023PR00018

COMPLAINT

Jerome Larkin, Administrator of the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission, by his attorneys, Richard Gleason and Rory Patrick Quinn, pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 753(b), complains of Respondent, Steven Messner (“Respondent”), who was licensed to practice law in Illinois on November 24, 1978, and alleges that Respondent has engaged in the following conduct which subjects him to discipline pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 770:

(Indecent Liberties with a Child and Contributing to the Sexual Deviancy of a Child)

1. Beginning in 1974, Respondent was a frequent guest in the home of a minor, A.L., visiting A.L.’s home multiple times each week. A.L.’s home was located in Skokie, Illinois. In 1974, A.L. was seven years old, and Respondent was 27 years old.

2. Between 1974 and 1983, when A.L. was between the ages of seven years old and 15 years old, and Respondent was between the ages of 27 and 36 years old, Respondent routinely touched A.L.’s breasts over and underneath A.L.’s clothes while Respondent was present in A.L.’s home. During the same period of time and at the same location, Respondent repeatedly touched A.L.’s pubic area both over and underneath A.L.’s clothes.

3. On one occasion in 1979, when A.L. was 12 years old and Respondent was 32 years

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old, Respondent tied A.L. to her bed at her home and touched her breasts under her clothes and inserted his fingers into A.L.'s vagina.

4. Between 1974 and 1983, Respondent told A.L. that he would kill A.L.'s family if A.L. disclosed his sexual acts, described in paragraphs two and three, above, to anyone.

5. During the time of Respondent's sexual acts against A.L., described in paragraphs two and three, above, there existed a statute in Illinois titled, "Indecent Liberties with a Child." That statute provided that any person of the age of 17 and upwards who performed any act of lewd fondling or touching of a child under the age of 16 with the intent to arouse or to satisfy the sexual desire of either the child or the person committed the offense of Indecent Liberties with a Child. The offense was a Class 1 felony, punishable by four to 15 years in prison. Ill. Rev. Stat. 1973, ch. 38, pars. 11-4, *et seq.*

6. During the time of Respondent's sexual acts against A.L., described in paragraphs two and three, above, there existed a statute in Illinois titled, "Contributing to the Sexual Delinquency of a Child," Illinois Revised Statutes Chapter 38 Article 11-5. That statute provided that any person of the age of 14 years and upward who performs any lewd or fondling or touching of either the child or the person with the intent or to arouse or to satisfy the sexual desires of either the child or the person committed the offense of Contributing to the Sexual Delinquency of a Child. The offense was a Class A misdemeanor, punishable by up to 364 days in prison. Ill. Rev. Stat. 1973, ch. 38, pars. 11-5, *et seq.*

7. Respondent committed his sexual acts, described in paragraphs two and three, above, with the intent to arouse or to satisfy his or A.L.'s sexual desires, and those acts were lewd.

8. By reason of the conduct described above which occurred prior to July 1, 1980, Respondent has engaged in the following misconduct:

- a. engaging in illegal conduct involving moral turpitude, by conduct including routinely touching A.L.'s breasts and pubic area when A.L. was between the ages of seven and 15 years old, and Respondent was between the ages of 27 and 36 years old, in violation of Disciplinary Rule 1-102(A)(3) of the American Bar Association Code of Professional Conduct (1974); and
- b. engaging in conduct that adversely reflected on his ability to practice law, by conduct including threatening to kill A.L.'s family if she ever disclosed Respondent's sex acts, in violation of Disciplinary Rule 1-102(A)(6) of the American Bar Association Code of Professional Conduct (1980).

9. By reason of the conduct described above that took place on or after July 1, 1980,

Respondent has engaged in the following misconduct:

- a. engaging in illegal conduct involving moral turpitude, by conduct including routinely touching A.L.'s breasts and pubic area when A.L. was between the ages of seven and 15 years old, in violation of Rule 1-102(A)(3) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (1980); and
- b. engaging in conduct that adversely reflected on his ability to practice law, by conduct including threatening to kill A.L.'s family if she ever disclosed Respondent's sex acts, in violation of Rule 1-102(A)(6) of the Illinois Code of Professional Conduct (1980).

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

Jerome Larkin, Administrator
Attorney Registration and
Disciplinary Commission

By: /s/ Richard Gleason
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/s/ Rory Patrick Quinn
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