

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

**FILED**

September 30, 2022

**ARDC CLERK**

In the Matter of:

**MAURICIO BORIS ANDRES ARAUJO,**

Attorney-Respondent,

No. 6215707.

Commission No. 2022PR00026

**REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE HEARING BOARD**

**DEFAULT PROCEEDING**

The hearing in this matter was held by video conference on September 21, 2022, before a Hearing Board Panel consisting of John D. Gutzke, Chair, Alexander L. Groden, and Charles A. Hempfling. Melissa A. Smart appeared on behalf of the Administrator. Respondent was not present, and no counsel appeared on his behalf. The Administrator recommended that Respondent be disbarred. We agree with the Administrator's recommendation.

We have considered the Administrator's three-count Complaint, a copy of which is attached as Exhibit 1. We have also considered the Order entered on July 21, 2022, deeming the allegations of the Complaint admitted, a copy of which is attached as Exhibit 2. Respondent did not file an answer or respond to the Motion to Deem the Allegations of the Complaint Admitted.

The allegations deemed admitted establish that Respondent engaged in multiple instances of sexually harassing conduct toward three women while he was working in his capacity as a Cook County Circuit Court Judge. In 2016, while a female Chicago police officer was obtaining Respondent's signature on a search warrant, Respondent attempted to kiss the officer on the lips, grabbed her hand and told her, "Touch my butt," all without her consent. He also made lewd

comments to the officer on another occasion when they met at her squad car regarding another search warrant. On two occasions in 2011, Respondent approached a female court reporter in a suggestive manner when they were alone in a courthouse elevator and asked how much money it would take for the court reporter to have sex with him. On September 11, 2018, Respondent made demeaning remarks about a female Assistant State's Attorney after she appeared before him in a first degree murder case. Respondent was unhappy that the female attorney, who was his law school classmate, had not congratulated him on his promotion to a new courtroom or said hello to him. Later that day, Respondent called another Assistant State's Attorney into his chambers and began discussing the female lawyer's failure to acknowledge him. Respondent referred to the female lawyer as a "bitch" and further stated, "Maybe it's because I didn't have sex with her. Or maybe it's because I did have sex with her."\*

The admitted allegations that Respondent attempted to kiss the officer, grabbed her hand and told her to touch Respondent, all without her consent, established that Respondent committed the criminal acts of battery (knowingly and without legal justification making physical contact of an insulting or provoking nature (720 ILCS 5/12-3)) and assault (knowingly and without lawful authority engaging in conduct that places another in reasonable apprehension of receiving a battery (720 ILCS 5/12-1)). The admitted allegations that Respondent moved close to the court reporter when they were alone in an elevator and asked for sex established that Respondent committed the criminal act of assault (720 ILCS 5/12-1). The foregoing conduct, in addition to Respondent's inappropriate sexual remarks to and about the three women, constituted conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice. Accordingly, the allegations deemed admitted established that Respondent violated Rules of Professional Conduct 8.4(b) and 8.4(d).

As a sitting judge, Respondent was required to observe high standards of conduct, comply with the law, and avoid impropriety. His disregard of these obligations for his own sexual gratification makes his misconduct especially egregious. In arriving at its recommendation of disbarment, the Panel also considered the following significant factors in aggravation: the harm to the victims, the legal profession, and the administration of justice; Respondent's abuse of his position of authority; his pattern of misconduct; his selfish motives; his failure to accept responsibility or show remorse for his misconduct; and his disrespect toward the Court and the disciplinary process by failing to participate in this proceeding.

Respondent has no prior discipline. We considered that factor in mitigation, but it does not lead us to recommend a different sanction.

Accordingly,

1. Respondent was served with the Complaint via email, by agreement, on May 17, 2022. A copy of the Affidavit of Agreed Service Pursuant to Commission Rule 214(c) is attached as Exhibit 3.
2. The allegations of the Complaint were deemed admitted in an Order entered on July 21, 2022. A copy of that Order is attached as Exhibit 2.
3. In consideration of the Order deeming the allegations of the Complaint admitted, this Panel finds Respondent committed the misconduct charged in the Complaint.
4. Given Respondent's misconduct, the serious aggravating factors present, and the case law cited by the Administrator, we recommend that Respondent, Mauricio Boris Andres Araujo, be disbarred.

5. The Panel has concluded this report format will adequately and appropriately communicate its recommendation to the Court.

Respectfully submitted,

John D. Gutzke  
Alexander L. Groden  
Charles A. Hempfling

### CERTIFICATION

I, Michelle M. Thome, Clerk of the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission of the Supreme Court of Illinois and keeper of the records, hereby certifies that the foregoing is a true copy of the Report and Recommendation of the Hearing Board, approved by each Panel member, entered in the above entitled cause of record filed in my office on September 30, 2022.

/s/ Michelle M. Thome

Michelle M. Thome, Clerk of the  
Attorney Registration and Disciplinary  
Commission of the Supreme Court of Illinois

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\* The Courts Commission conducted an evidentiary hearing addressing the foregoing allegations and found they were proven by clear and convincing evidence. No sanction was imposed because Respondent retired from the bench before the Courts Commission entered its written findings. In re: Circuit Judge Mauricio Araujo, of the Circuit Court of Cook County, Courts Commission of the State of Illinois, No. 19 CC 1 (Nov. 6, 2020).

# **Exhibit 1**

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

In the matter of:	)	
	)	
MAURICIO BORIS ANDRES ARAUJO,	)	
	)	Commission No. 2022PR00026
Attorney-Respondent,	)	
	)	
No. 6215707.	)	

COMPLAINT

Jerome Larkin, Administrator of the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission, by his attorney, Melissa A. Smart, pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 753(b), complains of Respondent Mauricio Boris Andres Araujo, who was licensed to practice law in Illinois on November 4, 1993, and alleges that Respondent has engaged in the following conduct which subjects him to discipline pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 770:

ALLEGATIONS COMMON TO ALL COUNTS

1. In 2008, Respondent was elected Judge of the Cook County Circuit Court, Sixth Judicial Subcircuit. At all times related to the allegations in this complaint, Respondent was a Cook County judge.
2. 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.
3. In September 2018, Respondent was placed on administrative leave in connection with the allegations as set forth in Counts I through III below. On June 5, 2019, the Judicial Inquiry

Board filed a three-count complaint against Respondent, and on September 28 and 29, 2020, the Illinois Courts Commission conducted a contested evidentiary hearing, at which the Commission heard witness testimony and considered admitted exhibits and stipulations of the parties. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Courts Commission orally ruled that the Judicial Inquiry Board had met its burden of proof, clear and convincing evidence, and continued the case to allow the parties to brief the issue of what sanction was appropriate for the proven conduct. In October 2020, Respondent retired from the bench. On November 6, 2020, the Courts Commission entered its written findings, in which it concluded that the Judicial Inquiry Board had proven Respondent's misconduct and concluding that the issue of Respondent's sanction was moot in light of his resignation from the bench. *In re: Circuit Judge Mauricio Araujo, of the Circuit Court of Cook County*, Courts Commission of the State of Illinois, No. 19 CC 1, (November 6, 2020).

COUNT I  
(Battery and Assault of Police Officer Karen Rittorno)

4. At all times of the alleged acts in this complaint, there was in effect a criminal statute in Illinois, 720 ILCS 5/12-3, which provided, "Battery. (a) A person commits battery if that person intentionally or knowingly without legal justification and by any means, (1) causes harm to an individual or (2) makes physical contact of an insulting or provoking nature with an individual."

5. At all times of the alleged acts in this complaint, there was in effect a criminal statute in Illinois, 720 ILCS 5/12-1, which provided, "Assault. (a) A person commits an assault when, without lawful authority, that person engages in conduct which places another in reasonable apprehension of receiving a battery."

6. As of August 15, 2016, Respondent presided over a criminal courtroom at the Leighton Criminal Court Building at 2650 South California Avenue in Chicago (the “Criminal Court Building.”)

7. As of August 15, 2016, Officer Karen Rittorno was a fifteen-year veteran of the Chicago Police Department who was assigned to the gang investigations unit. Occasionally, Officer Rittorno’s duties required her to obtain search warrants which required not only approval from the State’s Attorney’s Office, but also a judge’s signature. Some warrants also required that an informant be presented to the judge for questioning. Officer Rittorno had access to the cell phone numbers of several judges, including Respondent, should she be required to obtain judicial authorization for a search warrant.

8. As of August 15, 2016, Officer Rittorno had professional interactions with Respondent, but had no personal relationship with Respondent.

9. On August 15, 2016, Officer Rittorno texted Respondent to ask if he was available to authorize a search warrant. Respondent replied that he was available and Officer Rittorno drove with her partner and an informant to the Criminal Court Building. Officer Rittorno’s partner stayed with the informant in their squad car and Officer Rittorno entered the building to have the warrant initially reviewed and assigned a number by the State’s Attorney’s Office, as required by police protocol, after which she went to Respondent’s courtroom. Court was not in session and Officer Rittorno crossed the courtroom to Respondent’s chambers and knocked on the door. Respondent was present alone in his chambers and invited Officer Rittorno to enter.

10. As Officer Rittorno entered Respondent’s chambers, Respondent approached her with his arms extended, moved his face close to hers and attempted to kiss her on the lips. Relying

on her training for potentially dangerous physical encounters, Officer Rittorno extended her arm to prevent Respondent from coming closer, stepped back and stated loudly “Back, sir.” Officer Rittorno then admonished Respondent, asking “Aren’t you married?,” to which Respondent said “Well, yeah” but that his marital status “did not matter.”

11. Because Officer Rittorno was extremely uncomfortable with Respondent’s actions and statements, she moved close to the window overlooking the courthouse parking lot, hoping to get the attention of her partner in their squad car, but she could not be seen because the windows in Respondent’s chambers were tinted. Officer Rittorno asked Respondent if he wanted her to bring the informant to him for questioning, or to accompany her to the squad car. Respondent told Rittorno that he wanted her to bring the informant to his courtroom. Respondent then preceded Officer Rittorno from his chambers to his courtroom, which required him to climb a set of stairs. While Respondent was walking up the steps in front of Officer Rittorno, she was holding the warrant in her left hand and Respondent reached out and grabbed her right hand, and told Officer Rittorno “Here, touch it.” Officer Rittorno pulled away her hand and asked, “Touch what?” Respondent answered, “Touch my butt.” As Officer Rittorno and Respondent entered the courtroom Officer Rittorno again pushed Respondent away from her, made her way around him and left the courtroom to go to her squad car. Officer Rittorno described the above actions by Respondent to her partner, who accompanied Officer Rittorno back to Respondent with the informant for Respondent to question. Respondent then signed the warrant.

12. At no time did Officer Rittorno consent to Respondent’s attempt to kiss her or to grab her hand, as described in paragraphs 10 and 11, above.

13. Officer Rittorno was distressed and traumatized by the events of the incident with Respondent referenced in paragraphs 10 and 11 above. After August 15, 2016, Officer Rittorno

took steps to avoid any contact with Respondent. When she had reason to expect to encounter Respondent, or was unable to avoid Respondent, in connection with performance of her professional duties, Officer Rittorno always arranged to be accompanied by another officer.

14. In early fall 2016, Officer Rittorno was with other members of her policing team on a routine search warrant and met Respondent at the 14<sup>th</sup> District Police Station. When Respondent approached Officer Rittorno's squad cars, Officer Rittorno offered Respondent her seat. Respondent said "Oh, I get to sit where you were sitting" and "Do I get to sniff your seat too?" Officer Rittorno was offended and embarrassed by Respondent's remarks, which were made in the presence of several other officers.

15. As a result of the conduct set forth 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 but not limited to making statements to Officer Rittorno which made her fearful that Respondent intended to commit a battery, grabbing Officer Rittorno's hand in an attempt to compel her to touch Respondent inappropriately and attempting to kiss Officer Rittorno, in violation of Rule 8.4(b) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010), by committing assault in violation of 720 ILCS 5/12-1, and battery in violation of 720 ILCS 5/12-3; and,

- b. conduct that is prejudicial to the administration of justice, by conduct including, but not limited to grabbing Officer Rittorno's hand in an attempt to compel her to touch him inappropriately, attempting to kiss her, grabbing her hand and making statements to her which made her fearful that Respondent intended to commit a battery, and making statements to her, including but not limited to, "[d]o I get to sniff your seat too?" which made Officer Rittorno offended and embarrassed during times in which she was interacting with Respondent in his official capacity as a judge, in order for Officer Rittorno or her colleagues to obtain judicial authorization for search warrants, in violation of Rule 8.4(d) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010).

## COUNT II

(Assault and Sexual Harassment of Court Reporter Carolina Schultz)

16. At all times of the alleged acts in this complaint, there was in effect a criminal statute in Illinois, 720 ILCS 5/12-1, which provides, "Assault. (a) A person commits an assault when, without lawful authority, that person engages in conduct which places another in reasonable apprehension of receiving a battery."

17. In 2011, Respondent presided over a courtroom in the domestic violence courtroom in the Cook County Courthouse located at 555 West Harrison Street in Chicago (the "Harrison Street Courthouse").

18. As of Spring of 2011, Carolina Schultz, a Cook County Official Court Reporter who regularly worked at the Harrison Street Courthouse, was in the Harrison Street Courthouse for a professional assignment. Ms. Schultz had been introduced to Respondent and knew who he was but had no personal relationship with him.

19. In the spring of 2011, Respondent and Schultz were riding alone in an elevator together at the Harrison Street Courthouse when Respondent moved in close proximity to Schultz and, in a sexually suggestive manner, asked Schultz "how much money" she wanted to have sex

with him. Schultz moved away from Respondent and laughed in an attempt to defuse the situation. Respondent then said he was “not joking,” and asked her a second time “how much” it would take. Schultz refused to answer Respondent’s question and exited the elevator as quickly as she was able.

20. A few weeks after the incident referenced in paragraph 19 above, in Summer 2011, Schultz found herself alone with Respondent on an elevator on a second occasion. Respondent again moved near Schultz, asked her if she had thought about his previous request and “how much money” she wanted to have sex with him. Schultz did not respond but became alarmed because his remarks confirmed to her that the first incident was not an isolated instance of a poor joke, and that Respondent was serious. Schultz moved away from Respondent and told him that she had a boyfriend, to which Respondent replied that her relationship status did “not matter.” Schultz then remarked to Respondent that she knew him to be married, to which Respondent answered, “It’s OK.” Schultz refused to respond to Respondent further and exited the elevator at her first opportunity.

21. Schultz was distressed and traumatized by the incidents referred to in paragraphs 19 and 20 above but did not make any formal report about Respondent’s conduct because she knew Respondent was a sitting judge and she was concerned about possible negative ramifications to her career. After the second incident with Respondent, whenever possible Schultz took the stairs instead of the elevator at the Harrison Street courthouse. Whenever she was required to take an elevator due to carrying her court reporting equipment, Schultz would wait until other people were taking the elevator as well, in an effort to ensure that she would never be alone on an elevator. Schultz also avoided the second floor where Respondent’s courtroom was located, even though that was where the break room she had previously frequented was located. Finally, a few months

later, Schultz requested a transfer from the Harrison Street courthouse to the Daley Center because she found worrying about encountering Respondent to be too stressful.

22. As a result of the conduct set forth 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 but not limited to moving close to Schultz and making statements to her which made Schultz fearful that Respondent intended to commit a battery, in violation of Rule 8.4(b) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010), by committing assault, in violation of 720 ILCS 5/12-1; and,
- b. conduct that is prejudicial to the administration of justice, by conduct including, but not limited to moving close to Schultz and making statements to her which made Schultz fearful that Respondent intended to commit a battery, during times in which Respondent was a sitting judge and Schultz was a court reporter assigned to the same courthouse as Respondent, in violation of Rule 8.4(d) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010).

### COUNT III

(Sexual Harassment of Assistant State's Attorney Nina Ricci)

23. Between 1990 and 1993, Respondent attended the Loyola University Chicago School of Law, where one of his classmates was Nina Ricci. During their time at the Loyola School of Law, Respondent and Ricci were acquainted with each other, and occasionally participated in social events at the same time, but they were not friends.

24. At one point during one of these social events with a large group of their fellow law students, Ricci was playing pool and Respondent approached her and whispered in her ear that he wanted to, or was going to, leave the bar with her, and then described a sexual act which he intended to perform on her. Ricci did not reply to Respondent's remark, did not leave the bar with him and had no further contact with him at that time.

25. In January 1998, Ricci was hired as an Assistant State's Attorney, and has held that position to the present.

26. As of September 11, 2018, Respondent was assigned to the Daley Center courtroom of a judge who recently retired.

27. Prior to September 11, 2018, Ricci had never formally appeared before Respondent in any matter. On or about September 11, 2018, Ricci appeared before Respondent together with Assistant State's Attorney Joseph Hodol on behalf of the People of the State of Illinois on a motion in a case in which the defendant was charged with first degree murder. Interactions between Ricci and Respondent at the court appearance were respectful and courteous. Ricci and Hodol left the courtroom, and Hodol remarked to Ricci that Respondent had seemed to know her and been surprised to see her. Ricci told Hodol that she knew Respondent from law school and that he had made a crude comment of a sexual nature to her at that time.

28. On September 11, 2018, immediately after Ricci left the courtroom, Respondent spoke angrily to his clerk and was overheard by Assistant State's Attorney, Christina Kye. Respondent told his clerk that "She [Ricci] acted like she didn't even know me, she didn't congratulate me or anything." Kye understood Respondent's statement to mean that Respondent had expected Ricci to be congratulated for his promotion to a new courtroom.

29. On September 11, 2018, following the above events, Assistant State's Attorney Akash Vyas went to Respondent's courtroom to obtain an authorization on a consensual overhear. Respondent met with Vyas into his chambers. In an agitated and frustrated tone, Respondent spoke to Vyas, saying "You would think that if you went to law school with someone, they would say 'hi' to you." Respondent did not name Ricci but referred to the lawyer as "a bitch." When Vyas

remarked that perhaps the lawyer had not recognized him, Respondent cut him off and said, “My law school class was only 50 people.” They then discussed the consensual overheard and Respondent signed some documents. Respondent then said, “Maybe it’s because I didn’t have sex with her.” Respondent paused and then said, “Or maybe it’s because I did have sex with her.” Vyas then left Respondent’s chambers.

30. Later that same day, Assistant State’s Attorney Vyas, Kye, and Hodal discussed Respondent’s demeanor and comments and they realized that Respondent’s comments made to Vyas referred to Ricci. Vyas then reported the incident to the State’s Attorney’s Office Chief and Deputy Chief of Prosecutions.

31. Hodal reported the comments Respondent made about Ricci and expressed concerns that Respondent might have a bias against her. Ricci was embarrassed and concerned that she might not receive a fair hearing by Respondent and met with her supervisor to seek guidance. Pursuant to the direction of her supervisor, Ricci subsequently filed a motion for a substitution of judge in the matter for which she had initially appeared before Respondent.

32. The events referenced in paragraphs 28 through 30 above received public and media attention and contributed further to Ricci’s embarrassment.

33. As a result of the conduct set forth above, Respondent has engaged in the following misconduct:



# **Exhibit 2**

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

In the Matter of:

**MAURICIO BORIS ANDRES ARAUJO,**

Attorney-Respondent,

No. 6215707.

Commission No. 2022PR00026

**ORDER**

The Chair having considered the Administrator's Motion To Deem All Allegations And Disciplinary Charges Of The Complaint Admitted Pursuant To Commission Rule 236 and the Administrator's Motion To Motion To [sic] Bar Respondent From Presenting Any Witnesses At The Hearing and Respondent having filed no response to the Motions,

**IT IS ORDERED:**

1. The Administrator's motion to deem all allegations and disciplinary charges of the complaint admitted pursuant to Commission Rule 236 is granted;
2. The allegations of the Complaint are deemed admitted. No further proof of the allegations of the Complaint is required;
3. The Administrator's motion to bar Respondent from presenting any witnesses at the hearing is granted; and
4. Respondent is barred from presenting any witnesses at hearing. The evidence at the hearing is limited to factors in aggravation and mitigation.

**FILED**

July 21, 2022

**ARDC CLERK**

**CERTIFICATION**

I, Michelle M. Thome, Clerk of the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission of the Supreme Court of Illinois and keeper of the records, certify that the foregoing is a true copy of the order, approved by the Hearing Board Chair, entered in the above entitled cause of record filed in my office on July 21, 2022.

/s/ Michelle M. Thome

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Michelle M. Thome,  
Clerk of the Attorney Registration and  
Disciplinary Commission of the  
Supreme Court of Illinois

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**PROOF OF SERVICE**

I, Andrea L. Watson, hereby certify that I served a copy of this Order on the Attorney-Respondent listed at the e-mail addresses shown below on July 21, 2022, at or before 5:00 p.m. At the same time, a copy of this Order was sent to Counsel for the Administrator by e-mail service.

Mauricio Boris Andres Araujo  
Attorney-Respondent  
mauricio.araujo@cookcountyil.gov  
2022PR00026@gmail.com

Under penalties as provided by law pursuant to Section 1-109 of the Code of Civil Procedure, the undersigned certifies that the statements set forth in this instrument are true and correct, except as to matters therein stated to be on information and belief and as to such matters the undersigned certifies as aforesaid that she verily believes the same to be true.

/s/ Andrea L. Watson

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Andrea L. Watson

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# **Exhibit 3**

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

FILED  
5/18/2022 8:14 AM  
ARDC Clerk

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In the Matter of:

MAURICIO BORIS ANDRES ARAUJO,  
  
Attorney-Respondent,  
  
No. 6215707.

Commission No. 2022PR00026

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AFFIDAVIT OF AGREED SERVICE  
PURSUANT TO COMMISSION RULE 214(c)

1. I, Michael R. Hall, an agent of the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission who is over the age of 18, on oath state that per the agreement of the parties, I served a copy of the Complaint, Notice of Complaint, Order Appointing the Chairperson, a memorandum of the filing procedures and a copy of the Commission Rules (Complaint Packet), in the above-captioned matter, on Respondent, via email to mauricio.araujo.com, on May 17, 2022 at approximately 11:16 a.m..

2. After an exchange of emails with Mary Robinson, who represented Respondent during the investigation of this matter, I was told on May 12, 2022 at approximately 5:32 p.m., that she would not be representing Respondent, but that he would be willing to accept email service at his email address of Mauricio.araujo@gmail.com.

3. On May 13, 2022, at approximately 10:38 a.m., I emailed Mr. Araujo at the provided email address and asked him if he would confirm that he was willing to accept service in this manner.

4. On May 16, 2022, at approximately 5:46 p.m., I sent a follow-up email to Respondent to see if he would accept email service.

5. On May 16, 2022, beginning at approximately 6:46 p.m., Respondent sent three

emails saying he would accept email service and asking for some additional information. I opened those emails beginning at approximately 8:50 a.m., on May 17, 2022.

6. Finally, on May 17, 2022, at approximately 11:16 a.m., I sent the Complaint Packet via email to Mauricio.araujo@gmail.com, thus completing service.

5. Under penalties as provided by law, pursuant to Section 1-109 of the Code of Civil Procedure, the undersigned certifies that the statements set forth in this instrument are true and correct, except as to matters therein stated to be on information and belief and as to such matters the undersigned certifies as aforesaid that he verily believes the same to be true.

/s/ Michael R. Hall  
Michael R. Hall

Dated: May 17, 2022