

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

In the Matter of:

SARAH BASHIR VIRANI,

Attorney-Respondent,

No. 6324798.

Commission No. 2024PR00082

COMPLAINT

Lea S. Gutierrez, Administrator of the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission, by her attorney, Matthew D. Lango, pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 753(b), complains of Respondent, Sarah Bashir Virani, who was licensed to practice law in Illinois on November 10, 2016, and alleges that Respondent engaged in the following conduct which subjects Respondent to discipline pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 770:

COUNT I

(Dishonesty – Theft and Attempted Unauthorized Use of a Coworker’s Credit Card)

1. Beginning in or about April 2022, Respondent was hired as a contract attorney at the law firm in Chicago. On or about May 1, 2022, Respondent became an associate attorney at the firm, working in the firm’s real estate and corporate practice groups.

2. On Friday, April 21, 2023, another associate attorney at the firm, E.O., left her cell phone unattended in her office while she attended a firm meeting. Her phone case had a pocket attached which contained a credit card belonging to E.O.

3. On April 21, 2023, while E.O. was in the meeting, Respondent entered her office and took her credit card from her phone case. Respondent did so without E.O.’s knowledge or authorization.

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4. Respondent then took E.O.'s credit card to a 7-Eleven convenience store near the firm's office and attempted to purchase gift cards. That purchase was flagged as potentially fraudulent and was declined. Respondent then attempted to make various on-line purchases using E.O.'s credit card from Target and other retailers. Those attempted purchases were also declined.

5. Respondent knew that she was not authorized to take or use E.O.'s credit card, and when she attempted to do so, she did so dishonestly.

6. On April 21, 2023, upon returning to her desk from the firm meeting, E.O. discovered numerous fraud alert contacts on her phone, where the credit card provider alerted her to attempted purchases on her credit card while she was away from her office, including the attempted purchases at 7-Eleven and the online purchases described above. E.O. declined all charges as unauthorized and examined her phone case to discover that her credit card was missing.

7. E.O. later determined that she had not lost or misplaced her credit card and that someone must have taken it from her office. On Monday, April 24, 2023, E.O. reported the incident to a partner at the firm.

8. Following E.O.'s report that her credit card had been stolen in the office, other attorneys and staff at the firm quickly learned of the theft. Upon hearing the news, on or about April 23, 2023, Respondent then falsely reported to a firm partner that her own credit card had been stolen as well.

9. On April 27, 2023, another attorney from the firm filed a police report with the Chicago Police Department concerning the theft of E.O.'s credit card and the alleged theft of Respondent's credit card.

10. On or about May 2, 2023, a Chicago Police Department detective went to the 7-Eleven store to investigate. At that time, the detective obtained a surveillance video from April

21, 2023, showing Respondent attempting to use E.O.'s credit card to purchase gift cards. The detective then went to the firm's office and provided a copy of the surveillance video to a partner at the firm.

11. In the afternoon of May 2, 2023, members of the firm confronted Respondent with the surveillance video. Respondent initially denied that it was her in the video, and when showed a later segment of the surveillance video, did not deny it was her but said she had never been in that 7-Eleven store. When asked again, Respondent again stated she had never been in that 7-Eleven store and had no explanation for the images in the surveillance video.

12. Respondent's statements to firm partners on May 2, 2023, were false and Respondent knew they were false at the time she made them. The firm then terminated Respondent's employment.

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

- a. conduct including dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation, by conduct including taking E.O.'s credit card without her knowledge or consent and attempting to make purchases with it; falsely telling partners at her law firm that her credit had been stolen; and denying to partners at her law firm that she attempted to make purchases with E.O.'s credit card, in violation of Rule 8.4(c) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010).

WHEREFORE, the Administrator respectfully 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/ Matthew D. Lango
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