

**FORMAL COMPLAINT**

Christine S. Orlando, Esquire, Presenter  
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(856) 317-7100

SUPREME COURT OF NEW JERSEY  
District IV Ethics Committee  
Docket Nos.: IV-2014-017

DISTRICT IV ETHICS COMMITTEE,	:	
	:	
Complaint	:	
	:	
v.	:	Disciplinary Action
	:	Complaint
ADAM LUKE BRENT,	:	
	:	
Respondent	:	

District IV Ethics Committee by way of complaint against Respondent, says:

**GENERAL ALLEGATIONS**

1. Adam Brent (Respondent) was admitted to the Bar of this State in 2003.
2. Respondent maintains law offices at 120 North 8th Street, Vineland, New Jersey, 08322.
3. By Order of the Supreme Court of New Jersey, dated October 30, 2013, effective November 4, 2013, Respondent was administratively ineligible to practice law, pursuant to Rule 1:28A, for failure to comply with the IOLTA program.
4. Respondent was reinstated to the active list and eligible to practice law on January 30, 2014.

**FIRST COUNT**  
(Barbara Emmons)

5. In November 2013, Respondent was retained by Barbara Emmons (hereinafter "Emmons") of 2654 Ford Avenue, West Deptford, New Jersey, to represent her in a domestic violence action in which she faced criminal charges for assault arising out of an altercation with her adult daughter who resides with her.

6. Emmons also retained Respondent in November 2013 to represent her in an ejectment matter to remove her daughter from her home.

7. Respondent failed to provide Emmons with a retainer agreement or other writing confirming the terms of the representation.

8. During the initial meeting, Respondent made statements to Emmons, including claims that Emmons and Respondent could "retire badges" with her case.

9. Respondent's statements led Emmons to believe that Respondent could do more than defend her against the assault charges and to have unrealistic expectations concerning the outcome of her domestic violence matter.

10. Respondent failed to communicate with Emmons, failed to respond to her requests for status reports and failed to provide documents requested by Emmons, such as discovery obtained from the prosecutor.

11. Respondent failed to appear for a December 17, 2013, court hearing and refused to respond to Emmons' text messages and phone calls on the date of the hearing.

12. Respondent never advised Emmons that he believed that his representation of her may result in a violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct because he was appointed as a full time municipal court prosecutor in Franklin Township, which is in Gloucester County, where Emmons charges were pending in another municipality.

13. Respondent sent another attorney to appear at the hearing and defend the charges, but Respondent did not provide any notice to Emmons.

14. Respondent neglected the ejectment matter and failed to take action in a prompt and diligent manner, such as filing a lawsuit to initiate the ejectment process.

15. Respondent misrepresented to Emmons that a complaint was filed and her daughter would be served with ejectment papers shortly.

16. Respondent never filed any complaint or other proceeding in any court to eject Emmons' daughter.

17. Respondent failed to communicate with Emmons with respect to the ejectment matter, failed to respond to her requests for status reports, and failed to respond to her requests documents relevant to her case.

18. Respondent failed to notify Emmons that he believed an ethical violation prohibited him from representing her in the ejectment matter.

19. Respondent failed to withdraw as counsel, did not allow Emmons the opportunity to retain substitute counsel, refused to return the advance retainer from Emmons and refused to return Emmons' file at her request.

20. Respondent ceased all communications with Emmons when the alleged conflict arose.

21. Respondent was ineligible to practice law as the result of an administrative suspension for his failure to comply with the IOLTA requirements during the entirety of his representation of Emmons.

22. In July 2014, the District IV Ethics Committee opened an investigation of Respondent arising from a grievance filed by Emmons.

23. During the investigation conducted by the District Ethics Committee, Respondent was asked to provide documents and engage in an interview on two separate occasions.

24. Respondent failed to comply with the requests of the Investigator and did not provide any documents as requested or participate in an interview.

25. Respondent's failure to provide Emmons with a retainer agreement or other writing confirming the representation is a violation of RPC 1.5.

26. Respondent's statements, which led to Emmons to believe that Respondent could attain greater results than expected, constitute a violation RPC 7.1(a)(2).

27. Respondent did not keep Emmons adequately informed and his failure to communicate with Emmons despite her numerous attempts and

failure to Emmons with status reports and documents at her request violates RPC 1.4.

28. Respondent did not act diligently or promptly in representing Emmons in the ejectment matter in violation of RPC 1.3.

29. Respondent was deceitful and made misrepresentations concerning the filing of an alleged complaint, which was never filed, in violation of RPC 8.4.

30. Respondent ignored Emmons throughout the duration of the attorney-client relationship and failed to perform work on her matters as directed and required in violation of RPC 1.1(a).

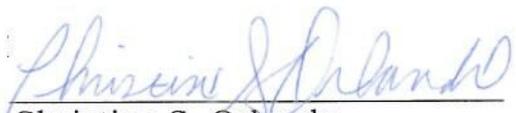
31. Respondent failed to withdraw as counsel when he believed it may lead to an ethical violation, failed to secure substitute counsel and failed to return Emmons' retainer and file in violation of RPC 1.16(a)(1) & (d).

32. Respondent engaged in the unauthorized practice of law while he was ineligible as the result of his failure to comply with the IOLTA mandates in violation of RPC 5.5.

33. Respondent's failure to comply with the Investigation conducted by the District Ethics Committee constitutes a violation of RPC 8.1(b).

**WHEREFORE**, Respondent should be disciplined.

DISTRICT IV ETHICS COMMITTEE

By:   
Christine S. Orlando,  
Investigator

DATED: January 7, 2015