

Book

DISCIPLINARY REVIEW BOARD
OF THE
SUPREME COURT OF NEW JERSEY

LEE M. HYMERLING, ESQ., CHAIR
MICHAEL R. COLE, ESQ., VICE-CHAIR
MATTHEW P. BOYLAN, ESQ.
HON. WARREN BRODY
RUTH JEAN LOLLA
MARY J. MAUDSLEY, ESQ.
ROCKY L. PETERSON, ESQ.
BARBARA F. SCHWARTZ
SPENCER V. WISSINGER, III



RICHARD J. HUGHES JUSTICE COMPLEX
P. O. Box 962
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625-0962
(609) 292-1011

ROBYN M. HILL
CHIEF COUNSEL

ISABEL FRANK
DEPUTY CHIEF COUNSEL

LILLIAN LEWIN
DONA S. SEROTA-TESCHNER
COLIN T. TAMS
ELLEN A. BRODSKY
JOANN G. EYLER
ASSISTANT COUNSEL

June 17, 1999

Certified Mail - R.R.R. and Regular Mail

Craig A. Altman, Esq.
1173 E. Landis Ave. - Front
Suite 103
Vineland, New Jersey 08360

Re: In the Matter of Craig A. Altman
Docket No. DRB 99-133
LETTER OF ADMONITION

Dear Mr. Altman:

The Disciplinary Review Board has reviewed your conduct in the above matter and has concluded that it was improper. Specifically, in the course of your representation of Dahena Hasankolli, you sent or caused to be sent a "letter of protection" to Vineland Anesthesia Consultants, who had rendered anesthesia services to your client. The letter advised the medical provider that your client's medical bills would be paid out of anticipated settlement proceeds. On April 26, 1996, your office received a settlement check in the matter. Vineland Anesthesia Consultants' bill, however, was not paid. Although there is no clear and convincing evidence that you were aware at the time that such bill was due and owing or that it had not been paid, on June 5, 1997 the attorney for Vineland Anesthesia Consultants called you to inform you that the bill remained unpaid and to remind you of the terms of the "letter of protection". You indicated to the attorney that you would look for the file and that, if a "letter of protection" had, in fact, been sent, you would see to the payment of the bill. Notwithstanding two subsequent communications by that attorney to you — a facsimile and a phone call — and notwithstanding that you then reviewed the Hasankolli file, you did not provide for the payment of the bill. Like the District Ethics Committee, the Board found that your failure to pay the bill, despite your knowledge from June through September 1997 that it was outstanding, constituted a violation of RPC 1.15(b).

I/M/O Craig A. Altman

Page 2

Your conduct adversely reflected not only upon you as an attorney, but also upon all members of the bar. Accordingly, the Board has directed the issuance of this admonition to you. R. 1:20-15 (f) (4).

A permanent record of this occurrence has been filed with the Clerk of the Supreme Court and the Board's office. Should you become the subject of any further discipline, it will be taken into consideration.

The Board has also directed that the costs of the disciplinary proceedings be assessed against you. An affidavit of costs will be forwarded under separate cover.

Very truly yours,

By 
Robyn M. Hill

RMH:ms

c. Chief Justice Deborah T. Poritz
Associate Justices
Stephen W. Townsend, Clerk
Supreme Court of New Jersey
Lee M. Hymerling, Chair
Disciplinary Review Board
David E. Johnson, Jr., Director
Office of Attorney Ethics.
Michael Fusco, Chair
District I Ethics Committee
Frank Corrado, Secretary
District I Ethics Committee
Scott M. Goldberg, Esq., Respondent's Counsel
Vineland Anesthesia Consultants, Grievant