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SUPREME COURT OF NEW JERSEY

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December 21, 2001

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

Stephen Schnitzer, Esq.

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Re: In the Matter of Stephen Schnitzer
Docket No. DRB 01-392
LETTER OF ADMONITION

Dear Mr. Schnitzer:

The Disciplinary Review Board has reviewed your conduct in the above matter and has concluded that it was improper. Specifically, on or about November 2, 1995, at a time when you were the attorney for Ruth Matis, you prepared and had Ms. Matis execute a second mortgage on her house to secure the payment of your legal fees of \$16,000 and all subsequent billed fees and charges. You failed to comply with the requirements of *RPC* 1.8(a), in that you failed to explain to Ms. Matis, in writing, the terms of the transaction; did not advise her of the desirability of obtaining the advice of independent counsel; and did not obtain Ms. Matis' written consent to the representation, in writing. Your conduct was unethical and in violation of *RPC* 1.8(a).

In imposing only an admonition, the Board considered your belief that the instrument of the mortgage itself was sufficient to satisfy the requirements of the rule.

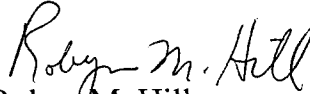
Your conduct adversely reflected not only upon you as an attorney, but also upon all members of the bar. Accordingly, the Board has directed the issuance of this admonition to you. *R.* 1:20-15(f)(4).

I/M/O Stephen Schnitzer
DRB 01-392

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,


Robyn M. Hill

RMH:ms

- c. Chief Justice Deborah T. Poritz
- Associate Justices
- Stephen W. Townsend, Clerk, Supreme Court of New Jersey
- Rocky L. Peterson, Chair, Disciplinary Review Board
- David E. Johnson, Jr., Director, Office of Attorney Ethics
- Lisa Taylor, Chair, District VC Ethics Committee
- Philip McGovern, Secretary, District VC Ethics Committee
- Peter Matis, Grievant