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SUPREME COURT OF NEW JERSEY

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September 27, 2021

VIA CERTIFIED MAIL, REGULAR MAIL, & E-MAIL

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Re: In the Matter of Thomas Evans Seeley
Docket No. DRB 21-106
District Docket No. I-2019-0003E
LETTER OF ADMONITION

Dear Mr. Seeley:

The Disciplinary Review Board has reviewed your conduct in the above-referenced matter and has concluded that it was improper. Following a review of the record, the Board determined to impose an admonition for your violation of RPC 1.6(a) (a lawyer shall not reveal information relating to the representation of a client unless authorized to do so).

Specifically, you represented Joaquin Barreto, a commercial landlord, in a business dispute with a neighboring tenant, who had alleged that Mr. Barreto had improperly opened a competing storefront. Thereafter, the tenant instituted a civil action against Mr. Barreto, which prompted the parties to begin settlement discussions regarding the tenant's purchase of the storefront.

On December 13, 2017, Mr. Barreto sent you, via e-mail, a proposed counteroffer to the tenant's settlement proposal to purchase the storefront. In his e-mail, Mr. Barreto sought your legal advice and noted the competition the tenant would face if he refused the counteroffer. On December 14, 2017, without replying to Mr. Barreto or obtaining his consent, you forwarded his e-mail to the tenant's counsel, redacting only the portion of the e-mail asking for your advice.

The Board found that you violated RPC 1.6(a) by carelessly disclosing Mr. Barreto's privileged e-mail, without his permission, to the tenant's counsel, which you were not expressly or impliedly authorized to disclose without Mr. Barreto's consent.

In imposing only an admonition, the Board considered, in mitigation, your lack of additional ethics infractions; your admission of wrongdoing; your lack of malicious intent in disclosing Mr. Barreto's e-mail to the tenant's counsel; and your lack of prior discipline in twenty-one years at the bar.

Your conduct has adversely reflected not only on you as an attorney but also on 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, this admonition will be taken into consideration.

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

Very truly yours,



Johanna Barba Jones
Chief Counsel

JBj/trj

c: Chief Justice Stuart Rabner
Associate Justices
Heather Joy Baker, Clerk
Supreme Court of New Jersey
Hon. Maurice J. Gallipoli, A.J.S.C. (Ret.), Chair
Disciplinary Review Board (e-mail)
Gail G. Haney, Deputy Clerk
Supreme Court of New Jersey (w/ethics history)
Charles Centinaro, Director
Office of Attorney Ethics (interoffice mail and e-mail)
Isabel McGinty, Statewide Ethics Coordinator
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Matthew W. Ritter, Chair
District I Ethics Committee (e-mail)
Christopher C. Fallon, III, Secretary
District I Ethics Committee (regular mail and e-mail)
Van Lee McPherson, III, Presenter
District I Ethics Committee (regular mail and e-mail)
Joaquin Barreto, Grievant (regular mail)