Supreme Court of New Jersey Disciplinary Review Board Docket No. DRB 21-230 District Docket No. IV-2019-0038E

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In the Matter of

David S. Bradley

An Attorney at Law

Decision

Argued: January 20, 2022

Decided: April 19, 2022

Anne T. Picker appeared on behalf of the District IV Ethics Committee.

Respondent appeared  $\underline{pro}$   $\underline{se}$ .

To the Honorable Chief Justice and Associate Justices of the Supreme Court of New Jersey.

This matter previously was before us on a recommendation for an admonition filed by the District IV Ethics Committee (the DEC). On October 21, 2021, we determined to treat the admonition as a recommendation for greater discipline, pursuant to  $\underline{R}$ . 1:20-15(f)(4), and to bring the matter on for oral

argument.

The formal ethics complaint charged respondent with having violated RPC 1.4(c) (failure to explain a matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions regarding the representation); RPC 3.3(a)(5) (failure to disclose to a tribunal a material fact knowing that the omission is reasonably certain to mislead the tribunal); RPC 8.4(c) (conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation); and RPC 8.4(d) (conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice).

For the reasons set forth below, we determine to impose a censure.

Respondent earned admission to the New Jersey bar in 2003 and to the Pennsylvania bar in 2002. He has no prior discipline in New Jersey. At the relevant times, he maintained a practice of law in Cherry Hill, New Jersey.

The facts of this case are largely undisputed. In 2017, Edward Coyle retained respondent to defend him in two separate incidents of driving while intoxicated (DWI), the first of which occurred on March 26, 2017, in Stratford Borough, and the second of which occurred on May 12, 2017, in Berlin Borough. Respondent requested discovery and several continuances in both matters to prepare for trial.

To accommodate the availability of an expert witness, the Berlin municipal court scheduled Coyle's trial for the morning of December 18, 2017.

To address discovery issues, the Stratford municipal court scheduled a status conference in Coyle's matter for the afternoon of December 18, 2017.

On the morning of December 18, 2017, respondent and Coyle appeared in the Berlin municipal court, where Coyle entered a guilty plea to DWI, as a first offender. Thereafter, the Berlin municipal court sentenced Coyle as a first offender, imposed the mandatory minimum penalties, and advised Coyle regarding the enhanced penalties for a subsequent DWI conviction.

On the same date, in the afternoon, respondent and Coyle appeared in the Stratford municipal court, where Coyle, again, entered a guilty plea to DWI based on the prosecutor's recommendation that the court sentence Coyle as a first offender. Coyle's driver's abstract had not yet been updated to reflect his Berlin DWI conviction from that same morning and, thus, neither the Stratford municipal court nor the prosecutor were aware of Coyle's prior conviction. Coyle provided the court with a factual basis for his plea, and the court, upon examining Coyle's driver's abstract, asked respondent whether Coyle was a first-time offender. Respondent then replied, "I looked at the [driver's] abstract. It was just run today, Judge. There are no priors." The court, in response, noted that "it does look like . . . a first [offense]" and sentenced Coyle to the mandatory minimum penalties for a first-time DWI offender. Although respondent knew that Coyle's driver's abstract had not yet been updated to reflect that morning's

conviction in Berlin, he never came forward to the Stratford municipal court or to the prosecutor to correct his misrepresentation. Unsurprisingly, had the Stratford prosecutor been aware of Coyle's Berlin conviction, she would not have recommended that the court impose the minimum penalties for a first offense.

Following his appearance in the Stratford municipal court, respondent discussed with Coyle the fact that, despite the fact that he was twice sentenced as a first offender, the Motor Vehicle Commission (MVC) may, nevertheless, treat Coyle as if he had been sentenced as a second offender and impose a license suspension greater than that imposed by the Stratford municipal court.<sup>2</sup> See N.J.S.A. 39:5-30 (vesting the MVC director with the authority to suspend or revoke driving privileges for any motor vehicle offense after written notice). Respondent also explained to Coyle that, if he received an additional DWI conviction, he would be treated as a third offender. Further, at some point earlier in the representation, respondent had discussed with Coyle the penalties he faced

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> According to the DEC presenter, this matter "came to the attention of the Camden County Prosecutor's Office" during "another situation" involving Coyle, after respondent's representation had concluded.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Because respondent, allegedly, did not plan for the Stratford municipal court to sentence Coyle as a first offender, respondent did not discuss with Coyle, prior to the hearing in Stratford, the possibility that the MVC may impose greater penalties than those imposed by the court.

as both a first and second-time DWI offender, as well as the enhanced penalties he could face for subsequent DWI convictions.

At the ethics hearing, in his answer to the formal ethics complaint, and at oral argument before us, respondent claimed that he was unaware, at the time of Coyle's court appearances, that his tactic was unethical. Specifically, respondent believed that he had no responsibility to provide the Stratford municipal court or prosecutor with information detrimental to Coyle, even when it would impact a mandatory sentence, based on the principles in State v. Kane, 2015 N.J. Super. Unpub. LEXIS 277 (App. Div. Feb. 17, 2015). Respondent also expressed his unsupported belief that not only was the municipal court required to solely rely on Coyle's driver's abstract, regardless of his independent knowledge of Coyle's prior conviction, but also that the municipal court should have instead questioned the prosecutor regarding Coyle's offense history. Incredibly, respondent also rationalized that he would have been found "ineffective" for disclosing Coyle's prior conviction from that same morning.

As detailed below, based on respondent's assertions at oral argument and to the DEC, we find that respondent has failed to appreciate his duty of candor

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> As explained in greater detail below, in <u>Kane</u>, the Appellate Division rejected the State's argument that a defense attorney was ethically obligated to inform the municipal court and prosecutor that his client's conduct could have subjected him to criminal liability under a newly enacted statute.

to the court. Indeed, at oral argument, rather than express sincere remorse or contrition or emphasize his commitment, going forward, to refrain from dishonesty, he merely noted that he "could have" been more candid with the municipal court regarding Coyle's offense history. Despite his continuing failure to understand his duty of candor, respondent admitted that he had "deceiv[ed]" the municipal court and prosecutor into believing that Coyle was a first offender, in violation of RPC 3.3(a)(5), RPC 8.4(c), and RPC 8.4(d).

Respondent, however, denied that he violated <u>RPC</u> 1.4(c) by failing to discuss with Coyle the risks inherent in being sentenced twice as a first offender. Respondent stated that he did not plan to have Coyle sentenced twice as a first offender but, after it occurred, he explained to Coyle that the MVC may, nevertheless, treat Coyle as a second offender. Additionally, he asserted that he had explained to Coyle the penalties Coyle faced as a first and second-time offender before his court appearances.

At oral argument, the DEC presenter urged us to sustain all charges of unethical conduct and to impose a reprimand, noting that respondent's misconduct squarely violated his duty of candor, which obligation the Court addressed in its opinion in <u>In re Seelig</u>, 180 N.J. 234 (2004).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> As explained in greater detail below, in <u>Seelig</u>, the Court stated that the <u>RPCs</u> prohibit "misrepresentation as a permissible litigation tactic, even when carried out in the name of zealous representation." <u>Seelig</u>, 180 N.J. at 250.

The DEC hearing panel found that respondent violated <u>RPC</u> 3.3(a)(5) by misrepresenting to the Stratford municipal court that Coyle had no prior DWI convictions based on a driver's abstract respondent knew to be inaccurate, considering Coyle's conviction, in Berlin municipal court, that very morning. The DEC emphasized that no one in the Stratford municipal courtroom, other than respondent and Coyle, knew of Coyle's prior conviction, and, by failing to disclose that information, respondent misled the court, resulting in the imposition of an improper sentence.

Similarly, the DEC found that respondent violated <u>RPC</u> 8.4(c), considering his admission that he "deceiv[ed]" the Stratford municipal court and prosecutor by failing to disclose Coyle's Berlin conviction. In addition, because respondent's failure to disclose the Berlin conviction directly resulted in Coyle receiving an improper sentence as a first-time DWI offender in Stratford, the DEC found that respondent's conduct, likewise, violated <u>RPC</u> 8.4(d).

Finally, the DEC did not find, by clear and convincing evidence, that respondent violated RPC 1.4(c) by failing to advise Coyle of the consequences of his strategy to have him sentenced twice as a first-time offender, as alleged in the complaint. The DEC first noted that respondent did not appear to have a premeditated strategy to mislead the Stratford municipal court into sentencing Coyle as a first-time offender. Second, the DEC found that, following the

hearing in Stratford, respondent had spoken with Coyle and explained that he was, in fact, a second DWI offender, notwithstanding the court's sentence.

In recommending only an admonition, the DEC found no aggravating factors and cited several mitigating factors, including respondent's lack of prior discipline; his good reputation and character; his admission of his misconduct; his exemplary conduct since his transgression; and the isolated nature of this incident, which it found was unlikely to recur. The DEC also emphasized that respondent appeared to have operated under a good faith, albeit incorrect, understanding of his role as a criminal defense attorney to serve as a zealous advocate, notwithstanding his duty of candor to the court.

Following a <u>de novo</u> review of the record, we are satisfied that the DEC's finding that respondent's conduct was unethical is fully supported by clear and convincing evidence.

Respondent affirmatively misrepresented to the Stratford municipal court that Coyle had no prior DWI convictions, despite having represented Coyle, mere hours beforehand, for his first conviction and sentencing in Berlin. Although respondent knew that Coyle's driver's abstract had not yet been updated to reflect the Berlin conviction, respondent failed to correct the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Respondent has submitted two character letters from his colleagues attesting to his reputation and integrity.

Stratford court's misimpression of Coyle's offense history. Instead, respondent lied to the Stratford court regarding the abstract's accuracy and arguably bolstered its reliability by indicating that it "was just run today."

Respondent initially claimed to believe that, at the time he appeared before the Stratford court, it was not his responsibility to inform the court or the prosecutor of Coyle's earlier conviction from that morning, based on State v. Kane, 2015 N.J. Super. Unpub. LEXIS 277 (App. Div. Feb. 17, 2015). In that unpublished criminal decision, the defendant, represented by counsel, pleaded guilty to driving with a suspended license, a motor vehicle offense. The defendant's plea was advantageous because the defendant's conduct also violated N.J.S.A. 2C:40-26(b), a fourth-degree criminal offense that prohibits driving with a suspended license due to a second or subsequent DWI conviction. On appeal, the State argued, among other things, that the defendant's attorney had violated RPC 3.3(a)(5) by failing to advise the municipal court and prosecutor of the applicability of N.J.S.A. 2C:40-26(b) to the defendant's conduct. The Appellate Division rejected the State's argument that the defendant's attorney had acted unethically, finding that it was the municipal prosecutor's responsibility to be aware of the statute's potential applicability, even if the statute was recently enacted.

The facts in <u>Kane</u> are not on all fours with respondent's case. <u>Kane</u> concerned a municipal prosecutor who was unaware, but reasonably should have known, of the applicability of a recently enacted statute. The <u>Kane</u> holding is, therefore, related to an attorney's constructive knowledge of legal facts. It is, therefore, inapplicable to our determination of respondent's actual knowledge and candor, in the instant matter, regarding material and operative facts concerning his own client – facts that had occurred earlier the same day. Also, <u>Kane</u> is an unpublished opinion without precedential value.

Respondent's actual knowledge that the driving abstract was inaccurate created a clear duty of candor to correct that misimpression for the benefit of the tribunal. Respondent was the only person in the Stratford municipal courtroom, other than Coyle, who knew that Coyle had sustained his first DWI conviction that morning. Respondent, thus, was required to disclose that material fact to the Stratford court to avoid misleading the tribunal into imposing an improper sentence.

In <u>In re Seelig</u>, 180 N.J. 234 (2004), the Court reminded the bar that an attorney's role as an advocate is limited by the accompanying "solemn duty to comply with the law and the standards of professional conduct." In that case, a lawyer failed to disclose to a municipal court judge that the person involved in his client's automobile accident had died. Had the lawyer revealed that

information, the client could have faced convictions for indictable offenses, for which the client already had been charged. The lawyer failed to disclose to the municipal court the death of the individual and the pending indictment, hoping that the municipal court would accept his client's plea to motor vehicle offenses and, thus, preclude, on double jeopardy grounds, the more serious indictable charges. The Court found that the attorney had violated RPC 3.3(a)(5) by failing to reveal the circumstances of the accident and the pending indictment. The Court observed that RPC 3.3(a)(5) "compel[s] a lawyer to act affirmatively against his or her client's interests even when the primary responsibility for informing the court does not (or may not) lie with the lawyer." Seelig, 180 N.J. at 253. Moreover, RPC 3.3(a)(5) "impose[s] a duty to disclose in order to prevent errors in decision making by a tribunal that [. . .] has been misled because it lacks information about material facts." Ibid.

Additionally, despite respondent's position that he would have been "ineffective" for disclosing Coyle's Berlin conviction, the Court in Seelig emphasized that "a criminal defendant's right to assistance of counsel does not include the right to cooperation in the commission of perjury in violation of the ethical standards [that] govern attorney conduct." <u>Id.</u> at 255 (citation omitted). Indeed, "[b]ecause an attorney does not function merely as an advocate but also as an officer of the court, the attorney's ethical duty to advance the interests of

his [or her] client" cannot compel the lawyer "to 'do what is impossible or unethical." Id. at 255-56 (quoting United States v. Cronic, 466 U.S. 648, 657 n.19 (1984)); see also State v. Thomas, 61 N.J. 314, 321 (1972) ("zeal displayed [by defense counsel] must not transcend the bounds imposed by law or those ethical standards and professional proprieties which govern the conduct of all members of the bar at all times").

Here, respondent violated the principles in <u>Seelig</u> by deceiving the Stratford municipal court into believing that Coyle was a first-time DWI offender. Respondent knew that the Stratford municipal court and prosecutor were unaware of Coyle's Berlin conviction and that such information was neither privileged nor reasonably obtainable from sources other than respondent. He was likewise aware that Coyle's printed driver's abstract was incomplete, having been prepared before the Berlin conviction. As the Court held in <u>Seelig</u>, respondent, as an officer of the court, was required to disclose Coyle's Berlin conviction to avoid the imposition of an illegal sentence.

We expressly reject respondent's contrary arguments. Particularly, we reject respondent's unsupported belief that the Stratford court was required to solely rely on Coyle's outdated driver's abstract to assess Coyle's offense history. We also reject respondent's excuse that responsibility for informing the Stratford court of the conviction lay with a prosecutor who lacked the actual

knowledge that respondent possessed. Ultimately, respondent's refusal to comply with his duty of candor led the Stratford court to improperly sentence Coyle as a first-time DWI offender, instead of the increased penalties he should have faced as a subsequent offender.<sup>6</sup> Respondent's dishonesty in response to a direct question from the court further constituted conduct prejudicial to the administration of the justice system, in violation of RPC 3.3(a)(5); RPC 8.4(c); and RPC 8.4(d).<sup>7</sup>

There is insufficient evidence, however, to find, by clear and convincing evidence, that respondent violated RPC 1.4(c), as alleged in the complaint, by his failure to explain to Coyle the risks of being sentenced twice as a first-time DWI offender, including the possibility that Coyle could be found in contempt for failing to disclose his prior conviction. As the DEC correctly found, and as respondent testified, respondent did not appear to have a premeditated strategy to mislead the Stratford municipal court into sentencing Coyle as a first-time offender. In addition, following the hearing in Stratford, respondent advised Coyle that, despite being sentenced twice as a first offender, the MVC, may,

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> "The statutory scheme provides a tiered penalty structure for first, second, and 'third or subsequent' DWI offenses, with increasing penalties for each additional offense." <u>State v. Denelsbeck</u>, 225 N.J. 103, 116 (2016) (quoting N.J.S.A. 39:4-50(a)).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Neither the record before us nor public court records reveal whether the Stratford municipal court resentenced Coyle as a second-time DWI offender.

nevertheless, treat Coyle as a second offender and impose increased penalties. Finally, respondent, and not Coyle, would have been at risk for contempt for misrepresenting Coyle's offense history. Based on these circumstances, there is insufficient evidence that respondent failed to explain the matter to Coyle to permit him to make informed decisions. Thus, we determine to dismiss the <u>RPC</u> 1.4(c) charge.

In sum, we find that respondent violated <u>RPC</u> 3.3(a)(5), <u>RPC</u> 8.4(c), and <u>RPC</u> 8.4(d). We dismiss the charge that respondent violated <u>RPC</u> 1.4(c). The sole issue left for our determination is the appropriate quantum of discipline for respondent's misconduct.

Generally, the discipline imposed on attorneys who make misrepresentations to a court or exhibit a lack of candor to a tribunal, or both, ranges from a reprimand to a long-term suspension, including cases in which the same conduct results in prejudice to the administration of justice. See, e.g., In re Marraccini, 221 N.J. 487 (2015) (reprimand for attorney who attached to approximately fifty eviction complaints, filed on behalf of a property management company, verifications that previously had been executed by the manager, who had since died; the attorney was unaware that the manager had

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> See generally, R. 1:10-1 (allowing a judge to summarily adjudicate contempt against only an "alleged contemnor" if, among other things, the judge affords the "alleged contemnor" an immediate opportunity to respond to his willfully obstructive conduct).

died and, upon learning that information, withdrew all complaints; violations of RPC 3.3(a); RPC 8.4(c); and RPC 8.4(d); in mitigation, the attorney's actions were motivated by a misguided attempt at efficiency, rather than by dishonesty or personal gain); In re Schiff, 217 N.J. 524 (2014) (reprimand for attorney who knowingly directed his staff to file inaccurate certifications of proof in connection with default judgments); In re McLaughlin, 179 N.J. 314 (2004) (reprimand for attorney who had been required by the New Jersey Board of Bar Examiners to submit quarterly certifications attesting to his abstinence from alcohol, but falsely reported that he had been alcohol free during a period within which he had been convicted of driving while intoxicated, in violation of RPC 8.4(c); in mitigation, after the false certification was submitted, the attorney sought the advice of counsel, came forward, and admitted his transgressions); In re Kantor, 165 N.J. 572 (2000) (reprimand for attorney who appeared in municipal court on a charge of driving without automobile insurance; he falsely stated that he did have automobile insurance; violations of <u>RPC</u> 3.3(a) and <u>RPC</u> 8.4(c)); In re Myerowitz, 235 N.J. 416 (2018) (censure for attorney who lied to the court on at least two occasions regarding the reasons for needing an extension of time to file an answer to his adversary's summary judgment motion and about the dates he mailed his opposition papers, thus causing delays and wasting judicial resources; violations of RPC 3.3(a)(1) and RPC 8.4(c) and (d);

the attorney also failed to reply to an order to show cause, in violation of RPC 3.4(c) (disobeying the rules of a tribunal)); In re Stuart, 192 N.J. 441 (2007) (three-month suspension for assistant district attorney in New York who, during the prosecution of a homicide case, misrepresented to the court that he did not know the whereabouts of a witness; however, the attorney had made contact with the witness four days earlier; violations of RPC 8.4(c) and (d); compelling mitigation justified only a three-month suspension); In re Forrest, 158 N.J. 428 (1999) (six-month suspension for attorney who, in connection with a personal injury action involving injured spouses, failed to disclose the death of one of his clients to the court, to his adversary, and to an arbitrator, and advised the surviving spouse not to voluntarily reveal the death; violations of RPC 3.3(a)(5); RPC 3.4(a) (unlawful obstruction to and of evidence); and RPC 8.4(c); the attorney's motive was to obtain a personal injury settlement); In re Cillo, 155 N.J. 599 (1998) (one-year suspension for attorney who, after misrepresenting to a judge that a case had been settled and that no other attorney would be appearing for a conference, obtained a judge's signature on an order dismissing the action and disbursing all escrow funds to his client; the attorney knew that at least one other lawyer would be appearing at the conference and that a trust agreement required that at least \$500,000 of the escrow funds remain in reserve; violations of RPC 3.3(a)(1) and (2) (failing to disclose a material fact to a tribunal when disclosure is necessary to avoid assisting in an illegal, criminal, or fraudulent act); RPC 3.5(b) (ex parte communication); and RPC 8.4(c) and (d)); In re Kornreich, 149 N.J. 346 (1997) (three-year suspension for attorney who had been involved in an automobile accident and then misrepresented to the police, to her lawyer, and to a municipal court judge that her babysitter had been operating her vehicle; the attorney also presented false evidence in an attempt to falsely accuse the babysitter of her own wrongdoing; violations of RPC 3.3(a)(4) (offering evidence that the lawyer knows to be false); RPC 3.4(f) (requesting a person other than a client from voluntarily giving relevant information to another party); RPC 8.4(b) (committing a criminal act that reflects adversely on the lawyer's trustworthiness or fitness as a lawyer); and RPCs 8.4(c)-(d)).

However, lack of candor to a tribunal can result in an admonition, if compelling mitigating factors are present. For example, in <u>In the Matter of William T. Haggerty</u>, DRB 18-067 (May 24, 2018), an attorney who served as a municipal prosecutor failed to notify the municipal court of the fact that his brother served as a high-ranking official of a business that had filed a criminal complaint before the municipal court. During trial, a witness for the business revealed the attorney's relationship during cross-examination, which led the municipal court to declare an immediate mistrial. In imposing an admonition for

the attorney's lack of candor, we considered that he had an otherwise unblemished forty-two-year legal career.

In addition, in <u>In the Matter of George P. Helfrich</u>, <u>Jr.</u>, DRB 15-410 (February 24, 2016), although the attorney made a misrepresentation to the court, he subsequently rectified his falsification and suffered serious consequences from his misconduct. Specifically, the attorney had prepared for trial, but failed to notify the requisite defense witnesses of the trial date. Although jury selection had been completed and the attorney appeared for two days of trial, he did not inform the trial judge that his client and witnesses were unaware of, or unavailable for, trial. Finally, on the third day of trial, the attorney notified the court and his adversary that neither his client, their witnesses, nor his own law firm were aware that the trial had begun. The judge then immediately declared a mistrial.

After the attorney notified his law firm, the firm stripped him of his shareholder status and suspended him for an undisclosed period. Additionally, the attorney went through mediation and reimbursed the plaintiff for legal fees and costs. Neither the plaintiff nor defendant, however, suffered pecuniary losses.

In imposing only an admonition, we considered that it was the attorney's first ethics infraction in his thirty-eight years at the bar; he was demoted by his

law firm, resulting in significantly lower earnings; and he was remorseful and working hard to regain the trust of all those affected by his conduct.

Finally, we imposed an admonition in <u>In the Matter of Robin K. Lord</u>, DRB 01-250 (September 24, 2001). There, the day after the attorney had misrepresented her client's real name to the municipal court, she advised the court of her client's true identity. In imposing only an admonition, we noted that, had the attorney not promptly advised the municipal court, her discipline would have been more severe.

The admonished attorneys in <u>Helfrich</u> and <u>Lord</u> and the reprimanded attorney in <u>McLaughlin</u> all took steps to rectify their misrepresentations and to mitigate the prejudice to the administration of justice. The same cannot be said in this matter. Here, respondent misrepresented to the Stratford municipal court that Coyle had no prior DWI convictions, bolstered the reliability of Coyle's driver's abstract despite knowing that it was inaccurate, and allowed the Stratford court to improperly sentence Coyle as a first-time offender. Unlike the attorney in <u>Lord</u>, respondent failed to come forward to correct his misrepresentation. To the contrary, the Camden County Prosecutor's Office discovered the circumstances of this matter after respondent's representation had concluded.

Moreover, unlike the attorneys in Marraccini and Schiff, who were reprimanded for submitting false documents in a misguided effort to short-cut their work rather than to mislead, respondent's misrepresentation rested upon his unreasonable belief that Coyle's driver abstract solely governed the Stratford court's review of Coyle's motor vehicle offense history; that he would have been "ineffective" for disclosing Coyle's Berlin conviction from that morning; and that the Appellate Division's decision in Kane permitted him to conceal from the Stratford court and prosecutor otherwise material, public information, which, at that time, not only was unknown to the court or prosecutor, but also was essential to avoid the imposition of an improper sentence. As described above, not only was respondent required, pursuant to Seelig, to disclose Coyle's Berlin conviction, but the circumstances in Kane were also clearly distinguishable from the facts underlying this matter because the prosecutor in Kane had constructive knowledge of the applicability of a recently enacted statute to the defendant's conduct. By contrast, only respondent and Coyle knew of Coyle's first DWI conviction, incurred mere hours beforehand, and by failing to disclose that conviction, respondent not only violated his duty of candor to the court, but he also allowed the court to sentence Coyle as a first-time DWI offender, in violation of the statutorily-mandated enhancements for subsequent DWI offenses.

In aggravation, based on respondent's unreasonable justifications for his misconduct and his ongoing lack of appropriate remorse or contrition, we find that he not only has failed to appreciate the seriousness of his deception, but also has failed to understand that misrepresentation cannot serve as a permissible litigation tactic, even when carried out in the name of zealous advocacy. In mitigation, however, respondent has no prior discipline in his nineteen years at the bar and cooperated with disciplinary authorities by stipulating to the facts underlying his misconduct.

Although respondent's misconduct placed him on the precipice of a suspension, in light of his otherwise unblemished career, we determine to impose a censure and note that, going forward, respondent must adhere to the duty of candor required of all attorneys in order "to comply with the high standards that our profession demands." In re Harris, 182 N.J. 594, 609 (2005).

Chair Gallipoli voted to impose a three-month suspension.

We further determine to require respondent to reimburse the Disciplinary Oversight Committee for administrative costs and actual expenses incurred in the prosecution of this matter, as provided in <u>R.</u> 1:20-17.

Disciplinary Review Board

Hon. Maurice J. Gallipoli, A.J.S.C. (Ret.),

Chair

By:

Johanna Barba Jones

Chief Counsel

## SUPREME COURT OF NEW JERSEY DISCIPLINARY REVIEW BOARD VOTING RECORD

In the Matter of David S. Bradley Docket No. DRB 21-230

Argued: January 20, 2022

Decided: April 19, 2022

Disposition: Censure

Members	Censure	Three-Month Suspension
Gallipoli		X
Singer	X	
Boyer	X	
Campelo	X	
Hoberman	X	
Joseph	X	
Menaker	X	
Petrou	X	
Rivera	X	
Total:	8	1

Johanna Barba Jones Chief Counsel