

**IN THE SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

OFFICE OF DISCIPLINARY COUNSEL,	:	No. 3109 Disciplinary Docket No. 3
	:	
Petitioner	:	No. 37 DB 2025
	:	
v.	:	Attorney Registration No. 94221
	:	
	:	(Philadelphia)
BRIAN DOOLEY KENT,	:	
	:	
Respondent	:	

**ORDER**

**PER CURIAM**

**AND NOW**, this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of May, 2025, upon consideration of the Recommendation of the Three-Member Panel of the Disciplinary Board, the Joint Petition in Support of Discipline on Consent is granted, and Brian Dooley Kent is suspended on consent from the Bar of this Commonwealth for a period of three years, with one year to be served. The remaining suspension period is stayed, and he is placed on probation for two years, subject to the following conditions:

1. Respondent shall undergo counseling throughout the three-year period of his suspension, on at least a monthly basis or as prescribed by his mental health professional;
2. Respondent shall cooperate with the directions of the mental healthcare professional supervising his treatment;
3. Respondent shall file quarterly written reports with the Board Prothonotary, which shall reflect his continued compliance with these conditions, and shall attach reports from his mental healthcare professional verifying the above counseling and treatment; and

4. Respondent shall not commit any violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct or Rules of Disciplinary Enforcement.

Respondent shall comply with the provisions of Pa.R.D.E. 217 and pay costs to the Disciplinary Board pursuant to Pa.R.D.E. 208(g).

A True Copy Nicole Traini  
As Of 05/23/2025

Attest:   
Chief Clerk  
Supreme Court of Pennsylvania

REDACTED

BEFORE THE DISCIPLINARY BOARD OF THE  
SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA

OFFICE OF DISCIPLINARY COUNSEL,	:	No. _____	Disciplinary Docket
Petitioner	:	No. _____	Supreme Court
	:		
	:	No. <b>37</b>	DB 2025
v.	:		
	:	Nos. C1-22-917, and C1-22-918	
	:		
	:	Atty. Reg. No. 94221	
	:		
BRIAN DOOLEY KENT,	:		
Respondent	:	(Philadelphia)	

**JOINT PETITION IN SUPPORT OF DISCIPLINE**  
**ON CONSENT UNDER Pa.R.D.E. 215(d)**

Petitioner, Office of Disciplinary Counsel ("Petitioner" or "ODC"), by Thomas J. Farrell, Esquire, Chief Disciplinary Counsel, and by Jeffrey M. Krulik, Esquire, Disciplinary Counsel, and Respondent, Brian Dooley Kent, Esquire, who is represented by Ellen C. Brotman, Esquire, file this Joint Petition In Support Of Discipline On Consent Under Pa.R.D.E. 215(d), and respectfully represent that:

1. Petitioner, whose principal office is located at Pennsylvania Judicial Center, Suite 2700, 601 Commonwealth Avenue, P.O. Box 62485, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, is invested, pursuant to Rule 207 of the Pennsylvania Rules of Disciplinary Enforcement (hereinafter "Pa.R.D.E."), with the power and duty to investigate all matters involving alleged misconduct of an attorney admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and to prosecute all disciplinary proceedings brought in accordance with the various provisions of said Rules of Disciplinary Enforcement.

2. Respondent, Brian Dooley Kent, was born in 1978, and was admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth on December 23, 2004.

FILED

04/02/2025

The Disciplinary Board of the  
Supreme Court of Pennsylvania

Respondent maintains his office at 50 South 16<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 1700, Philadelphia, PA 19102.

3. Pursuant to Pa.R.D.E. 201(a)(1), Respondent is subject to the disciplinary jurisdiction of the Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania.

**FACTUAL ADMISSIONS AND  
RULES OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT VIOLATED**

4. Respondent has focused his career on the representation of victims of sexual abuse, assault, and trafficking, first as a sex crimes prosecutor and more recently through his private practice.

5. Beginning in or about March 2019, Respondent met V.P. and agreed, along with his former law firm, then known as Laffey Bucci & Kent, LLP, as well as several other law firms, to investigate a potential lawsuit against the Church of Scientology on behalf of V.P. (Although Respondent did not provide V.P. with an engagement letter until December 2019, he does not contest that an attorney-client relationship existed before that time.)

6. V.P. lived in Australia.

7. After an initial call with V.P., Respondent began following her Instagram and Twitter accounts, and “liking” her posts.

8. During the time he represented V.P., Respondent exchanged thousands of text messages, messages on “What’sApp,” and emails with her; many of these communications concerned personal rather than professional matters.

9. Respondent also had telephone communications with V.P. regarding personal matters, including telling her about sexual abuse he had suffered as a child.

10. During his representation of V.P., Respondent:

- a. exchanged communications with her suggesting that he wanted to pursue a sexual relationship;
- b. engaged in sexual conduct with her; and
- c. continued to represent V.P. despite his awareness that his conduct had substantially impaired the attorney-client relationship.

11. Respondent's communications with V.P. also reflected his awareness of his ethical obligations, as he repeatedly referenced the need to maintain "professional boundaries" while violating those same boundaries in 2019.

12. Beginning in April 2019, Respondent and V.P. exchanged communications that were personal and flirtatious.

13. In or around May 2019, V.P. informed Respondent that she had been invited to travel to Los Angeles in June for a show related to Scientology; Respondent told V.P. that he would try to join her there.

14. In an exchange of WhatsApp messages, dated May 7, 2019, V.P. revealed personal feelings toward Respondent which she explained made her "stressed and confused," and expressed her concern that he would "drop" her as a client if she said the wrong thing.

15. Respondent reassured V.P. that “we will represent you,” but that he would “need to maintain the professional aspect.”

16. As reflected in the May 7, 2019 messages, Respondent was aware not only of V.P.’s personal feelings for him but also that getting involved romantically with her would negatively impact his ability to provide proper representation by creating a potential “personal interest” conflict of interest.

17. Throughout the remainder of May 2019, Respondent continued to have personal, flirtatious, and sexually suggestive communications with V.P.

18. At the time Respondent engaged in these exchanges, he continued to recognize that a romantic relationship with his client was contrary to his ethical obligations.

19. Respondent’s knowledge of his ethical obligations was reflected in a WhatsApp message, dated May 31, 2019, where, after a long string of texts that veered from flirtatious to suggestive, he wrote, “It’s just as we talked before, I can’t cross certain boundaries ... I just can’t ever do that.”

20. Respondent booked hotel rooms for himself and V.P. at the SLS Marriott in Los Angeles for the taping of the show related to Scientology.

21. In June 2019, Respondent informed V.P. that he had a respiratory illness.

22. In a WhatsApp message, dated June 5, 2019, V.P. offered to give Respondent a massage and an “Indian head massage,” which she believed could help with his condition.

23. On June 5, 2019, after V.P. finished taping her show, V.P. went to Respondent's room, at which time:

- a. Respondent changed into a shirt and sweatpants;
- b. V.P. lay down next to Respondent and began to give him a massage;
- c. Respondent engaged in sexually explicit conversation with V.P.;
- d. Respondent and V.P. engaged in touching that was sexual in nature; and
- e. there was no sexual intercourse.

24. Respondent then asked V.P. to leave his room.

25. The next day, Respondent, V.P., and another client had dinner together.

26. After dinner, V.P. changed into her pajamas and returned to Respondent's hotel room.

27. While in Respondent's room, he again engaged in sexual contact with V.P., but did not engage in sexual intercourse.

28. On June 7, 2019, Respondent and V.P. went to the airport together, and returned to their homes.

29. V.P.'s communications with Respondent after returning from Los Angeles reflected the adverse impact his conduct had had on the attorney-client relationship, including causing her to have increasing feelings of vulnerability and insecurity about their relationship.

30. By a WhatsApp message and an email, both dated September 17, 2019, V.P.:

- a. told Respondent she would be meeting with the U.S. Department of Justice ("DOJ") in October or November 2019;
- b. told Respondent she had arranged that he could "come and meet with them too[,] [f]irst as [her] lawyer and then so [he could] talk to them and find out everything from them and vice versa if [he] want[ed] to"; and
- c. asked about his availability to meet her in Los Angeles.

31. Respondent agreed to travel to Los Angeles for the meeting with the DOJ.

32. To accommodate Respondent's schedule, V.P. arranged to be in Los Angeles from October 10 through 13, 2019.

33. In an exchange of WhatsApp messages, between September 28, 2019, and October 7, 2019, Respondent and V.P. had personal communications that were again flirtatious and sexually suggestive.

34. During an October 7, 2019, exchange of flirtatious and suggestive messages, Respondent also discussed V.P.'s legal matters with her, including:

- a. confirming that her meeting with the DOJ was on October 15, 2019;
- b. telling her he would be meeting with her on October 14, 2019, to review her documents with her;



- c. agreeing she would be the only one he would be meeting with on October 14, 2019; and
- d. telling her he would be meeting with other clients on October 15, 2019.

35. In a lengthy exchange of WhatsApp messages, dated October 8, 2019:

- a. V.P. told Respondent that while in Los Angeles, “[i]t will be LA Marriott Spa”;
- b. Respondent replied, “I hope so,” and asked what the “spa experience” would include;
- c. V.P. told Respondent the “spa experience” would include a “[f]ull body massage,” an “Indian head massage,” and a “foot massage,” with “massage oil”;
- d. Respondent said that would be “pretty unbelievable”;
- e. V.P. told Respondent she was bringing massage oil with her, that she had “magic hands,” that she would be “the boss” during the massage, and that it would be “the best massage [he] ever had in [his] life”; and
- f. Respondent told V.P. that would be “a high burden” and she would need to “pull out some special moves.”

36. In an exchange of WhatsApp messages, dated October 9, 2019:

- a. Respondent told V.P. he could not get approval for costs for the trip to Los Angeles unless he was certain the DOJ meeting

was “definitely happening,” requested the names and contact information for the relevant individuals, and told her he “need[ed] to speak to the department of justice folks before [he got] on a plane to go out there”; and

- b. V.P. told Respondent the “only reason [she was] going now [was Respondent],” and she was “devastat[ed]” that he might not be coming.

37. Respondent later confirmed that he would be going to Los Angeles for the meeting.

38. On October 11, 2019—just three days after exchanging messages about a “spa experience”—Respondent sent V.P. WhatsApp messages stressing his ethical obligations, telling her, inter alia, that he had “a professional and ethical obligation to [her] first and foremost as a client above anything else.”

39. V.P. became upset, telling Respondent, among other things, that “she care[d] about [him] so much” and that his comments had “crushed [her].”

40. Respondent told V.P. that her feelings about him could be “a problem with [him] representing her.”

41. Despite recognizing that V.P.’s feelings for him could cause a “problem” with any continued representation, Respondent continued to investigate her claims.

42. On October 13, 2019, Respondent and V.P. arrived in Los Angeles for her meeting with the DOJ.

43. Respondent had dinner with V.P. that night.

44. After dinner, V.P. went to Respondent's hotel room in her pajamas.

45. While Respondent and V.P. were in his hotel room, Respondent and V.P. touched each other in a sexual manner. Again, they did not engage in sexual intercourse.

46. Respondent and V.P. slept in Respondent's bed until 4:00 a.m., when his alarm went off.

47. Later that day, Respondent informed V.P. that she could not sleep in his room again, as he did not want to be dishonest and go back to being the person he was in the past.

48. On October 14, 2019, Respondent met with V.P. to review documents related to her case; they briefly discussed the documents before Respondent told V.P. that he had other work to attend to.

49. On October 15, 2019, Respondent and V.P. met with the DOJ.

50. On October 16, 2019, V.P. returned to her home.

51. In an exchange of WhatsApp messages, dated October 21, 2019, Respondent told V.P. he could only "move forward being [her] attorney if everything remain[ed] professional."

52. Despite her feelings for Respondent, V.P. promised she would maintain a professional relationship with him.

53. By a WhatsApp message, dated November 11, 2019, V.P.:

- a. informed Respondent that the DOJ wanted to meet with her in Los Angeles on November 18, 2019, but that they wanted his permission first; and

b. asked if she had his permission.

54. Respondent did not reply to V.P.'s message.

55. In a lengthy exchange of text messages on November 11, 2019:

a. V.P. asked if Respondent had seen her WhatsApp messages;

b. Respondent told V.P. he "shut down [his] WhatsApp" and was "going off of texting all together for all clients";

c. V.P. renewed her inquiry as to whether she could meet with the DOJ, told Respondent she was "always here" if he needed her, and asked whether he had deactivated WhatsApp and stopped texting because of her;

d. Respondent told V.P. she could meet with DOJ; and

e. Respondent told V.P. he needed to limit his communications with clients to telephone and email.

56. In November 2019, V.P. attended the meeting with the DOJ in Los Angeles, where she learned that Respondent was still texting with other clients.

57. By a text message, dated December 7, 2019, V.P. told Respondent she had sent him a message on "google drive" and asked if he had received it.

58. Respondent did not reply to V.P.'s message.

59. In an email to Respondent, dated December 10, 2019, V.P.:

a. complained about Respondent's "lack of communication";

b. noted that she had sent Respondent a "summary of her case questions," but he did not respond;

- c. noted that she had sent Respondent a set of “organized documents” and then sent him a text asking if he had received them, but he again failed to respond; and
- d. asked Respondent to “please take the time to answer [her] with whatever [he] needed to say.”

60. Respondent did not reply to the email.

61. In a series of text messages sent later that day, V.P.:

- a. complained about Respondent’s failure to respond to her inquiries;
- b. told Respondent she “fe[lt] like [he] wanted absolutely nothing to do with [her]”;
- c. asked if Respondent was still representing her;
- d. asked Respondent to please “answer [her] case questions and [her] other email”;
- e. “promise[d] [she would] NEVER cross boundaries again” because “the consequences [were] too painful”; and
- f. pleaded with Respondent to “not ignore her” because it was “really hurtful.”

62. By a text message, dated December 10, 2019, Respondent apologized to V.P. for not responding, explaining that he was working on filing three motions and had been very sick. Respondent explained, “I have had the flu for a while. Starting to feel better now. Hoping to heal up once I get all of these motion responses done.”

63. In a series of text messages, dated December 19, 2019:

- a. V.P. told Respondent she had heard he was dropping some cases against Scientology, and wanted to know if she still had a case;
- b. Respondent told V.P. "the group" had not made any definitive decision with respect to her case and that it was "still in the investigation stage";
- c. V.P. complained that Respondent had "told [her] this entire time that [she] 100% had a case" and she was not sure what had changed; and
- d. V.P. told Respondent she felt she deserved to have him talk to her and that she felt like he "absolutely dislike[d] [her]."

64. In a text message, also dated December 19, 2019, Respondent replied, telling V.P., "I/we will not be able to represent you if you feel this is personal or that I/we dislikes [sic] you. No one dislikes you. Again, we can schedule a call after the new year with Guy and I. (Referring to Guy D'Andrea, who was then an associate and later a partner at Respondent's firm.) No one is saying you don't have a case. But conversations via text like this are not working as a means of communication."

65. Later that day, V.P. sent Respondent an additional text message which again reflected the adverse impact his improper conduct had had on the attorney-client relationship; among other things, V.P. told Respondent that:

- a. she was “writing [Respondent] as a person not as [her] lawyer”;
- b. she hoped that nothing she had written would “sabotage [her] potential of having a case”;
- c. it felt “horrible to have someone who was sooo nice to you and called you a friend and said they really enjoyed talking to you just change and turn so cold”;
- d. noted that she was “scared of writing [Respondent] because [she did] not want to be ignored or to say something that is wrong or upsets you”;
- e. asked Respondent not to “not have a case for [her] because of what [she] wrote”; and
- f. promised to “do [her] best to just be a client and to not act like a friend.”

66. In a text message, dated December 20, 2019, Respondent replied, “This is why I don’t like texting” and “We’ll connect after the new year.”

67. In a series of emails, dated January 4 and 5, 2020, Respondent asked V.P. not to text him and to use email instead.

68. V.P.’s communications with Respondent in January through March 2020, again reflected the negative impact his improper conduct had had with respect to the attorney-client relationship.

69. By way of example:

- a. in a text message, dated January 16, 2020, V.P. complained that Respondent was not responding to her and asserted that she knew she had “dug [her] grave with [him]”;
- b. in an email, dated January 22, 2020, V.P. complained that Mr. D’Andrea had been on a recent call when she had wanted to “clarify” information with Respondent and suggested that she needed to speak with him “to sort out whatever’s happened between us as friends so it’s not awkward”;
- c. in a text message, dated January 23, 2020, V.P. complained that Respondent never answered her emails, and told him that she was “hurt and confused by how [he had] been towards [her] the last few months”;
- d. in an email, dated January 25, 2020, V.P. told Respondent that she was in “pain,” that while he told her not to “cross boundaries” he had done so “a few times,” that she felt he had “put her in the category of some crazy girl,” and that he was “treating [her] like he intensely dislike[d] [her]”;
- e. in a series of text messages, dated February 17, 2020, V.P., inter alia, stated that Respondent had “pursued [her] at first,” asked why he could not talk to her and “give [her] closure,” and noted further that “[o]n the physical thing it wasn’t just [her]”;



- f. in a lengthy series of text messages, dated March 18, 2020, V.P. replied to Respondent's comment that he was "always trying to stick to boundaries" by telling him, inter alia, that she did not know what she had done "to make [him] someone who seemed to really like [her] to someone who doesn't," that she did not understand why he felt she was "so toxic for [him] to have in [his] life," that she "love[d] [him] unconditionally," and that the "sudden" change in how he communicated with her made it "feel[ ] like [her] heart was smashed into a million pieces"; and
- g. in a lengthy exchange of text messages, dated March 24, 2020, V.P., inter alia, noted that Respondent had told her that "we had a connection and that [he was] glad [they] had met and that it was meant to have happened," and that she still felt that way.

70. In a lengthy exchange of text messages, dated April 13, 2020, V.P. discussed Respondent's prior actions and its impact on her, stating, among other things, that:

- a. it was "painful" that he had changed the way he acted after she was with him in Los Angeles in October, and that "[i]f she could rewind time [she would] just have given [him] the message and walked ... out";

- b. she did not “understand why [he] made [her] fall in love with [him] when [he] felt nothing for [her]”;
- c. “the physical stuff happened”; and
- d. she was “heartbroken.”

71. In an exchange of emails, dated April 18, 2020:

- a. V.P. told Respondent that she was “excruciatingly hurt” by what had occurred between them and that it was “too late for [her] not to care about [him]”;
- b. V.P. asked if Respondent was still going to file a case for her; and
- c. Respondent told V.P. that “we are still going to file a case for you.”

72. In text messages, dated April 28, 2020, V.P. told Respondent that he had broken her heart, that she had tried to get over him but she could not do it, and she still loved him.

73. Respondent’s responses to V.P.’s communications throughout the winter and spring of 2020, reflect some attempts to belatedly restore a more professional relationship, including:

- a. in a text message, dated January 25, 2020, Respondent told V.P. that he had read an email she sent and that he “hope[d] [she] underst[ood] [him] repeatedly saying that [he] need[ed] boundaries personally and professionally ha[d] nothing to do with not liking [her] as a person or anything personally. It ha[d]

to do with [him] personally and professionally. [He was] happy to have a call but consider it a clean slate already moving forward”;

- b. in a text message, dated March 18, 2020, Respondent told V.P., “I think I’ve tried to explain it on a call and am happy to try and do so again. And I know you’re not trying to be hurtful. But as I explained before, it’s not right for me to be having personal conversations with any women. That’s especially true with any one (sic) who is a client, which you are now. I know you don’t want to hear that but that’s true and there’s actually a rule for that that [I] am required to abide by. As [I] said before conversations got too personal before and I take responsibility for that. But I’m just trying to do the right thing at the end of the day. That’s all. And that has nothing to do with you personally;” and
- c. in text messages, dated April 13, 2020, Respondent replied to V.P. telling him that his actions had made her fall in love with him by writing, “As I said before I take responsibility for allowing that connection to happen as there should have been boundaries up from the start. As I said, my MO is to be overly open and personal with people especially those that I feel safe talking with. And that’s my fault. ... I said before that things got too personal. They did. I take responsibility for that. I’ve

said that repeatedly before. ... I also have tried to explain why I cannot have a personal relationship for professional and personal reasons. And again, it has nothing to do with you as a person.”

74. However, despite being aware that the attorney-client relationship remained impaired, Respondent continued to represent V.P.

75. Indeed, it should have become clear to Respondent that his efforts to set “boundaries” were inadequate and he needed to withdraw from the representation.

76. On or about August 19, 2020, V.P. spoke with another law firm about her case.

77. In a lengthy exchange of text messages, dated August 20, 2020, V.P.:

- a. told Respondent she had spoken to the firm because he had told her it was a good idea;
- b. expressed her feelings for Respondent and told him his responses made her feel “unwanted and disliked”;
- c. told Respondent she was “scared of writing” about her feelings because she “[did not] want [him] to send [her] a text saying if [she] feel[s] anything [he] can’t represent [her]”; and
- d. asked that [he] “please don’t say [he] can’t represent me if I feel what I feel.”

78. In the August 20, 2020, exchange of text messages:

- a. Respondent told V.P. he was “not saying” that he could not represent her;
- b. Respondent told V.P. that if he did not answer something she wrote, it was “because it is something personal”; and
- c. V.P. apologized if she wrote anything personal, and went on to inquire as to what types of communications she could still send.

79. V.P.’s difficulties maintaining a purely professional relationship with Respondent continued, as reflected in additional text messages, sent in September and November 2020.

80. By a telephone call in January 2021, Respondent told V.P. that, after evaluation, his firm could not bring a claim on her behalf.

81. In February 2021, V.P. retained new counsel to represent her.

82. By his conduct as alleged in Paragraphs 4 through 81, above, Respondent violated the following Rules of Professional Conduct:

- a. RPC 1.7(a)(2), which states that except as provided in paragraph 1.7(b), a lawyer shall not represent a client if the representation involves a concurrent conflict of interest. A concurrent conflict of interest exists if there is a significant risk that the representation of one or more clients will be materially limited by the lawyer's responsibilities to another client, a former client or a third person or by a personal interest of the lawyer;
- b. RPC 1.8(j), which, at the time Respondent represented V.P., stated that a lawyer shall not have sexual relations with a

client unless a consensual relationship existed between them when the client-lawyer relationship commenced;<sup>1</sup> and

- c. RPC 1.16(a)(1), which states that except as stated in RPC 1.16(c), a lawyer shall not represent a client or, where representation has commenced, shall withdraw from the representation of a client if the representation will result in violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct or other law.

### **SPECIFIC JOINT RECOMMENDATION FOR DISCIPLINE**

83. ODC and Respondent jointly recommend that the appropriate discipline for Respondent's admitted misconduct is a suspension from the practice of law for three years, with the last two years stayed, along with probation and the condition that Respondent file reports reflecting his continued treatment with a counselor for his mental health issues throughout the three-year period.

84. Respondent hereby consents to that discipline being imposed upon him by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. Attached to this Joint Petition is Respondent's executed Affidavit required by Pa.R.D.E. 215(d), stating that he consents to the recommended discipline, including the mandatory acknowledgments contained in Pa.R.D.E. 215(d)(1) through (4).

85. ODC and Respondent submit that the following are aggravating factors in this case:

- a. Respondent misused a position of trust, as an advocate for victims of abuse, to take advantage of a vulnerable client; and
- b. there was substantial adverse publicity regarding Respondent's conduct, which caused harm to the reputation of the Bar.

---

<sup>1</sup> RPC 1.8(j) was amended, effective November 8, 2024, to make clear that the phrase "sexual relations," includes, but is not limited to, communications of a sexual nature."

86. ODC and Respondent also submit that the following are mitigating factors in this case:

- a. Respondent has admitted engaging in misconduct and violating the charged Rules of Professional Conduct;
- b. Respondent is remorseful and understands that his actions warrant the imposition of discipline, as is evidenced by his agreement to enter into this Joint Petition;
- c. Respondent has no record of discipline since being admitted to practice law in Pennsylvania in December 2004;
- d. by agreeing to this Joint Petition, Respondent has spared V.P. the embarrassment, anxiety, and stress associated with testifying in a public proceeding; and
- e. Respondent has proffered character evidence, including letters of support from members of his family, and participants in a men's counseling group of which he is a member, as well as letters and emails from former clients thanking him for his representation.

87. Respondent has also provided evidence of his civic involvement, including his:

- a. membership on the board of ChildUSA, a non-profit organization devoted to ending child abuse and neglect;<sup>2</sup>
- b. involvement in the National Trafficking Sheltered Alliance, a network of service providers assisting survivors of human trafficking and sexual exploitation;
- c. serving as a former board member and volunteer mentor for the University of Delaware HenLaw Society, an affinity group providing guidance, mentorship, and opportunities to students pursuing careers in the legal profession;
- d. volunteering with the Montgomery County Child Advocacy Project from 2015 through 2021, during which time he was court-appointed to serve as an advocate in six cases; and

---

<sup>2</sup> After information related to his instant misconduct became public, in April 2024, Respondent resigned from the ChildUSA board.

- e. membership on the Advisory Board for the National Crime Victim Bar Association from 2020 through 2021.

88. In addition, Respondent has proffered evidence regarding his mental health which, if proven at a hearing, would satisfy the requirements of Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. Braun, 553 A.2d 894 (Pa. 1989). Specifically, Respondent has provided a report from his therapist, who states that she has been treating Respondent since August 2018. A copy of the therapist's report is attached as Exhibit A. The therapist has diagnosed Respondent with Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, related to his having been sexually abused as a child, and has opined that his misconduct in this matter was "substantially caused by his ongoing post-traumatic stress." Specifically, she opined that his past trauma resulted in "impaired judgment and poor decision-making" during the period when he represented V.P. She also provided a supplemental report, a copy of which is attached as Exhibit B. In the supplemental report, the therapist advised that Respondent is engaged in weekly therapy, and continues his participation in a men's group addressing mental health issues. She offered her opinion that, so long as Respondent remains committed to therapy, his chance of reverting to past poor behaviors is "very low."

89. The therapist also offered her opinion that Respondent has addressed the issues that caused his conduct here. In her report, she states that "[i]t is because of his dedication to work through his trauma that Mr. Kent is not the same man that walked into [her] office six years ago." She also concludes that, "[h]e has advanced in his therapy and internalized these coping skills to the point where [she] believe[s] his judgment is restored and the likelihood of inappropriate



behavior re-occurring is extremely low. [She does] not consider that he is currently at risk of crossing appropriate boundaries with a client.”

90. If this case were to proceed to a hearing, Respondent would testify that he was motivated to embrace the defense of sexual assault victims because he himself was a victim of childhood sexual abuse. He would testify that for over 18 months, as a fourth and fifth grader, he was repeatedly sexually abused by a priest in charge of the altar boys at his parish/school, and that the abuse stopped after the priest was moved to another parish.

91. Respondent would also testify that, as a child and young adult, he did his best to compartmentalize the emotions, pain and symptoms related to the abuse. Respondent would further testify that in August of 2018, he and his family realized he needed significant help and that he sought intensive treatment and began to disclose these events to his therapists, his family, and his colleagues/friends. However, upon completion of the treatment program, instead of taking time off from work, he buried himself in his job. At this point in his life, Respondent began his representation of V.P.”

92. Respondent would further testify that, from November 2019 through August 2021, he isolated himself on the issue and did not seek the advice of his therapist, his partners, his family, or his support groups because he was ashamed of his misconduct and struggling with the issues raised by his own childhood abuse.

93. As set forth above, Respondent engaged in a course of misconduct over a period of nearly two years while representing a client in a matter involving

allegations of abuse. Respondent committed the misconduct that is at issue here by having a personal relationship with V.P. that violated RPC 1.7(a)(2) and 1.8(j). From November 2019 through February 2021, Respondent violated Rules 1.7(a)(2) and 1.16(a) when he failed to terminate the attorney-client relationship.

94. At the outset of the representation, Respondent engaged in communications with the client that suggested he had an interest in pursuing her romantically. These communications culminated in physical touching that constitutes a violation of RPC 1.8(j) between Respondent and his client during two trips to Los Angeles. Respondent's conduct had a substantial negative impact on his client and adversely affected the attorney-client relationship. Despite being aware of the damaged relationship, and its impact on his ability to provide proper representation, Respondent failed to timely withdraw from the matter or assign new counsel to handle it.

95. Citing the comment to RPC 1.8(j), the Supreme Court has stressed that "[t]he relationship [between a lawyer and a client] is almost always unequal" and that a sexual relationship between the lawyer and the client "can involve unfair exploitation of the lawyer's fiduciary role, in violation of the lawyer's basic ethical obligation not to use the trust of the client to the client's disadvantage." Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. Altman, 228 A.3d 508, 518 (Pa. 2020) As such, Rule 1.8(j) prohibits a lawyer from having sexual relations with a client regardless of whether the relationship is consensual and regardless of prejudice to the client. Id.

96. The range of sanctions in cases involving sexual relations with a client vary greatly based upon the specific facts and the presence of aggravating

and mitigating factors. In Altman, for example, the Court disbarred a respondent who engaged in five consensual sexual encounters with a vulnerable client. Altman lacked remorse and committed additional serious misconduct, including engaging in prohibited financial transactions with the client and filing a meritless motion for legal fees that included false and misleading statements. Alternatively, a sexual relationship with a client has also resulted in a public reprimand. Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. Christian V. Badali, No. 8 DB 2016 (S.Ct. Order 2/10/16) (public reprimand where Badali had a sexual relationship with a client and lied to his law firm about the relationship). See also Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. Joshua M. Briskin, No. 93 DB 2019 (S.Ct. Order 5/16/19) (public reprimand, with probation, where Briskin made sexually charged statements to a client by text message and in person, and attempted to kiss the client on five occasions; Briskin also committed additional misconduct, including failing to provide his client with a written fee agreement, failing to notify his client that he lacked professional liability insurance, and making false statements in a disciplinary matter).

97. Several cases involving sexual contact with a client have imposed a one-year suspension. Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. Pearlette Toussant, No. 138 DB 2022 (S.Ct. 2/13/23) (one-year suspension on consent where Toussant had a consensual sexual relationship with a client and engaged in other misconduct related to that client); Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. Charles Shainberg, No. 41 DB 2022 (S.Ct. Order 10/13/22) (one-year suspension on consent where Shainberg repeatedly made sexually explicit comments to a vulnerable client and had nonconsensual sexual contact with her; Shainberg also failed to abide by his

client's decisions regarding the objective of the representation); Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. David Knight, No. 37 DB 2013 (S.Ct. Order 7/17/13) (one-year suspension on consent where Knight never charged fees to a vulnerable client who performed oral sex on him three times).

98. In this case, the nature of Respondent's practice, as an advocate for victims of abuse, placed him in a position of trust with particularly vulnerable clients. By virtue of his reputation and position, he gained the trust of a vulnerable client, and then abused that trust. See Altman, 228 A.3d at 519 (noting that Altman abused his position by taking advantage of a client who was "in a vulnerable state"); Shainberg, supra, Joint Petition, p. 12 (that client was in a vulnerable situation was an aggravating factor in imposing discipline).

99. In addition, Respondent's conduct generated negative publicity which adversely affected the reputation of the Bar and the legal profession. See, e.g., "A Philly Lawyer for Sexual Abuse Victims Left His Firm After An Ex-Client's Complaint Was Leaked," The Philadelphia Inquirer, April 26, 2024 (noting that Respondent, a "go-to personal injury lawyer for survivors of sexual abuse," was alleged to have had a sexual relationship with a client); "Survivors' Lawyer Accused of Shocking Misconduct," Catholics4Change, Apr. 29, 2024 (noting that Respondent's misconduct was "especially egregious given his client's vulnerability as a victim of sexual abuse"); "Laffey Bucci & Kent Name Partner's Exit Neither 'Mutual' Nor 'Amicable,' Firm Contends," The Legal Intelligencer, April 22, 2024 (discussing the allegations of Respondent's misconduct). This is another aggravating circumstance supporting the imposition of substantial discipline. See,

e.g., Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. Lesley Rae Childers-Potts, No. 25 DB 2024 (S.Ct. Order 7/16/24), Joint Petition, p. 32 (aggravating circumstances included that misconduct generated negative publicity); Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. Jeff Foreman, No. 164 DB 2009 (D.Bd. Rpt. 5/19/14, p. 11) (S.Ct. Order 9/17/14) (harm to the reputation of the Bar due to adverse publicity about Foreman's conduct was a "particularly weighty aggravating factor") (citing authority).

100. Respondent, on the other hand, has presented significant mitigation. As noted above, he has proffered an opinion from his therapist which, if proven at a hearing, would satisfy the requirements of Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. Braun, *supra*, as well as evidence that he is taking steps to address his mental health issues. See Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. William H. Lynch, No. 70 DB 2020 (D.Bd. Rp. 12/10/21, p. 29) (S.Ct. Order 1/6/22) (Lynch having voluntarily sought psychiatric treatment to address his mental health issues was mitigating); Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. Daniel Michael Dixon, No. 174 DB 2020 (D.Bd. Rpt. 12/8/21, p.37) (S.Ct. Order 3/4/22) (Dixon's efforts to remediate problems he identified with respect to his mental health was mitigating).

101. Respondent has also proffered letters from character witnesses, as well as former clients, along with evidence of his civic involvement. He has demonstrated remorse for his actions, and has no prior discipline in nineteen years since being admitted to the Pennsylvania Bar, all of which provides further mitigation. See, e.g., Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. Chung, 695 A.2d 405, 407-8 (Pa. 1997) (mitigation included Chung's extensive involvement in community service, character witnesses, and remorse); Office of Disciplinary Counsel v.

Christie, 639 A.2d 782, 785-86 (Pa. 1994) (mitigation included, inter alia, a psychiatric condition satisfying Braun, lack of disciplinary record, remorse, and continued participation in therapy); Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. Ralph David Karsh, No. 13 DB 2023 (D.Bd. Rpt. 6/10/24, pp. 25-29) (S.Ct. Order 8/23/24) (Karsh's mitigation, which included no prior discipline in 33 years of practice, remorse, character evidence, and a psychiatric condition satisfying Braun, warranted a stayed three-month suspension with two years of probation for misconduct including lack of diligence, dishonesty in communications with a client, prejudice to administration of justice, and a failure to disclose information on an annual attorney registration form).

102. While a suspension is appropriate discipline for Respondent's misconduct, the totality of the circumstances—including Respondent's conduct, the mitigation presented, his years of treatment and rehabilitation since August 2021, and his continued treatment for mental health issues—does not warrant a term that would require him to undergo a reinstatement hearing. This proposed discipline is consistent with analogous precedent, which has imposed one-year suspensions for cases involving sexual relations with clients. See Toussant, supra; Shainberg, supra; Knight, supra. The additional two years of a stayed suspension, with probation and the condition that Respondent continue his mental health treatment, will provide further assurance that Respondent will not engage in similar misconduct in the future.

103. Accordingly, ODC and Respondent submit that a suspension of three years, with the last two years stayed, with probation and the proposed conditions, is appropriate discipline.

WHEREFORE, ODC and Respondent respectfully request that:

- a. Pursuant to Rule 215(e) and 215(g)(2), Pa.R.D.E., a three-member panel of the Disciplinary Board review and approve this Joint Petition In Support Of Discipline On Consent and file a recommendation with the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania that Respondent receive a three-year suspension, with one year served, and two years to be stayed with probation, subject to the following conditions:
  - i. Respondent shall undergo counseling throughout the three-year period of his suspension, on at least a monthly basis or as prescribed by his mental healthcare professional;
  - ii. Respondent shall cooperate with the directions of the mental healthcare professional supervising his treatment;
  - iii. Respondent shall file quarterly written reports with the Board Prothonotary which shall reflect his continued compliance with these conditions, and shall attach reports from his mental healthcare professional verifying the above counseling and treatment; and

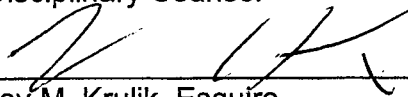
iv. Respondent shall not commit any violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct or Rules of Disciplinary Enforcement.

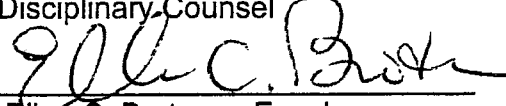
- b. Respondent shall comply with all of the provisions of Pa.R.D.E. 217; and
- c. Pursuant to Pa.R.D.E. 215(i), the Three-Member Panel of the Disciplinary Board recommend that the Supreme Court enter an order for Respondent to pay the necessary expenses incurred in the investigation and prosecution of this matter, and that under Pa.R.D.E. 208(g)(1) all expenses be paid by Respondent within 30 days after the notice of the taxed expenses is sent to Respondent.

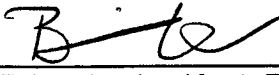
Respectfully submitted,

OFFICE OF DISCIPLINARY COUNSEL

Thomas J. Farrell  
Chief Disciplinary Counsel

By   
Jeffrey M. Krulik, Esquire  
Disciplinary Counsel

By   
Ellen C. Brotman, Esquire  
Counsel for Respondent

By   
Brian Dooley Kent, Esquire  
Respondent

4/2/2025  
Date

3/31/2025  
Date

3-31-2025  
Date



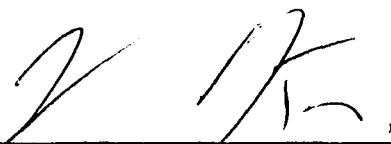
BEFORE THE DISCIPLINARY BOARD OF THE  
SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA

OFFICE OF DISCIPLINARY COUNSEL,	:	No. _____	Disciplinary Docket
Petitioner	:	No. _____	Supreme Court
	:		
	:	No. _____	DB 2025
	:		
v.	:		Nos. C1-22-917, and C1-22-91
	:		
	:		Atty. Reg. No. 94221
	:		
BRIAN DOOLEY KENT,	:		
Respondent	:		(Philadelphia)


VERIFICATION

The statements contained in the foregoing Joint Petition In Support Of Discipline On Consent under Pa.R.D.E. 215(d) are true and correct to the best of our knowledge or information and belief and are made subject to the penalties of 18 Pa.C.S. § 4904, relating to unsworn falsification to authorities.


4/2/2025  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jeffrey M. Krulik, Esquire  
Disciplinary Counsel

3-31-2025  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Ellen C. Brotman, Esquire  
Counsel for Respondent

3-31-2025  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Brian Dooley Kent, Esquire  
Respondent

# **Exhibit A**

**UNAVAILABLE –  
CONFIDENTIAL  
DOCUMENT**

# **Exhibit B**

**UNAVAILABLE –  
CONFIDENTIAL  
DOCUMENT**

BEFORE THE DISCIPLINARY BOARD OF THE  
SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA

OFFICE OF DISCIPLINARY COUNSEL,	:	No. _____ Disciplinary Docket
Petitioner	:	No. _____ Supreme Court
	:	
	:	No. _____ DB 2025
v.	:	
	:	Nos. C1-22-917, and C1-22-91
	:	
	:	Atty. Reg. No. 94221
BRIAN DOOLEY KENT,	:	
Respondent	:	(Philadelphia)

AFFIDAVIT UNDER RULE 215(d), Pa.R.D.E.

Respondent, Brian Dooley Kent, hereby states that he consents to the imposition of a suspension of three years, with one year served, and two years stayed with probation, subject to conditions, as jointly recommended by Petitioner, Office of Disciplinary Counsel, and Respondent in the Joint Petition in Support of Discipline on Consent Under Pa.R.D.E. 215(d) ("Joint Petition"), and further states that:

1. His consent is freely and voluntarily rendered; he is not being subjected to coercion or duress; he is fully aware of the implications of submitting the consent; and he has consulted with counsel in connection with the decision to consent to discipline;

2. He is aware that there is presently pending a proceeding involving allegations that he has been guilty of misconduct as set forth in the Joint Petition;

3. He acknowledges that the material facts set forth in the Joint Petition are true; and

4. He consents because he knows that if the charges continued to be prosecuted in the pending proceeding, he could not successfully defend against them.

*Brian Dooley Kent*

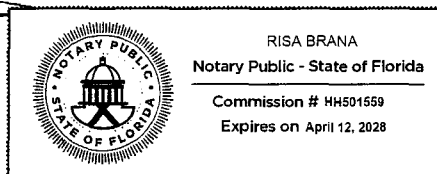
Brian Dooley Kent, Esquire  
Respondent

Sworn to and subscribed

before me this 31st

day of March, 2025.

  
Notary Public Risa Brana



State of Florida

County of Miami-Dade

Sworn to (or affirmed) and subscribed before me by means of online notarization,  
this 03/31/2025 by Brian Dooley Kent.

Commission Expires 04/12/2028

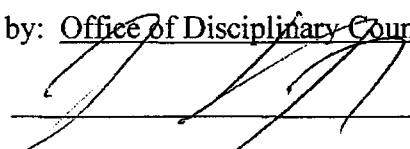
☐ Personally Known OR ☒ Produced Identification

Type of Identification Produced DRIVER LICENSE

**CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE**

I certify that this filing complies with the provisions of the *Public Access Policy of the Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania: Case Records of the Appellate and Trial Courts* that require filing confidential information and documents differently than non-confidential information and documents.

Submitted by: Office of Disciplinary Counsel

Signature: 

Name: Jeffrey M. Krulik, Disciplinary Counsel

Attorney No. (if applicable): 57110