



FILED

Aug 11, 2023

STATE BAR OF NEVADA

BY: *[Signature]*

OFFICE OF BAR COUNSEL

Case Nos.: SBN22-00282; SBN23-00580

STATE BAR OF NEVADA

SOUTHERN NEVADA DISCIPLINARY BOARD

STATE BAR OF NEVADA,

Complainant,

vs.

LEILA LOUISE HALE, ESQ.

STATE BAR NO. 7368

Respondent.

PUBLIC REPRIMAND

TO: LEILA LOUISE HALE, ESQ.
Nevada Bar No. 7368
1661 W. Horizon Ridge Pkwy. Suite 200
Henderson, NV 89012

A panel of the Southern Nevada Disciplinary Board has reviewed the two cases captioned above against you. We found that you have violated the Rules of Professional Conduct, which requires a Public Reprimand to ensure your professionalism and adherence to ethical standards. We encourage you to take appropriate action to prevent similar misconduct in the future.

In 2017, two unrelated clients, Natalie Ramsey Brown and Joseph Antonio Sanchez-Hernandez, employed your firm, Hale Injury Law (HIL), to represent them in personal injury claims after sustaining injuries in automobile accidents.

Both Brown and Sanchez-Hernandez sought medical treatment from Jeffrey Gross, M.D. Eventually, HIL initiated litigation by filing separate complaints on behalf of Brown

1 and Sanchez-Hernandez. In preparation for arbitration and trial, HIL employed Dr. Gross
2 as a medical expert to opine on these clients' injuries and provide expert reports for them.
3 Dr. Gross charged fees of \$12,760 and \$17,125 to Brown and Sanchez-Hernandez,
4 respectively, for his services as an expert witness.

5 You were in a long-term relationship with Dr. Gross while HIL represented Brown
6 and Sanchez-Hernandez. We found a significant risk that your relationship with Dr. Gross
7 may materially limit your responsibilities to Brown and Sanchez-Hernandez. This created
8 a conflict of interest. Although you have done so with other clients of HIL, you failed to
9 disclose your relationship to Brown and Sanchez-Hernandez, explain the potential harm,
10 or obtain their informed consent regarding the conflict of interest.

11 In September 2020, your associate, Jolene Manke, left HIL to join another firm.
12 Brown and Sanchez-Hernandez transferred their cases with Manke. HIL then filed liens
13 against the recoveries in both cases, which included reimbursement for expert fees to Dr.
14 Gross of \$12,760 and \$17,125.

15 You directed your bookkeeper to issue an omnibus check from your IOLTA to pay
16 Dr. Gross for these and other cases in which he had provided expert services and had
17 treated clients of HIL on a lien basis. You did not have money in your IOLTA at any time
18 for Brown and you had insufficient money in your IOLTA for Sanchez-Hernandez.
19 Although you instructed your bookkeeper to transfer the necessary funds from your cost
20 account to your IOLTA to cover this check to Dr. Gross, he did not do so.

21 Based on the conduct described above, we find that you violated RPC 1.7(a)(2)
22 (Conflict of Interest: Current Clients). Your personal relationship with Dr. Gross posed a
23 significant risk of materially limiting your responsibilities to Brown and Sanchez-
24 Hernandez. This relationship could have influenced your treatment of Dr. Gross, such as
25 using client funds to pay him instead of advancing your own funds to do so. Moreover, you

1 failed to obtain informed consent from Brown and Sanchez-Hernandez regarding this
2 conflict, as required by RPC 1.7(b).

3 Additionally, we find that you violated RPC 1.15(a) (Safekeeping Property). This rule
4 mandates that lawyers keep clients' funds and other property safe and separate from their
5 own. The act of paying Dr. Gross from your IOLTA for Brown's and Sanchez-Hernandez's
6 cases placed other clients' monies at risk. We understand that you wished to simplify
7 payment to Dr. Gross with a single check. But the best practice is to advance costs from a
8 separate cost account and pay liens after recovery from your IOLTA. Paying a provider from
9 an IOLTA for multiple clients, both pre-recovery and post recovery, creates a risk of
10 commingling firm and client property and a risk of misappropriating other client property
11 from your IOLTA.

12 Considering the gravity of these violations and the impact they have had on the legal
13 proceedings and your clients' trust, it is imperative that you address this conduct promptly.
14 We urge you to reflect upon your actions and to ensure that you uphold the highest ethical
15 standards expected of legal professionals. It is vital to prioritize the best interests of your
16 clients and to keep payments from your cost account and your IOLTA separate.

17 Considering the foregoing, you violated Rule of Professional Conduct ("RPC")
18 1.7(a)(2) (Conflict of Interest: Current Clients) and RPC 1.15(a) (Safekeeping Property) and
19 are hereby PUBLICLY REPRIMANDED.

20 DATED this 9th day of August 2023.

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22 By: _____
23 ROBERT J. CALDWELL, ESQ.
24 Formal Hearing Panel Chair
25 Southern Nevada Disciplinary Board

1 **CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

2 The undersigned hereby certifies a true and correct copy of the **PUBLIC REPRIMAND** was
3 electronically served upon:

- 4 1. Robert Caldwell, Esq. (Panel Chair): rjcalldwelljr@msn.com
5 2. Joshua P. Gilmore, Esq. (Respondent’s Counsel): jgilmore@baileykennedy.com;
6 srusso@baileykennedy.com
7 3. Daniel M. Hooge, Esq. (Bar Counsel): danh@nvbar.org

8 DATED this 11th day of August, 2023.

9 *Sonia Del Rio*
10 _____
11 Sonia Del Rio an employee of
12 the State Bar of Nevada.
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