

VIRGINIA:

BEFORE THE SEVENTH DISTRICT SUBCOMMITTEE  
OF THE VIRGINIA STATE BAR

IN THE MATTER OF  
PETER L. GOLDMAN

VS B Docket No. 22-070-125043

**SUBCOMMITTEE DETERMINATION**  
**(PUBLIC REPRIMAND WITH TERMS)**

On August 17, 2023, and November 1, 2023, meetings were held in this matter before a duly convened Seventh District Subcommittee consisting of Ryan Ruzic, Esquire, Subcommittee Chair; Bret Reed, Esquire; and Matt Caesar, Lay Member. During the meeting on November 1, 2023, the Subcommittee voted to approve an Agreed Disposition for a Public Reprimand with Terms pursuant to Part 6, § IV, ¶ 13-15.B.4. of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia. The Agreed Disposition was entered into by the Virginia State Bar by Joseph M. Caturano, Jr., Assistant Bar Counsel; Peter L. Goldman (“Respondent”); and Bernard J. DiMuro, Esquire, counsel for Respondent.

WHEREFORE, the Seventh District Subcommittee of the Virginia State Bar hereby serves upon Respondent the following Public Reprimand with Terms:

**I. FINDINGS OF FACT**

1. Respondent was licensed to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1996. At all times referenced herein, Respondent has been licensed to practice law and in good standing.
2. On June 15, 2018, Sayle Al sarhan (“Complainant”) engaged Respondent for representation in a lawsuit against Nedal Hamdan and Solution Auto, LLC in the Loudoun County Circuit Court (“Court”). The lawsuit alleged claims of conversion, breach of duty pursuant to the Virginia Partnership Act, and unjust enrichment (“the litigation”). (Loudoun Circuit Court: CL-115208-00). Respondent noted his appearance in the litigation with the Court on June 20, 2018.

3. The Fee Contract of June 15, 2018, prepared by Respondent, provided, in relevant part:

My fee for professional services is a fixed fee of \$5,000.00. You paid \$1,500.00 on June 15, 2018. Thank you. You have agreed to pay \$1,000.00 on July 15, August 15, September 15, 2018, and \$500.00 on October 15, 2018. If the case goes to trial, you will pay an additional \$2,500.00 fee.

4. Pursuant to the Fee Contract, a check in the amount of \$1,500.00, was paid by Complainant to Respondent on June 15, 2018. Respondent deposited the check, dated June 15, 2018, into his checking account at Bank of America on June 16, 2018.
5. On June 27, 2018, Respondent, on behalf of Complainant, filed an Answer to a Counterclaim in the litigation. Approximately nine (9) months later, on March 26, 2019, Respondent propounded discovery upon the opposing party in the litigation. Subsequent to a motion to compel discovery filed by Respondent with the Court, Respondent acknowledges that adequate discovery responses were produced by the opposing party in October 2019.
6. Respondent provided information and documents (including time records) reflecting that he performed other tasks for the Complainant during the course of his representation of Complainant in the litigation. Respondent contends that he was hampered in his representation of Complainant by his client's refusal to meet and lack of cooperation in the litigation process.
7. On February 11, 2022, the Court issued a *Notice of Removal of Case from the Active Docket* upon Respondent as a result of "no orders or proceedings for the past two years ..." As such, the litigation would "be removed from the Court's active docket" unless a praeipe and motion (requesting the matter remain open on the court's active docket) were filed with the Court by March 4, 2022, and placed upon the docket on March 18, 2022. As Respondent had moved his law office, Respondent indicates that he had not received the Notice from the Court when Respondent and Complainant met on February 18, 2022, to discuss the litigation.
8. On February 18, 2022, at the conclusion of an office conference, Respondent terminated the representation of Complainant in the litigation.
9. On March 11, 2022, the Respondent sent correspondence to Complainant on the return of Complainant's files and documents and enclosed a copy of the *Notice of Removal of Case from Active Docket*, issued the previous month (on February 11, 2022) by the Court and giving Complainant options on how to address the Notice. Respondent anticipated that new counsel would enter an appearance and that a substitution order would be executed. However, that did not occur.

10. Respondent did not file a Motion for Leave to Withdraw as Counsel with the Court and an Order Granting Respondent Leave to Withdraw as Counsel for Complainant was never entered by the Court.
11. On March 25, 2022, the Court entered a Final Order upon the Notice issued to Respondent on February 11, 2022.

## **II. NATURE OF MISCONDUCT**

Such conduct by Respondent constitutes misconduct in violation of the following provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct:

### **Rule 1.15 Safekeeping Property**

#### **(a) Depositing Funds**

- (1) All funds received or held by a lawyer or law firm on behalf of a client or a third party, or held by a lawyer as a fiduciary, other than reimbursement of advances for costs and expenses shall be deposited in one or more identifiable trust accounts[.]

### **Rule 1.16 Declining or Terminating Representation**

\* \* \*

- (c) In any court proceeding, counsel of record shall not withdraw except by leave of court after compliance with notice requirements pursuant to applicable Rules of Court. In any other matter, a lawyer shall continue representation notwithstanding good cause for terminating the representation, when ordered to do so by a tribunal.

## **III. PUBLIC REPRIMAND WITH TERMS**

Accordingly, having approved the Agreed Disposition, it is the decision of the Subcommittee to impose a Public Reprimand with Terms. The terms are:

## 1. NO FURTHER MISCONDUCT

For a period of one (1) year following the entry of the Subcommittee Determination, Respondent will not engage in any conduct that violates the Virginia Rules of Professional Conduct, including any amendments thereto, and/or which violates any analogous provisions, and any amendments thereto, of the disciplinary rules of another jurisdiction in which Respondent may be admitted to practice law. The terms contained in this paragraph will be deemed to have been violated when any ruling, determination, judgment, order, or decree has been issued against Respondent by a disciplinary tribunal in Virginia or elsewhere, containing a finding that Respondent has violated one or more provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct referred to above, *provided, however*, that the conduct upon which such finding was based occurred within the period referred to above, and provided, further, that such ruling has become final.


## 2. MCLE

Within six (6) months of the service of the Subcommittee Determination in this matter, Respondent will complete six (6) hours of continuing legal education credits by attending courses approved by the Virginia State Bar in the subject matter of legal ethics. Respondent's Continuing Legal Education attendance obligation set forth in this paragraph will not be applied toward his Mandatory Continuing Legal Education requirement in Virginia or any other jurisdictions in which Respondent may be licensed to practice law. Respondent will certify his compliance with the terms set forth in this paragraph by delivering a fully and properly executed Virginia MCLE Board Certification of Attendance form (Form 2) to Assistant Bar Counsel, promptly following his attendance of each such CLE program(s).

If any of the terms are not met by the time specified, pursuant to Part 6, § IV, ¶ 13-15.F of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia, the District Committee shall impose a Certification for Sanction Determination pursuant to Part 6, § IV, ¶ 13-15.F-G of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia. Any proceeding initiated due to failure to comply with terms will be considered a new matter, and an administrative fee and costs will be assessed.

Pursuant to Part 6, § IV, ¶ 13-9.E. of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia, the Clerk of the Disciplinary System shall assess costs.

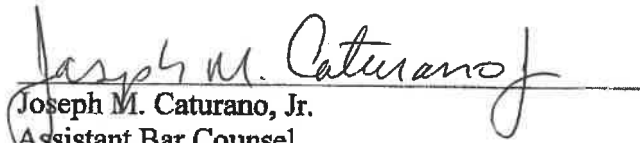
SEVENTH DISTRICT SUBCOMMITTEE OF  
THE VIRGINIA STATE BAR



Ryan Ruzic, Esquire  
Subcommittee Chair

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I certify that on the 6 day of November, 2023, a true and complete copy of the Subcommittee Determination (Public Reprimand With Terms) was sent by certified mail to Peter L. Goldman, Respondent, at 1800 Diagonal Road, Suite 600, Alexandria, Virginia 22314, Respondent's last address of record with the Virginia State Bar, and Bernard J. DiMuro, Esquire, counsel for Respondent, at 1001 N. Fairfax Street, Suite 510, Alexandria, Virginia 22314, and by email at [bdimuro@dimuro.com](mailto:bdimuro@dimuro.com).



Joseph M. Caturano, Jr.  
Assistant Bar Counsel