

People v. Gordon D. Sanchez. 19PDJ038. May 28, 2019.

The Presiding Disciplinary Judge approved the parties' conditional admission of misconduct and suspended Gordon D. Sanchez (attorney registration number 12919) from the practice of law for one year and one day, all to be stayed upon the successful completion of a two-year period of probation. The probation takes effect July 2, 2019.

In May 2017, Sanchez entered into a fee agreement with a client in a criminal case. The agreement provided, in part, that the client would pay \$12,500.00 for representation up through a disposition hearing. The client paid Sanchez the same day the agreement was signed. Even though no disposition or comparable hearing had yet taken place, Sanchez deposited \$7,500.00 of the fee into his operating account. The remaining \$5,000.00 was not immediately deposited into any account. The \$5,000.00 was deposited into Sanchez's operating account in late June 2017.

The client was charged in a new matter in November 2017 but hired a different lawyer to represent him in that case. The matters were set for a court appearance in January 2018. Though the other counsel appeared with the client, Sanchez did not appear. Between January and March 2018, the client tried numerous times to contact Sanchez by phone and in writing, but Sanchez never spoke to the client after late January. In late February, shortly after Sanchez's mother died, new counsel substituted into the original criminal case. After the representation ended, Sanchez failed to provide a requested accounting as to legal fees.

Through his conduct, Sanchez violated Colo. RPC 1.4(a)(3) (a lawyer shall keep a client reasonably informed about the status of the matter); Colo. RPC 1.4(a)(4) (a lawyer shall promptly comply with reasonable requests for information); Colo. RPC 1.5(f) (a lawyer does not earn fees until a benefit is conferred on the client or the lawyer performs a legal service); Colo. RPC 1.15A(a) (a lawyer shall hold client property separate from the lawyer's own property); and Colo. RPC 1.16(d) (a lawyer shall protect a client's interests upon termination of the representation, including by returning unearned fees and any papers and property to which the client is entitled).

The case file is public per C.R.C.P. 251.31.