

THIS REPORT IS NOT A FINAL ORDER OF DISCIPLINE*

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURT OF APPEALS
BOARD ON PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY
AD HOC HEARING COMMITTEE



FILED

Aug 20 2026 3:51pm

Board on Professional Responsibility

In the Matter of: :
:
SHOFALI JINDAL, :
: Board Docket No. 25-ND-006
Respondent. : Disciplinary Docket No. 2024-D010
:
A Member of the Bar of the :
District of Columbia Court of Appeals :
(Bar Registration No. 994533) :

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE
AD HOC HEARING COMMITTEE APPROVING
AMENDED PETITION FOR NEGOTIATED DISCIPLINE

I. PROCEDURAL HISTORY

This matter came before the Ad Hoc Hearing Committee on May 26, 2026, for a limited hearing on an Amended Petition for Negotiated Discipline (the “Petition”), filed on March 31, 2026. The members of the Hearing Committee are Mary Kuntz, Chair; John Johnson, Public Member; and Charles Eisen, Attorney Member. The Office of Disciplinary Counsel was represented by Assistant Disciplinary Counsel Mariah K. Shaver. Respondent, Shofali Jindal, appeared *pro se*.

The Hearing Committee has carefully considered the Petition signed by Disciplinary Counsel and Respondent, the supporting Amended Affidavit of Negotiated Disposition (the “Affidavit”) submitted by Respondent, and the representations during the limited hearing made by Respondent and Disciplinary

* Consult the ‘Disciplinary Decisions’ tab on the Board on Professional Responsibility’s website (www.dcattorneydiscipline.org) to view any subsequent decisions in this case.

Counsel. The Hearing Committee also has fully considered the Chair’s *in camera* review of Disciplinary Counsel’s files and records and *ex parte* communications with Disciplinary Counsel. For the reasons set forth below, the Hearing Committee finds that the negotiated discipline of a six-month suspension is justified and recommends that it be imposed by the Court.

II. FINDINGS PURSUANT TO D.C. BAR R. XI, § 12.1(c) AND BOARD RULE 17.5

The Hearing Committee, after full and careful consideration, finds that:

1. The Petition and Affidavit are full, complete, and in proper order.
2. Respondent is aware that there is currently pending against her an investigation into allegations of misconduct. Tr. 17;¹ Aff. ¶ 2.
3. The allegations that were brought to the attention of Disciplinary Counsel are that Respondent engaged in conduct that violated D.C. Rules of Professional Conduct (“Rules”) 8.1(a) (knowing false statement to Disciplinary Counsel during the course of an investigation), 8.4(c) (conduct involving misrepresentation by omission and deception), 8.4(d) (conduct that seriously interferes with the administration of justice). Pet. at 7-8.
4. Respondent has freely and voluntarily acknowledged that the material facts and misconduct reflected in the Petition are true. Tr. 18-21; Aff. ¶¶ 4, 6. Specifically, Respondent acknowledges that:

¹ “Tr.” refers to the transcript of the limited hearing held on May 26, 2026.

(1) Ms. Jindal is a member of the Bar of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals, having been admitted June 7, 2010, and assigned Bar Number 994533.

(2) On October 1, 2023, J.P. was pulled over while he was driving in Maryland. Ms. Jindal was in the car with him. Various controlled substances were found in the car during that traffic stop. Ms. Jindal, intending to protect J.P., told an officer that the controlled substances all belonged to her. The psilocybin [sic] found in the car did belong to her, and she was aware that J.P. had cannabis with him, but at that time she did not know there were additional controlled substances in the vehicle. She was subsequently arrested and released on bond. Ms. Jindal resolved her criminal charges with a *nolo contendere* plea to one count of possession of psilocybin [sic], a controlled substance. She was sentenced to a term of probation before judgment, which allowed her to avoid a judgment of conviction by successfully completing her probation on February 25, 2025.

(3) J.P. was also arrested during the traffic stop. He was charged with driving under the influence and was served with an outstanding parole warrant. He remained in custody while those matters were pending and was housed at the [Metropolitan Transition Center in Baltimore, Maryland (“MTC”)]. J.P. was not charged with possession of the controlled substances found in the vehicle.

(4) On December 11, 2023, Ms. Jindal emailed the MTC stating she needed “to do another legal visit” with J.P. on December 16, 2023. She had previously scheduled and attended a legal visit with J.P. at the MTC.

(5) Ms. Jindal never informed the MTC that she had a personal relationship with J.P. or that she had been arrested during the same incident that had resulted in J.P.’s incarceration.

(6) When Ms. Jindal appeared for the December 16, 2023, visit, she said she was requesting an attorney visit and presented a photocopy of her D.C. Bar card.

(7) At the conclusion of Ms. Jindal’s meeting with J.P., MTC staff noticed that J.P. had a stack of papers he did not bring to the meeting. The MTC generally requires attorneys to send legal documents via legal mail, rather than deliver them in person during legal visits.

(8) The papers were reviewed and were found to contain the incident report regarding the October 1, 2023, traffic stop, which included Ms. Jindal’s name and booking photo. After learning [from these documents] that Ms. Jindal had also been arrested during the incident resulting in J.P.’s detention, MTC staff discovered that J.P. had identified Ms. Jindal as his fiancé[e] in his booking paperwork.

(9) Warden Landerkin’s complaint followed.

(10) During a phone call with [the Office of Disciplinary Counsel (“ODC”)] on February 7, 2024, Ms. Jindal stated that J.P. had been her client

since June 2023. Ms. Jindal explained that she represented J.P. and provided him with legal advice related to businesses he managed but did not represent him in his pending criminal case. She further indicated that she went to visit J.P. as his attorney. Ms. Jindal advised that a Maryland attorney she had consulted with told her that she could visit J.P. at the MTC, and she did so based on that information. She also said that she had visited J.P. before without issue, and other than arriving late, there was nothing wrong or inappropriate with her December 16, 2023[,] visit. Ms. Jindal further stated that J.P. was not her co-defendant, as the complaint alleged. She additionally indicated that the legal documents she brought to J.P. were confiscated.

(11) On February 14, 2024, Ms. Jindal provided a written response to the complaint, consistent with the statements above and generally denying any misconduct occurred. The written response additionally contended that the complaint was filed to hurt Ms. Jindal's credibility because she was contemplating filing a lawsuit against the MTC for interfering with inmate rights.

(12) In the written response Ms. Jindal again specifically stated that she had an ongoing legal relationship with J.P[.], who was her client, and that she was conducting a legal visit with him on the date in question. Ms. Jindal admitted that she also had a personal relationship with J.P., but claimed it was irrelevant. She further explained that she was not a co-defendant of J.P.'s, as

the complaint suggested, because they had not been charged with the same offenses.

(13) Ms. Jindal's written response further indicated that before conducting a legal visit with J.P., she had consulted a Maryland attorney who practices criminal law. She stated that when the correctional officers raised concerns about the paperwork she had given J.P. she offered to take it back and mail it to him, noting that on a previous visit she was able to give documents to J.P. Ms. Jindal averred there was no contraband in the papers.

(14) On May 21, 2024, Ms. Jindal attended an in-person meeting with ODC. She explained that she and J.P. met at a party. While she had provided legal advice to J.P. regarding a business license and two family-related issues, Ms. Jindal did not represent J.P. in his Maryland criminal case. Ms. Jindal admitted that she and J.P. had been in a romantic relationship but said they were never engaged. Ms. Jindal explained that she scheduled the December 16, 2023, visit so she could have J.P. sign a power of attorney form that would allow her to assist with his finances while he was incarcerated. During that visit she also gave J.P. copies of documents she had received regarding the October 1, 2023, traffic stop[,] because J.P. had not yet had the opportunity to review them. At that time, Ms. Jindal, who has never practiced criminal law, did not fully appreciate that the MTC would generally not permit unmonitored visits, such as a legal visit, between romantic partners or between people who were arrested during the same incident.

(15) Ms. Jindal admits she made a mistake and has expressed remorse for what occurred.

(16) Ms. Jindal's conduct violated the following District of Columbia Rules of Professional Conduct:

(a) Rule 8.1(a) in that Ms. Jindal knowingly made false statements of fact to ODC during a disciplinary investigation related to the nature of her relationship with J.P.;

(b) Rule 8.4(c) in that she engaged in conduct involving misrepresentation by omission and deception when she held herself out as J.P.'s attorney to the MTC, failed to disclose that she had a personal relationship with J.P. and had been arrested at the same time he had been in order to schedule and attend an unmonitored legal visit with J.P., and in that she made similar misrepresentations to ODC about the nature of her relationship with J.P.; and

(c) Rule 8.4(d) in that Ms. Jindal engaged in conduct that seriously interfered with the administration of justice when she told an officer that controlled substances belonged to her when they did not and when she provided false information to ODC about the nature of her relationship with J.P. during the initial phase of its investigation.

Pet. at 3-8.

5. Respondent is agreeing to the disposition because Respondent believes that she cannot successfully defend against discipline based on the stipulated misconduct. Tr. 16; Aff. ¶ 5.

6. Disciplinary Counsel has made no promise to Respondent other than what is contained in the Petition. Aff. ¶ 7. That promise is that Disciplinary Counsel agrees not to pursue any other charges or seek any other sanction for the conduct set forth in the Petition. Pet. at 8. Respondent confirmed during the limited hearing that there have been no other promises or inducements other than those set forth in the Petition. Tr. 21.

7. Respondent is aware of her right to confer with counsel and is proceeding *pro se*. Tr. 9, 12; Aff. ¶ 1.

8. Respondent has freely and voluntarily acknowledged the facts and misconduct reflected in the Petition and agreed to the sanction set forth therein. Tr. 18-21; Aff. ¶¶ 3-4, 6.

9. Respondent is not being subjected to coercion or duress. Tr. 21; Aff. ¶ 6.

10. Respondent is competent and was not under the influence of any substance or medication that would affect her ability to make informed decisions at the limited hearing. Tr. 9-10.

11. Respondent is fully aware of the implications of the disposition being entered into, including, but not limited to, the following:

- a) she has the right to consult with counsel prior to entering this negotiated disposition;

- b) she will waive her right to cross-examine adverse witnesses and to compel witnesses to appear on her behalf;
- c) she will waive her right to have Disciplinary Counsel prove each and every charge by clear and convincing evidence;
- d) she will waive her right to file exceptions to reports and recommendations filed with the Board and with the Court;
- e) the negotiated disposition, if approved, may affect her present and future ability to practice law;
- f) the negotiated disposition, if approved, may affect her bar memberships in other jurisdictions; and
- g) any sworn statement by Respondent in her affidavit or any statements made by Respondent during the proceeding may be used to impeach her testimony if there is a subsequent hearing on the merits.

Tr. 9, 11-14; Aff. ¶¶ 1, 9-10, 12.

12. Respondent and Disciplinary Counsel have agreed that the sanction in this matter should be a six-month suspension. Pet. at 8; Tr. 20-21. Respondent further understands that she must file with the Court an affidavit pursuant to D.C. Bar Rule XI, § 14(g) in order for her suspension to be deemed effective for purposes of reinstatement. Tr. 24-25; Aff. ¶ 13.

14. Disciplinary Counsel and Respondent have provided the following circumstances in mitigation: (1) Respondent has no prior disciplinary history; (2) Respondent has shown remorse and taken full responsibility for the misconduct; (3) the misconduct occurred during an unusually stressful period, which is unlikely to recur; and (4) no clients were prejudiced by Respondent's conduct. Pet. at 10-11; Aff. ¶ 14; *see also* Tr. at 22-24. The Hearing Committee has taken these circumstances into consideration.

15. The complainant, Warden Kathleen Landerkin, appeared at the limited hearing and made a statement pursuant to Board Rule 17.4(a). The complainant expressed satisfaction with the disciplinary process, which the Hearing Committee has taken into consideration. Tr. 25.

III. DISCUSSION

The Hearing Committee shall recommend approval of a petition for negotiated discipline if it finds:

- (1) The attorney has knowingly and voluntarily acknowledged the facts and misconduct reflected in the petition and agreed to the sanction set forth therein;
- (2) The facts set forth in the petition or as shown at the hearing support the admission of misconduct and the agreed upon sanction; and
- (3) The sanction agreed upon is justified.

D.C. Bar R. XI, § 12.1(c)(1)-(3); *see also* Board Rule 17.5(a)(i)-(iii).

A. Respondent Has Knowingly and Voluntarily Acknowledged the Facts and Misconduct and Agreed to the Stipulated Sanction.

The Hearing Committee finds that Respondent has knowingly and voluntarily acknowledged the facts and misconduct reflected in the Petition and agreed to the sanction therein. Respondent, after being placed under oath, Tr. 8, admitted the stipulated facts and charges set forth in the Petition, and denied that she is under duress or has been coerced into entering into this disposition. *See supra* Paragraphs 8-9. Respondent understands the implications and consequences of entering into this negotiated discipline. *See supra* Paragraph 11.

Respondent has acknowledged that any and all promises that have been made to her by Disciplinary Counsel as part of this negotiated discipline are set forth in writing in the Petition and that there are no other promises or inducements that have been made to her. *See supra* Paragraph 6.

B. The Stipulated Facts Support the Admissions of Misconduct and the Agreed-Upon Sanction.

The Hearing Committee has carefully reviewed the facts set forth in the Petition and established during the hearing and concludes that they support the admission of misconduct and the agreed-upon sanction. Moreover, Respondent is agreeing to this negotiated discipline because she believes that she could not successfully defend against the misconduct described in the Petition. *See supra* Paragraph 5.

With regard to the second factor, the Petition states that Respondent violated Rule 8.1(a) (knowing false statements to Disciplinary Counsel during a disciplinary investigation). The evidence supports Respondent's admission that she violated Rule 8.1(a) in that the stipulated facts describe that Respondent initially told Disciplinary Counsel only that J.P. was her client and that she visited him at the MTC as his attorney. She did not initially disclose that she had a personal romantic relationship with J.P.

The Petition states that Respondent violated Rule 8.4(c) (misrepresentation by omission and deception). The evidence supports Respondent's admission that she violated Rule 8.4(c) in that the stipulated facts describe that Respondent held herself out as J.P.'s attorney while visiting him at the MTC, which allowed her to have an

unmonitored legal visit with him. Respondent failed to inform officials at the MTC that she had a personal romantic relationship with J.P. or that she had also been arrested as part of the same traffic stop. This misrepresentation allowed her to improperly have an unmonitored visit with J.P. at the MTC. Respondent made similar misrepresentations to Disciplinary Counsel during the disciplinary investigation.

The Petition states that Respondent violated Rule 8.4(d) (conduct that seriously interferes with the administration of justice). The evidence supports Respondent's admission that she violated Rule 8.4(d) in that the stipulated facts describe that Respondent initially claimed all the controlled substances found during the traffic stop were hers, when they were not, and that she provided false information to Disciplinary Counsel at the outset of its investigation.

C. The Agreed-Upon Sanction Is Justified.

The third factor the Hearing Committee must consider is whether the sanction agreed upon is justified. *See* D.C. Bar R. XI, § 12.1(c); Board Rule 17.5(a)(iii) (explaining that hearing committees should consider “the record as a whole, including the nature of the misconduct, any charges or investigations that Disciplinary Counsel has agreed not to pursue, the strengths or weaknesses of Disciplinary Counsel’s evidence, any circumstances in aggravation and mitigation (including respondent’s cooperation with Disciplinary Counsel and acceptance of responsibility), and relevant precedent”); *In re Johnson*, 984 A.2d 176, 181 (D.C. 2009) (per curiam) (providing that a negotiated sanction may not be “unduly

lenient”). Based on the record as a whole, including the stipulated circumstances in mitigation, the Hearing Committee Chair’s *in camera* review of Disciplinary Counsel’s investigative file and *ex parte* discussion with Disciplinary Counsel, and the Committee’s review of relevant precedent, the Hearing Committee concludes that the agreed-upon sanction is justified and not unduly lenient, for the following reasons:

The charged conduct arose out of a single incident and does not appear to reflect ongoing or habitual misconduct. Respondent has no record of prior discipline. While Respondent’s statement to the police that the controlled substances in the car were all hers was clearly deliberate, it did not benefit her directly but was intended to protect her companion. That statement also rested on partial ignorance: she knew she possessed psilocybin and that J.P. had cannabis on him, but she did not know the full range of controlled substances in the car for which she was haplessly asserting ownership. Respondent was forthright in taking responsibility for the psilocybin, and she successfully completed her probation before judgment for her crime. Her conduct at the MTC was egregious in that it sought to deliberately exploit her status as an attorney in order to obtain an unmonitored conference with a detainee. The seriousness of this conduct was underlined by the appearance of the Warden of MTC, the complainant, at the hearing. It was mitigated somewhat by the fact that, while not representing J.P. in his criminal case, she did provide legal advice

related to a business license and two family issues.² Further no client was prejudiced by her conduct. Finally, Respondent fully admitted her misconduct in failing to be fully truthful to the police, to the MTC, and to Disciplinary Counsel. She has taken responsibility for her actions, is remorseful, and avers that she is no longer subject to the unusual job stress to which she attributed this earlier, singular misconduct. Therefore, it seems unlikely that it will be repeated. For these reasons and consistent with the range of sanctions imposed in cases involving comparable misconduct, discussed in what follows, the Hearing Committee concludes that the agreed-upon sanction is justified and not unduly lenient.

² In her responses to Disciplinary Counsel, Respondent indicated that she had provided legal advice to J.P., but it is not clear in the Petition whether Respondent was in a romantic relationship with J.P. at the time she provided advice. If so, there may have been an uncharged violation of Rule 1.7(b)(4), which, absent proper waiver, prohibits a representation where a “lawyer’s professional judgment on behalf of the client will be or reasonably may be adversely affected by the lawyer’s . . . personal interests.” However, the Committee finds that even if the Petition included a Rule 1.7(b)(4) violation, the agreed-upon sanction of a six-month suspension would still be justified and not unduly lenient. *See, e.g., In re Jones-Terrell*, 712 A.2d 496 (D.C. 1998) (imposing a sixty-day suspension for violations of Rules 1.8(a), 1.7(b), 4.2(a), 7.1(b)(3), 8.4(c), and 8.4(d) where the respondent improperly solicited the representation of an already-represented vulnerable party, engaged in multiple conflicts after accepting the representation, and made dishonest statements to a court to secure her appointment as guardian); *In re Hager*, 812 A.2d 904 (D.C. 2002) (imposing one-year suspension for violations of Rules 1.2(a), 1.4(a), 1.7(b)(4), 1.8(e), 1.16(a), 1.16(d), 5.6(b), and 8.4(c) where the respondent’s secretive fee arrangement during settlement negotiations for a potential class action was both dishonest and a conflict of interest, and the sanction was aggravated by a lack of remorse and the impact on “an unusually large number of clients”).

Six-to-twelve-month suspensions have been imposed in other cases involving dishonesty, false statements during the course of a disciplinary investigation, and interference with the administration of justice. *See, e.g., In re Soto*, 298 A.3d 762, 764, 766-69 (D.C. 2023) (imposing six-month suspension for violations of Rules 8.1(a), 8.4(c), and 8.4(d) where the respondent made unauthorized alterations to a notarized deed and misled Disciplinary Counsel during its investigation by omitting information in responses); *In re Powell*, 898 A.2d 365, 365-66 (D.C. 2006) (per curiam) (imposing one-year suspension with proof of fitness for violations of Rules 8.1(a), 8.4(c), and 8.4(d) where the respondent misrepresented his bar status to a federal district court while on an interim suspension from the D.C. Bar pending the outcome of a disciplinary proceeding for a criminal misdemeanor); *In re Robertson*, 618 A.2d 720, 721-22, 725-26 (D.C. 1993) (imposing a six-month suspension for a reciprocal case finding a violation under a prior version of Rule 8.4(c) where the respondent misrepresented to a correctional facility that a reporter he brought into the facility to interview his client was also an attorney, with prior discipline as an aggravating factor);³ *In re Fitzgerald*, Board Docket No. 10-BD-057, at 1-3, 21-22, 27 (BPR Dec. 31, 2013) (recommending one-year suspension with proof of fitness before reinstatement for violations of Rules 1.16(d), 8.1(a), 8.1(b), 8.4(c), and 8.4(d)

³ Although *Robertson* was a reciprocal matter, the Court could not impose identical reciprocal discipline; instead, it determined that a six-month suspension would be both functionally equivalent to the foreign discipline and would be warranted in a non-reciprocal case. 618 A.2d at 724-26. The Court’s sanction analysis emphasized the seriousness of the respondent’s “deliberate and intentional breach of courthouse security” in order to bring the reporter into the facility, which the Court described as “utterly inexcusable” and “unthinkable.” *Id.* at 725-26.

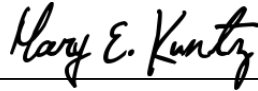
where the respondent failed to turn over a client file to successor counsel and failed to respond or deceitfully responded to Disciplinary Counsel’s investigation, aggravated by prejudice to the client, a lack of remorse, and dishonest testimony in the disciplinary hearing), *recommendation adopted after no exceptions filed*, 109 A.3d 619 (D.C. 2014). Furthermore, as the Court has explained, a “six-month or one-year suspension . . . ‘gives the Bar and the public notice that we consider the attorney’s misconduct serious.’” *In re Elgin*, 918 A.2d 362, 382 (D.C. 2007) (quoting *In re Reback*, 513 A.2d 226, 233 (D.C. 1986) (en banc)); *see also id.* at 383 (“Despite [the respondent’s] lengthy, untarnished career, we are troubled by his apparent abandonment of several of the major tenets of professional conduct—honesty, openness about conflicts of interest, and cooperation with the administration of justice . . .”).

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

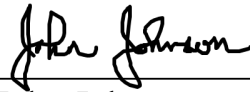
For the reasons stated above, it is the recommendation of this Hearing Committee that the negotiated discipline be approved and that the Court impose a six-month suspension.

We further recommend that the Court's Order direct Respondent's attention to the requirements of D.C. Bar Rule XI, § 14, and their effect on eligibility for reinstatement. *See* D.C. Bar R. XI, § 16(c).

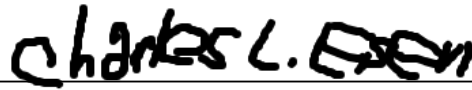
AD HOC HEARING COMMITTEE



Mary Kuntz
Chair



John Johnson
Public Member



Charles Eisen
Attorney Member