

*People v. Laurel Meyers Byrnes. 24PDJ040. December 18, 2024.*

The Presiding Disciplinary Judge approved the parties' stipulation to discipline and suspended Laurel Meyers Byrnes (attorney registration number 36257) for one year and one day, all to be stayed upon Meyers Byrnes's successful completion of a two-year period of probation, which carries conditions. Meyers Byrnes's probation takes effect December 18, 2024.

In March 2023, during a pretrial conference in her client's domestic relations matter, Meyers Byrnes represented to the judge presiding over the case that the opposing party was preventing the parties' child from attending a home visit with the client and was interfering in the court-ordered child and family investigation. The opposing party was not present at the conference and was represented by covering counsel, who was unfamiliar with the details of the case and did not dispute Meyers Byrnes's statements. The judge continued the upcoming permanent orders hearing based on Meyers Byrnes's uncontested representations. But the statements were inaccurate and misleading. In fact, the home visit was scheduled to take place that afternoon following the pretrial conference, and the client had informed Meyers Byrnes that his child was not comfortable staying with him other than for the home visit. After the home visit that afternoon, the opposing counsel notified Meyers Byrnes that the home visit had been completed. The opposing counsel also filed a forthwith request for a status conference, stating that Meyers Byrnes had provided false or incomplete information to the court at the pretrial conference. In her response to that filing, Meyers Byrnes did not correct her earlier misstatements and accused the court clerks of misunderstanding or misconstruing what she said at the pretrial conference. The judge issued an order, expressing concerns that Meyers Byrnes had presented false or misleading information and that she had not corrected the record despite having opportunities to do so. The court rescinded the order continuing the permanent orders hearing, and the case proceeded on roughly its original timeline.

Through this conduct, Meyers Byrnes violated Colo. RPC 8.4(c) (it is professional misconduct for a lawyer to engage in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation) and Colo. RPC 8.4(d) (it is professional misconduct for a lawyer to engage in conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice).

The case file is public per C.R.C.P. 242.41(a).