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| SUPREME COURT, STATE OF COLORADO ORIGINAL PROCEEDING IN DISCIPLINE BEFORE THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDING DISCIPLINARY JUDGE 1300 BROADWAY, SUITE 250 DENVER, CO 80203 | |
| Complainant: THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF COLORADO Respondent: DANIEL J. STEINHAUSER, #54606 | Case Number: 25PDJ4 |
| OPINION IMPOSING SANCTIONS UNDER C.R.C.P. 242.31(a) | |

SUMMARY

On October 30, 2025, following a hearing on the sanctions, a hearing board suspended Daniel J. Steinhauser (“Respondent”), Colorado registration number 54606, for one year and one day, with seven months to be served and the remainder to be stayed pending Respondent’s successful completion of a thirty-month period of probation, with conditions. The suspension is scheduled to take effect on December 4, 2025.

In 2024, Respondent was convicted of one count of contributing to the delinquency of a minor, a class-one misdemeanor. Through this misconduct, Respondent violated Colo. RPC 8.4(b), which provides that it is professional misconduct for a lawyer to commit a criminal act that reflects adversely on the lawyer’s honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness as a lawyer in other respects.

I. PROCEDURAL HISTORY

On January 16, 2025, Jonathan P. Blasewitz of the Office of Attorney Regulation Counsel (“the People”) filed a one-claim complaint with Presiding Disciplinary Judge Bryon M. Large (“the PDJ”), alleging that Respondent was convicted of contributing to the delinquency of a minor, a class-one misdemeanor, thereby violating Colo. RPC 8.4(b). Through his counsel, Craig L. Truman, Respondent answered on February 12, 2025, admitting most of the complaint’s factual allegations and the People’s sole claim.

In late February 2025, the PDJ set this matter for a three-day hearing in September 2025. On March 10, 2025, the PDJ granted the People’s unopposed motion for judgment on the pleadings, entered judgment under C.R.C.P. 12(c) for the People, and converted the three-day disciplinary hearing set in this case to a two-day hearing on the sanctions.

On September 10 and 11, 2025, a Hearing Board comprising the PDJ and lawyers Jodi S. Martin and Avi B. Loewenstein held a hearing under C.R.C.P. 242.30. Blasewitz attended for the People, and Truman appeared on behalf of Respondent, who also attended. The Hearing Board received in-person testimony from J.P. ("Father"), T.P. ("Mother"), Respondent, Casey Krizman, and Karen Steinhauser. The PDJ admitted stipulated exhibits S1-S14 into evidence.¹

II. FACTS AND RULE VIOLATIONS ESTABLISHED ON THE PLEADINGS²

Respondent was admitted to practice law in Colorado on May 4, 2020, under attorney registration number 54606, and is thus subject to the jurisdiction of the Colorado Supreme Court and the Hearing Board.

Respondent is a former deputy district attorney who began his career in Eagle County in the 5th Judicial District. He later worked as a juvenile prosecutor in the Denver District Attorney's Office for one year, which included the period of time relevant to this proceeding.

In autumn 2022, Mother and Father became concerned about some of the choices their fourteen-year-old son, O.P., was making, so they contacted a local criminal defense lawyer for advice as to how they could curb O.P.'s behavior before it got any worse. The lawyer connected the family with Respondent, who invited them to bring O.P. to observe a court docket. Respondent subsequently volunteered to have O.P. shadow him. Respondent told Mother and Father that he would mentor O.P. and help O.P. make better choices.

The family met with Respondent to introduce O.P. The meeting was productive, resulting in Respondent and Mother exchanging text messages over several months. Given Respondent's role as a deputy district attorney, Mother provided Respondent with O.P.'s phone number so Respondent and O.P. could communicate with one another directly.

From April 26, 2023, through May 25, 2023, Respondent and O.P. exchanged hundreds of text messages. Respondent sent O.P. messages during school hours, late at night, and on weekends. Respondent initiated every text message conversation, many of which included profanity. In addition, Respondent sent O.P. three messages over several days, inquiring why O.P. had not immediately responded.

In one exchange, Respondent sent a message to O.P. stating that he was at a bar in Washington, D.C., and that women were buying him drinks. He also sent O.P. a photograph of himself in a U.S. Senator's office. In another, Respondent sent O.P. a TikTok video of a woman

¹ At the hearing, the PDJ **GRANTED** Respondent's "Unopposed Motion for Filing [Prehearing Materials] Out of Time," which Respondent submitted on August 27, 2025.

² The facts and rule violations recited here are drawn from the PDJ's order granting judgment on the pleadings.

riding a horse, in which the woman flips over the horse's back, placing her face between the horse's hind legs.

With respect to Respondent's relationship to Mother, Respondent wrote to O.P.:

your mom loves me though and thinks im a godsend but im like telling her that im not always gonna agree with her. I try and give them some perspective but I gotta be careful because if I told them everything I really think, they wouldn't want me talking to you or seeing you. So I ride both lines.³

Respondent was not having any discussions with Mother throughout the time he was texting O.P., however.

Respondent also commented on O.P.'s physical appearance: "Damnnnn bro your [sic] massive . . . ppl love you and you have a pretty face."⁴

A common theme among the text messages was Respondent discussing alcohol and drug use. Respondent sent a photo of himself smoking marijuana from a vape pen. Respondent texted O.P. "just ripped some patron shots feelin nice."⁵ O.P. texted Respondent asking for advice about marijuana: "I really wanna smoke some weed. Cause I haven't smoke sense [sic] Halloween and Google says it will be out of my system in 3-8 days. Good idea or bad idea?"⁶ In response, Respondent informed O.P. how to evade the results of a drug test: "just take 1 or 2 rips... but rip a couple, take a couple hours and chill . . . but try not to worry about it and just enjoy yourself and you will be fine, don't mess with your high."⁷ Respondent offered to provide O.P. with a detoxifying drink and bring it to him, adding, "can it be soon? And no parents."⁸ Respondent also referred to cranberry pills, which he stated can be used to evade drug testing.

With respect to their relationship, Respondent referred to O.P. as the "young grasshopper" and "padawan," while stating, "take a big fat bong rip that'll set you right lol" and "hahaha well yea don't get caught but get ripped in your room, just don't make it smell."⁹ O.P. called Respondent his "master" or "sensei."¹⁰

Respondent was aware of the wrongfulness of his messages. He instructed O.P., "delete our messages. Please. Don't get me in trouble."¹¹ He also wrote, "Fuck im worried your mom

³ Ord. Granting J. on the Pleadings at 3.

⁴ Ord. Granting J. on the Pleadings at 3.

⁵ Ord. Granting J. on the Pleadings at 3.

⁶ Ord. Granting J. on the Pleadings at 3.

⁷ Ord. Granting J. on the Pleadings at 3.

⁸ Ord. Granting J. on the Pleadings at 4; *see also* Ex. S2 at 300-01.

⁹ Ord. Granting J. on the Pleadings at 4.

¹⁰ Ord. Granting J. on the Pleadings at 4.

¹¹ Ord. Granting J. on the Pleadings at 4.

gonna see these and be horrified and Ill never get to see you again.”¹² In another instance, he wrote, “please be smart don’t ruin our good thing.” O.P. responded, “I won’t [don’t worry].”¹³ At one point, Respondent discovered O.P. had a Snapchat account and accused O.P. of “holding out” on him.¹⁴ Respondent informed O.P. that Snapchat would be a better form of communication for them because of the “overall invisible nature of Snapchat.”¹⁵ Respondent described, based on his experience as a deputy district attorney, how law enforcement does not like Snapchat because it can be difficult to retrieve messages sent over the app. Their conversation then migrated to Snapchat. While using that app, Respondent sent to O.P. a short video in which Respondent pointed the phone at himself in the car and stuck his tongue out in a suggestive manner.

Mother soon discovered the texts. Mother reached out to a lawyer, who reported Respondent’s conduct to the Denver District Attorney’s Office. Respondent was subsequently let go by the Denver District Attorney’s Office and instructed not to have any contact with O.P. or his family. The matter was referred to the Arapahoe County Sheriff’s Office for investigation. The assigned investigator was unable to obtain any messages that were sent over Snapchat.

Despite being told not to have any contact with the family, Respondent sent a text message to Mother on July 16, 2023:

[Mother], why are you doing this to me? Isn’t it enough that I already lost my job which was my whole life and everything I ever worked for? I was good at it and cared a lot about it, and a lot of victims, families, and People were relying on me and now on top of that I am blocked from unemployment for the last 7 weeks that this has been “investigated” and can’t pursue other work either. Please, please understand and consider having a little bit of mercy and perspective is all I ask. I am suffering. [Sad emoji]. Is there anything I can do or say to help put you at ease and avoid going through the Court process? I really do wish you all the best and hope [O.P.] is doing okay.¹⁶

Respondent was issued a summons to appear in Arapahoe County Court on August 16, 2023. He was charged with one count of contributing to the delinquency of a minor, a class-one misdemeanor. On July 30, 2024, the day before trial, Respondent pleaded guilty, with sentencing completely open to the court.

On October 4, 2024, the court sentenced Respondent to sixty days in jail and five years of probation. Probationary conditions included a drug and alcohol evaluation followed by completion of any recommended treatment; no contact with anyone under the age of eighteen; no marijuana without a valid prescription; a victim awareness class; and a treatment provider

¹² Ord. Granting J. on the Pleadings at 4.

¹³ Ord. Granting J. on the Pleadings at 4.

¹⁴ Ord. Granting J. on the Pleadings at 4.

¹⁵ Ord. Granting J. on the Pleadings at 4.

¹⁶ Ord. Granting J. on the Pleadings at 5.

certified by the sex offender management board for any required mental health treatment. Respondent was immediately remanded into custody.

Respondent admitted, and the PDJ found in his order granting judgment on the pleadings, that Respondent's conduct violated Colo. RPC 8.4(b), which provides that it is professional misconduct for a lawyer to commit a criminal act that reflects adversely on the lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness as a lawyer in other respects.

III. SANCTIONS

The American Bar Association *Standards for Imposing Lawyer Sanctions* ("ABA Standards")¹⁷ and Colorado Supreme Court case law guide the imposition of sanctions for lawyer misconduct.¹⁸ When imposing a sanction after finding lawyer misconduct, the Hearing Board must consider the duty the lawyer violated, the lawyer's mental state, and the actual or potential injury the lawyer's misconduct caused. These three variables yield a presumptive sanction that the Hearing Board may then adjust based on aggravating and mitigating factors.

ABA Standard 3.0 – Duty, Mental State, and Injury

Duty. Respondent violated a duty to maintain his personal integrity and to obey Colorado law. Because Respondent was not only a lawyer and thus an officer of the court but also a prosecutor and thus a minister of justice, he breached his heightened duty to operate within the bounds of the law and to uphold the laws of the state.

Mental State. We find that Respondent acted knowingly, as he was consciously aware of the nature and attendant circumstances of his misconduct: he repeatedly initiated communication with O.P., encouraged O.P.'s illegal use of marijuana, and asked O.P. to conceal those messages from Mother and Father. Additionally, Respondent elected not to contact Mother or Father to inform them of the nature of O.P.'s messages. We do not find, however, that Respondent operated with a conscious objective or purpose to accomplish a particular result, other than to build rapport with O.P. in an extremely misguided and unhealthy way. We accept as credible Respondent's testimony that, fueled by his proclivity for approval-seeking, he agreed to meet with O.P. as a favor. Once they began texting, he meant to share with O.P. the importance of rightly ordering priorities and of using marijuana in a smart and responsible way, informed by his own positive experiences using marijuana as a high school student. We accept that Respondent wanted to impart to O.P. what he believed to be the wisdom of his life experience as summed up by the maxim, "do what you have to do before you do what you want to do."

¹⁷ Found in ABA *Annotated Standards for Imposing Lawyer Sanctions* (2d ed. 2019).

¹⁸ See *In re Roose*, 69 P.3d 43, 46-47 (Colo. 2003).

Injury. Respondent harmed O.P., O.P.'s family, the legal profession, and the reputation of prosecutors.

First and foremost, Respondent significantly harmed O.P. Instead of benefitting from mentorship regarding the detriments and consequences of underage substance use, O.P. was confused by a deluge of messages from a juvenile prosecutor not only suggesting that it was acceptable to break the law but also providing guidance to avoid detection. Respondent, an adult, exposed O.P., a teenager, to concepts and images completely at odds with an appropriate mentoring relationship. He sent O.P. distasteful videos that could be interpreted to have sexual overtones, regularly used profanity, commented on O.P.'s physical appearance, and taught O.P. how to evade detection after using marijuana. His repeated pleas to O.P. to conceal their messages drove a wedge between O.P. and his parents, sabotaging their familial trust. When Mother discovered the texts between O.P. and Respondent, O.P. felt protective of Respondent, blamed himself, and faulted Mother for violating his privacy. According to Mother, she and O.P. have only just rebuilt trust, which involved extensive therapy for both of them.

Respondent's misconduct caused the rest of the family to suffer, too. Mother and Father both testified they felt betrayed and undermined upon learning that Respondent was abetting the very behavior they sought his help to curb. Each described the emotional turmoil they endured from their discovery of the texts through Respondent's sentencing hearing and continuing to the present, repeatedly using words like confusion, shock, horror, terror, disbelief, and guilt. Further, because Respondent was a representative of the justice system, Mother and Father initially feared they might not have any legal recourse and worried they were powerless to hold Respondent accountable. Finally, as a result of Respondent's interaction with O.P., O.P.'s younger sister refused for a time to sleep outside her parents' bedroom. Her parents enrolled her in therapy. But she initially feared being alone in a room with an adult therapist, questioning how she could trust the therapist after witnessing Respondent's abuse of his position of trust with her brother.

Mother and Father have been financially harmed by confronting Respondent's behavior and addressing its fallout. They paid for a lawyer to guide them through the legal system, financed a phone data extraction to preserve O.P.'s texts with Respondent, and incurred costs for therapy. Moreover, the family has faced logistical challenges and interruptions to their regular schedules. They spent time away from work, school, and the children's extracurricular activities while being interviewed by law enforcement, preparing for trial, attending each court proceeding in Respondent's criminal case, and participating in this disciplinary hearing.

Respondent corrupted the family's trust in lawyers, prosecutors, and the legal system. Before Respondent and O.P. began texting, the family viewed prosecutors as upholders of the law who work to protect the public. Due to the role of prosecutors within the criminal justice system, Mother and Father inherently relied on prosecutors' honesty and integrity. This ingrained trust in law enforcement crumbled, however, upon learning that Respondent had compromised their son and betrayed them. Indeed, Respondent's serious lapse in judgment has tarnished the reputation of prosecutors, lawyers, and the criminal justice system in general.

ABA Standards 4.0-7.0 – Presumptive Sanction

The parties agree that suspension is the presumptive sanction for Respondent's misconduct in this case, as set forth in ABA *Standard* 5.12, which applies when a lawyer knowingly engages in criminal conduct that seriously adversely reflects on the lawyer's fitness to practice but does not contain certain elements listed in ABA *Standard* 5.11.¹⁹ The Hearing Board endorses the use of this *Standard* here. That Respondent, as a law enforcement officer, encouraged a minor to use controlled substances casts a serious pall over his fitness to practice law.

ABA Standard 9.0 – Aggravating and Mitigating Factors

Aggravating circumstances include any considerations that justify an increase in the degree of the sanction to be imposed, while mitigating factors warrant a reduction in the severity of the sanction.²⁰ As explained below, we apply four factors in aggravation, assigning great weight to two. Five mitigating factors apply, one of which is entitled to significant weight and two of which we find negligible.

Aggravating Factors

Dishonest or Selfish Motive – 9.22(b): We do not attribute to Respondent a selfish motive, but we do view his behavior as dishonest. In one text, Respondent exhorted O.P. to delete their messages. In another, he worried that Mother would see their texts and be horrified. In yet another exchange, he remarked, "I gotta be careful because if I told them everything I really think, they wouldn't want me talking to you or seeing you."²¹ Respondent ultimately moved his correspondence with O.P. to Snapchat, specifically noting, based on his experience as a prosecutor, that messages on Snapchat would be more difficult to trace. From this correspondence we conclude—as corroborated by Mother's testimony—that Respondent knew a central concern of Mother and Father was O.P.'s drug use. Even so, Respondent's messaging directly contravened Mother and Father's values. By promising one set of actions yet covertly delivering the opposite, Respondent dishonestly breached his agreement with the family. We give this aggravating factor moderate weight.

Vulnerability of Victim – 9.22(h): In our estimation, this factor warrants the greatest aggravating weight possible. O.P., who was just fourteen years old at the time of the text exchanges, was entrusted to Respondent's care by his parents. Because Mother and Father placed faith in what they reasonably assumed was Respondent's good judgment and positive influence,

¹⁹ ABA *Standard* 5.11 addresses the intentional interference with the administration of justice, false swearing, misrepresentation, fraud, extortion, misappropriation, theft, the sale of controlled substances, and the intentional killing of another.

²⁰ See ABA *Standards* 9.21 and 9.31.

²¹ Ex. S14 at 3.

they provided O.P.'s phone number to Respondent and agreed not to interfere or monitor the communications. O.P. was thus an unprotected, impressionable minor during a life phase in which he was highly suggestable. Instead of serving as a mentor and guide for this child, Respondent became his accomplice.

Illegal Conduct – 9.22(k): The Hearing Board considers this a factor in aggravation because Respondent not only engaged in illegal behavior but also encouraged a minor to break the law. We accord this factor only limited weight, however, because Respondent's criminal conduct forms the substantive basis for his rule violation.

Additional Aggravation – 9.22: ABA Standard 9.22 sets forth a nonexhaustive list of aggravating factors.²² As such, we also find weighty aggravation in Respondent's status as a minister of justice, as he owes a higher duty to the public to act with probity and to promote law-abiding behavior.²³ We are particularly moved to apply this aggravating factor because at the time Respondent was encouraging O.P.'s illegal use of substances, he was also prosecuting minors for criminal offenses as a member of Denver's juvenile prosecution division.

Mitigating Factors

Absence of a Prior Disciplinary Record – 9.32(a): Respondent has no record of prior discipline. We thus apply this factor but give it very little weight, as Respondent's misconduct occurred only three years after he was admitted to practice law.

Full and Free Disclosure or Cooperative Attitude Toward the Proceeding – 9.32(e): The People concede, and so we find, that Respondent's misconduct is mitigated by his attitude and cooperation in this disciplinary proceeding. We give this factor average weight.

Inexperience in the Practice of Law – 9.32(f): Respondent contends he is entitled to application of this mitigating factor due to his inexperience in the practice of law, but we do not agree. Because Respondent's misconduct involves serious lapses of personal judgment rather than gaps in professional maturity, we discern no causal link between his inexperience and his misconduct.

Character or Reputation – 9.32(g): Respondent asks the Hearing Board to extend to him mitigating credit for his positive reputation and good character, as evidenced by several letters penned by his friends and colleagues attesting to the same. These letters praise Respondent's sincere empathy, ability to meaningfully connect with people, willingness to give his time to help

²² See *In re Rosen*, 198 P.3d 116, 121 (Colo. 2008) ("While the ABA Standards enumerate a number of . . . aggravating and mitigating factors, they are expressly intended as exemplary and are not to be applied mechanically in every case.").

²³ See *People v. Groland*, 908 P.2d 75, 77 (Colo. 1995).

others, and his good intentions.²⁴ Respondent also points to the testimony of Casey Krizman, his current boss, as well as his mother, Karen Steinhauser. Krizman described Respondent as an outstanding associate who has excelled in Krizman’s firm in all aspects. Ms. Steinhauser portrayed Respondent as a kind, generous person who has always wanted to help people and who possesses a talent for relating to others. We acknowledge these testimonials but do not find them materially mitigating.

Imposition of Other Penalties or Sanctions – 9.32(k): The Hearing Board applies this factor and gives it significant weight. Respondent lost his position—and perhaps his identity—as a government prosecutor, which irrevocably changed the trajectory of his legal career. He was sentenced to sixty days in jail and served forty-one days. Thereafter, he began a five-year period of probation, including treatment and community service. His probationary conditions also prohibit contact with anyone under the age of eighteen, which has limited his ability to spend time with family and friends. Finally, because Respondent’s criminal case was widely publicized, he has suffered significant reputational damage, has been shunned by many people with whom he was once close, and will forever be burdened by the notoriety of his misconduct.

Remorse – 9.32(l): Respondent does not ask the Hearing Board to apply this factor, and the People have elicited testimony from Mother and Father decrying Respondent’s failure to apologize to them at his sentencing hearing. Nevertheless, we apply this factor and choose to give it moderate weight. While we make no finding as to whether Respondent in fact apologized to the family at his sentencing hearing in 2024—he disputes their account and insists that he apologized to them—we find that he did express genuine remorse at the disciplinary hearing and has voluntarily taken actions that substantiate those expressions. At the hearing, Respondent explained that his July 2023 text message to Mother asking her for mercy and perspective was a “desperate plea” that served as a signal to himself to reengage with therapy. He self-referred in July 2023 and has been in treatment since that time, switching providers in March 2025 to comply with his probationary requirements.²⁵ Respondent’s mother also testified that Respondent is incredibly remorseful. Most impactful, however, was Respondent’s own account. On the stand, Respondent acknowledged that he overstepped his role and boundaries as a mentor, inserting a wedge in O.P.’s relationship with his parents. He stated that his texts to O.P. horrify him. And he expressed genuine contrition for his behavior and the negative effects it has had on O.P. We find Respondent’s expressions of remorse both credible and sincere.

Analysis Under ABA *Standards* and Case Law

The Hearing Board heeds the Colorado Supreme Court’s directive to exercise discretion in imposing a sanction, recognizing that “individual circumstances make extremely problematic any meaningful comparison of discipline ultimately imposed in different cases.”²⁶ As such, the

²⁴ See Exs. S9-S13.

²⁵ See Exs. S6-S8.

²⁶ *In re Attorney F.*, 2012 CO 57 ¶ 20 (quoting *Rosen*, 198 P.3d at 121).

Hearing Board must determine the appropriate sanction on a case-by-case basis, looking to the *ABA Standards* for guidance in the exercise of that discretion. The *ABA Standards* offers a theoretical framework that provides for “the flexibility to select the appropriate sanction in [a] particular case” after the Hearing Board carefully considers the applicable aggravating and mitigating factors.²⁷

The parties agree that, given the unique facts and circumstances here, no directly comparable cases exist in Colorado or in sister jurisdictions. In the absence of such parallels, the parties take decidedly divergent positions concerning the appropriate sanction. The People urge us to suspend Respondent for one year and one day, which carries with it the requirement that Respondent petition to regain his law license by proving that he has been rehabilitated, he is fit to practice law, and he has complied with all disciplinary orders and rules. According to the People, this sanction is appropriate because Respondent displayed strikingly bad judgment and abused his position of trust as a prosecutor when texting with O.P., resulting in a serious offense that caused substantial harm. Respondent agrees that suspension is appropriate under the *ABA Standards* but urges us to consider a short period of served suspension followed by a period of probation; he also suggests that the Hearing Board could consider imposing other probationary requirements specific to the disciplinary setting, including intensive monitoring or mentoring.

As discussed above, the presumptive sanction for Respondent’s misconduct under the *ABA Standards* is suspension. This should generally be a period equal to or greater than six months,²⁸ adjusted according to the relative weight and number of applicable aggravating and mitigating factors. Here, when accorded their proper weight, the applicable aggravators and mitigators are roughly on par, tipping slightly toward aggravation. Given that balance, we have concluded that a served suspension of seven months is fitting, accompanied by a lengthy period of probation.

We also have given serious thought to whether Respondent should be required to petition for reinstatement, but we have concluded that such an exercise would be unprofitable. Respondent texted with O.P. more than two years ago. In the intervening time, Respondent has engaged in two years of therapy, served his criminal sentence, and has begun to carve out a new professional role for himself. Though we find his misconduct reprehensible, we see that he has made significant strides toward rehabilitation. We struggle to envision additional evidence that Respondent should marshal to show his rehabilitation or fitness.

We do, however, see value in a lengthy period of regulatory oversight to ensure Respondent’s compliance with his criminal probationary terms, including therapy. This oversight is intended to protect the public, further Respondent’s rehabilitation efforts, and encourage Respondent to conduct himself according to the norms of the legal profession. We thus order a thirty-month period of probation in this case and attach to the probation conditions that emphasize Respondent’s ethical duties. If Respondent is not successful in fulfilling those terms,

²⁷ *Id.* ¶ 3.

²⁸ See *ABA Standard 2.3*.

the stayed portion of his suspension will take effect, and Respondent will be required to serve the remainder of his one-year-and-one-day suspension, followed by the requirement that he must petition for reinstatement, if at all, under C.R.C.P. 242.39.

In sum, these combined elements yield a sanction we deem appropriate under the circumstances: we suspend Respondent for one year and one day, ordering him to serve seven months of that suspension but staying the remainder of that suspension period while he completes a thirty-month period of probation, which mandates that he comply with his criminal probation conditions—including therapy—and requires him to attend the People’s ethics school. We also strongly encourage, but do not require, Respondent to establish a close mentoring relationship with an experienced lawyer whom he trusts and who can advise him in both professional and personal matters.

IV. CONCLUSION

Respondent, then a juvenile prosecutor, knew that a fourteen-year-old boy was wandering down a path of drug use his parents did not approve of. The parents solicited Respondent’s help to redirect the boy. But instead of guiding the boy in a different direction, Respondent laid out a red carpet down that same primrose path. This criminal conduct warrants a disciplinary suspension that includes a served suspension and a lengthy period of probation.

V. ORDER

The Hearing Board **ORDERS**:

1. **DANIEL J. STEINHAUSER**, attorney registration number **54606**, is **SUSPENDED FOR ONE YEAR AND ONE DAY** from the practice of law in Colorado, with **SEVEN MONTHS** to be served and the remainder to be stayed pending Respondent’s successful completion of a **THIRTY-MONTH PERIOD OF PROBATION**, with the conditions identified in paragraph 8 below. The suspension will take effect upon issuance of an “Order and Notice of Suspension.”²⁹
2. Respondent **MUST** promptly comply with C.R.C.P. 242.32(b)-(e), concerning winding up of affairs, notice to current clients, duties owed in litigation matters, and notice to other jurisdictions where he is licensed or otherwise authorized to practice law.

²⁹ In general, an order and notice of sanction will issue thirty-five days after a decision is entered under C.R.C.P. 242.31(a)(6). In some instances, the order and notice may issue later than the thirty-five days by operation of C.R.C.P. 242.35, C.R.C.P. 59, or other applicable rules.

3. Within fourteen days of issuance of the "Order and Notice of Suspension," Respondent **MUST** file an affidavit with the PDJ under C.R.C.P. 242.32(f), attesting to his compliance with C.R.C.P. 242.32. As provided in C.R.C.P. 242.41(b)(5), lists of pending matters, lists of clients, and copies of client notices under C.R.C.P. 242.32(f) must be marked as confidential attachments and filed as separate documents from the affidavit.
4. The parties **MUST** file any posthearing motions **no later than Thursday, November 13, 2025**. Any response thereto **MUST** be filed within seven days.
5. The parties **MUST** file any application for stay pending appeal **no later than the date on which the notice of appeal is due**. Any response thereto **MUST** be filed within seven days.
6. Respondent **MUST** pay the costs of this proceeding. The People **MUST** submit a statement of costs **no later than Thursday, November 13, 2025**. Any response challenging the reasonableness of those costs **MUST** be filed within seven days thereafter.
7. If Respondent wishes to seek reinstatement to the practice of law after his suspension, he must submit to the PDJ, no earlier than twenty-eight days before the period of suspension is set to terminate, a motion and affidavit seeking reinstatement under C.R.C.P. 242.38(b)(1).
8. If Respondent is reinstated to the practice of law, he **MUST** serve a **THIRTY-MONTH** period of **PROBATION** subject to the following conditions:
 - a. Respondent must not commit any further violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct.
 - b. Not later than six months after his probation begins, Respondent must attend at his own expense and successfully pass the one-day ethics school sponsored by the People. Respondent must register and pay the costs of ethics school within thirty-five days of his reinstatement. Attendance at ethics school will count as eight general continuing legal education credits, including seven ethics credits. Respondent may obtain the registration form for the ethics school online at www.coloradosupremecourt.com. Respondent may elect to attend ethics school before his probation begins.
 - c. Respondent must submit a quarterly certification to the People that he has complied with all terms of his criminal probation, including therapy. Upon completing his criminal probation, Respondent **MUST** remain in therapy until his provider determines that therapy is no longer necessary.

9. If, while Respondent is on probation, the People receive information that Respondent may have violated a condition of probation, the People may request under C.R.C.P. 242.18(f) that the PDJ order Respondent to show cause why the stay on his suspension should not be lifted.

DATED THIS 30th DAY OF OCTOBER, 2025.



BRYON M. LARGE
PRESIDING DISCIPLINARY JUDGE



AVI B. LOEWENSTEIN
HEARING BOARD MEMBER



JODI S. MARTIN
HEARING BOARD MEMBER