

*People v. Reuler*, No. 02PDJ062, Attorney Regulation.

The Presiding Disciplinary Judge approved the parties' Conditional Admission of Misconduct and suspended Respondent Jody C. Reuler, No. 24375 from the practice of law for a period of nine months, all stayed during a two-year period of probation subject to conditions.

Respondent's firm handled an estate on behalf of a client. Respondent charged an unreasonable fee in violation of Colo. RPC 1.5(a), failed to ensure that the firm's attorneys conformed their conduct to the Rules of Professional Conduct in violation of Colo. RPC 5.1(a), failed to adequately supervise the primary lawyer on the case in violation of Colo. RPC 5.1(c)(2), had knowledge of and ratified the conduct of the primary lawyer on the case with regard to providing a client with an itemized billing statement containing false or inaccurate statements and failing to take reasonable remedial action in violation of Colo. RPC 5.1(c)(1), and assisted with the reconstruction of the dishonest billing statement used to justify the negligent conversion by another lawyer in violation of Colo. RPC 8.4(c). In a separate matter, the respondent's firm represented a client in a dissolution of marriage matter. When a fee dispute arose, respondent's firm recorded liens on the client's property without first reducing the liens to judgment. When the client hired counsel to resolve the dispute, counsel for the client requested that respondent release the liens and respondent did not do so. Respondent charged and attempted to collect an unreasonable fee in violation of Colo. RPC 1.5(a), improperly asserted attorney's liens against the client and failed to surrender papers and property to which the client was entitled in violation of Colo. RPC 1.16(d), utilized the assertion of attorney's liens in an effort to leverage payment of an unreasonable fee in violation of Colo. RPC 8.4(h). Respondent was ordered to pay the costs of the proceeding.