

Sherri Renner <sherri.renner@lawyouamerica.com> Mon, Oct 23, 2017 at 8:01 PM To: [REDACTED]
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By now I'm sure you know that the Florida Supreme Court has revoked my license to practice law. The Sept. 20 order is attached for your review. Please rest assured that the Court's ruling is 100% unrelated to any actual misconduct on my part.

Back in Sept. 1998, when I was a third year law student, I developed depression. There are several situational reasons (including the onset of premature menopause) that I'm sure worked together to bring about the depression. Unfortunately, the timing of it was such that I was required to alert the Florida Board of Bar Examiners (which is the entity responsible for administering the bar exam and for screening bar applicants prior to admission) that I had sought treatment for depression.

Even more unfortunate was the fact that I had sought that treatment from psychiatrists who believed my salvation would come through their prescription pads. The various medications they prescribed worsened and prolonged the condition until I finally caught on and rejected psychiatric care. Since then, I have never suffered from any depression or other mental health disorder or illness.

Still, I had to battle the FBBE to win my admission to the Florida Bar. I finally succeeded, but my admission in Feb 2005 was conditional. I understood the conditions and really didn't mind, because I could understand the concern about having to make sure that the attorneys they admit to practice aren't going to harm the public in some way.

The conditions on my admission included the requirement that I consult monthly with my mental health care provider and submit quarterly reports to the Florida Bar. The length of time of the conditional status was indefinite. I was not represented by an attorney at any time, because I trusted the FBBE and Florida Bar. The conditional admission was memorialized in an order entered by the Florida Supreme Court (the Court is the Bar membership gatekeeper).

After about 8 years of complying with these conditions, I began trying to find a way to get the Florida Supreme Court to change my admission status from conditional to unconditional. I found nothing in the Florida Bar procedural rules that provided any guidance. So I sought an opinion from an attorney who practices in this area. He told me there was nothing I could do other than continue to comply.

Then, earlier this year, after 12 years of complying with these conditions, I asked the Florida Bar to petition the Florida Supreme Court for an order admitting me unconditionally to the Bar. The attorney for the Bar refused. (As a point of reference, the American Bar Association has a conditional admission "model rule" that has conditions expiring no longer than 3 years after attorney admission.)

I then informed that attorney that I was going to "strategically non-comply" with the terms of my conditional admission for the sole purpose of forcing the Bar to bring the issue to the Florida Supreme Court for a ruling. I believed then -- and believe without doubt to this day -- that I was well within my legal rights to seek to have the conditions on my admission lifted.

Then, in June, the Bar filed its petition for the Florida Supreme Court to hold me in contempt and to revoke or suspend

my license to practice. I responded with a well-reasoned, logical, fully supported -- with law and facts -- opposition memo stating that continued enforcement of the conditions on my admission would violate the Americans with Disabilities Act. I also argued that the reason for my non-compliance -- seeking review by the Court -- did not constitute contempt of court because my intention was not to thumb my nose at the Court or undermine its authority, but rather to seek judicial review when there was no other way for me to do so.

I really believed that the Court would be fair and do the right thing. I thought that the most risk I was taking was that the Court would be unhappy with my method, which would result in something being published in the Bar disciplinary records

that would reveal publicly the fact that my admission was conditional. Public knowledge of an attorney's conditional admission would damage any attorney's reputation and ability to earn a living.

I was so certain that the Court would rule in my favor that I continued to take steps to build my practice even as I awaited the ruling. I established a physical office location in downtown Jacksonville and had plans to continue to develop LawYou (including continuing to work with [REDACTED]).

Then, on the morning of Sept. 20, I received that order finding me in contempt and revoking my license. I was so shocked that I didn't even start to feel the physical effects until a little while later, as I was driving to my new office. Then reality started setting in. I didn't stop shaking for days. It felt like someone close to me had died unexpectedly.

I have been betrayed at a deep level by the Bar and Court. I have been enraged, grief-stricken, sorrowful, and panicked by the sudden termination of my income and devastation to part of my identity.

I was given 30 days to close down my practice. Those 30 days were up this past Friday. I thought I would feel better after it was all over with, but I'm still on that emotional roller coaster.

I am preparing now to move to Colorado to live with a friend who has offered to allow me to stay in an efficiency apartment in his house -- free of charge until I get back on my feet. Once I get to Colorado, it's full steam ahead with LawYou, and with picking up where I left off with [REDACTED], if you all will still have me.

I have sued the Florida Supreme Court and Florida Bar for violating my rights under the Rehabilitation Act and Americans with Disabilities Act. Ironically (or maybe not so ironically), I cannot afford to hire an attorney to represent me, so I am on my own.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns about what has been happening, or if you would like some additional details. I would very much like to continue working with you all, if you will have me, because I believe in your goals and have nothing but respect for you as individuals and as a team.

Best regards, Sherri
L. Renner, J.D.

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