

People v. Colin Louis Barnacle. 26PDJ17. July 9, 2026.

The Presiding Disciplinary Judge approved the parties' stipulation to discipline and suspended Colin Louis Barnacle (attorney registration number 33657) for one year and one day, with four months to be served and the remainder to be stayed upon successful completion of a three-year period of probation, with conditions. The suspension takes into account extraordinary mitigating factors. Barnacle's suspension takes effect on August 13, 2026.

In 2023 and 2024, Barnacle was defense counsel in cases before Routt County District Court and Denver District Court. In October 2023, Barnacle underwent surgery. From January through at least August 2024, Barnacle repeatedly made false representations to opposing counsel and to the tribunals in the two cases regarding his hospitalizations and timing of surgical procedures. In spring 2024, opposing counsel in both cases sought sanctions and asked to compel discovery responses. The Routt County trial court granted the sanctions motion and awarding attorney's fees. Barnacle did not timely inform his client of the disputes resulting in this order. In the Denver case, the parties jointly moved to reschedule the trial, citing Barnacle's "serious and sometimes life-threatening health issues." The trial court continued the trial. Barnacle did not correct his misstatements to the Denver District Court. In the Routt County case, Barnacle moved to reconsider the sanctions order, citing significant health issues, medical procedures, and hospitalizations. Barnacle also admitted he failed to communicate with his client about the sanctions order. The trial court denied the motion, remarking that Barnacle continued to rely on false medical claims to justify delays and failed to correct the record in the Denver case, that he knowingly misled the court, and that his misrepresentations directly influenced court rulings. The trial court sanctioned Barnacle and his clients and awarded \$43,000.00 against them, jointly and severally. Barnacle withdrew from the Routt County case and later confirmed that he had no medical procedures from November 2023 and May 2024, directly contradicting his prior representations about the timing of his procedures.

In a separate federal district court matter, Barnacle requested a telephone appearance for an in-person status conference, falsely representing that he had suffered a "medical emergency" and was just returning from the hospital. He did not file a correction with the federal district court.

Also in 2024, Barnacle commingled client funds by mistakenly arranging for funds to deposit in his law firm's operating account. Barnacle's law partner twice emailed him, voicing concerns that the money was in the operating account. His law partner arranged to transfer the funds to the firm's trust account.

Through this conduct, Barnacle violated Colo. RPC 1.3 (a lawyer must act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client); Colo. RPC 1.4(a) (a lawyer must reasonably communicate with a client); Colo. RPC 1.15A(a) (a lawyer must hold client property separate from the lawyer's own property); Colo. RPC 3.3(a)(1) (a lawyer must not make a false statement of material fact or law to a tribunal or fail to correct a false statement); Colo. RPC 4.1(a) (while representing a client, a lawyer must not knowingly make a false statement of material fact or law to a third person); and Colo. RPC 8.4(c) (it is professional misconduct to engage in dishonest conduct). The case file is public per C.R.C.P. 242.41(a).