

People v. William Gibson Dornan IV. 25PDJ40. June 6, 2025.

The Presiding Disciplinary Judge approved the parties' stipulation to discipline and publicly censured William Gibson Dornan IV (attorney registration number 35470), effective June 6, 2025.

In March 2021, Dornan began representing a client with respect to the client's trust. During the representation, Dornan agreed to assist the client's father in an estate planning matter, including creating a beneficiary deed to the father's house that provided the client would receive the house upon the father's death. Dornan never obtained either client's informed consent as to conflicts that could arise out of the dual representation. Several weeks after the dual representation began, the client discharged the father from the rehabilitation center where the father resided. A few days after being discharged, the client's father was hospitalized following a fall at his home. An investigator with the Department of Adult Protective Services ("APS"), which had a case with the father, contacted Dornan regarding his client's ability to provide the necessary level of care for the father. The client asked Dornan to represent him with respect to APS's investigation, and in September 2021, a lawyer with Dornan's law firm executed an engagement letter with the client in the matter.

APS closed its investigation without taking further action in early October 2021. A week later, the father signed a power of attorney appointing his son, Dornan's client, as his attorney in fact after Dornan and another lawyer from his firm confirmed the father's testamentary capacity. In December 2021, the client fired Dornan on his own behalf and on his father's behalf. Dornan never confirmed the termination with the father.

Through this conduct, Dornan violated Colo. RPC 1.7(a)(2) (a lawyer must not represent a client if the representation involves a concurrent conflict of interest, including if there is a significant risk that the representation of one or more clients will be materially limited by the lawyer's responsibilities to another client).

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