

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF FLORIDA

THE FLORIDA BAR,

Complainant,

v.

NATALIE PATRICIA WHITCO,

Respondent.

Supreme Court Case No.
SC-

The Florida Bar File No.
2023-50,582(15E)

COMPLAINT

The Florida Bar, complainant, files this Complaint against Natalie Patricia Whitco (f/k/a Natalie Patricia Bruzzese), respondent, pursuant to the Rules Regulating The Florida Bar and alleges:

1. Respondent is and was at all times mentioned herein a member of The Florida Bar admitted on October 20, 2004, and is subject to the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court of Florida.

2. In Supreme Court Case No. SC18-1796, respondent was suspended for three years by this Honorable Court on February 14, 2019, after being found guilty by a jury for criminal misconduct of Resisting Officer with Violence (a 3rd degree felony) and Resisting Officer without Violence (a 1st degree misdemeanor). Respondent is currently suspended but petitioned the Court for reinstatement on October 31, 2023.

3. Respondent resided in Palm Beach County, Florida, at all times material.

4. The Fifteenth Judicial Circuit Grievance Committee "E" found probable cause to file this complaint pursuant to Rule 3-7.4, of the Rules Regulating The Florida Bar, and this complaint was approved by the presiding member of that committee.

COUNT I

5. Respondent was charged by Information on December 19, 2022, with aggravated assault, battery LEO, and resisting with violence, in Palm Beach County Case No. 2022CF009282AMB styled State of Florida v. Natalie Bruzzese.

6. According to law enforcement, a call was received for a possible intoxicated driver on November 18, 2022. According to the arrest report, a resident walking alongside a curb told her to slow down as she believed respondent was speeding. Respondent allegedly aimed her car towards the resident and accelerated, jumping the curb in the process.

7. Respondent exited the car and aggressively approached the resident. Police officers arrived on scene and observed both respondent and her car on the curb.

8. According to the arrest report respondent attempted to flee the approaching officer and kicked him in the abdomen when he held her arm to take her into custody. Respondent continued to resist and was tased at least three times as a result.

9. Respondent pled guilty to Resisting an Officer without Violence and Reckless Driving on March 13, 2023, and was sentenced to probation.

10. Respondent did not inform the bar of this arrest until April 16, 2023.

COUNT II

11. Respondent was arrested on May 21, 2021, for aggravated battery with a deadly weapon and domestic battery by strangulation, both felonies, in Palm Beach County Case No. 2021CF004289AMB styled State of Florida v. Natalie Bruzzese.

12. The arrest report states that respondent was arguing with her wife when she broke a glass and used the broken glass as a weapon. Respondent allegedly pinned her wife down, and then proceeded to cut, hit, and strangle her. The report noted that officers observed blood and bruises on respondent's wife while respondent had no apparent injuries.

13. The Palm Beach State Attorney filed a No File on May 27, 2021, claiming there was insufficient evidence to prove the charges due to an uncooperative victim and lack of independent evidence.

14. Respondent was on probation, as ordered by the court in Case Number 2018CF001393 (Osceola County), when this arrest occurred and was taken into custody for violation of her drug offender probation.

15. Respondent did not inform the bar of this arrest until April 16, 2023.

16. By reason of the foregoing, respondent has violated the following Rules Regulating The Florida Bar: 3-4.3 [The commission by a lawyer of any act that is unlawful or contrary to honesty and justice may constitute a cause for discipline whether the act is committed in the course of the lawyer's relations as a lawyer or otherwise, whether committed within Florida or outside the state of Florida, and whether the act is a felony or a misdemeanor.]; 3-7.2(c) [Any member of The Florida Bar who is the subject of a felony criminal charge must notify the executive director of The Florida Bar of the charges within 10 days of the filing of the indictment or information and include a copy of the indictment or information.]; and 4-8.4(b) [A lawyer shall not commit a criminal act that reflects adversely on

the lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness as a lawyer in other respects...].

WHEREFORE, The Florida Bar prays respondent will be appropriately disciplined in accordance with the provisions of the Rules Regulating The Florida Bar as amended.



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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that this document has been E-filed with The Honorable John A. Tomasino, Clerk of the Supreme Court of Florida, with a copy provided via email to Respondent, Natalie Patricia Whitco, at nataliewhitco.1@gmail.com; and that a copy has been furnished by United States Mail via certified mail No. 7020 1810 0000 0813 5383, return receipt requested to Natalie Patricia Whitco, whose record bar address is 6350 Branchwood Drive, Lake Worth, FL 33467-7377 and via email to Dina Hyppolite, Bar Counsel, dhyppolite@floridabar.org and smiles@floridabar.org, on this 31st day of December, 2024.



Patricia Ann Toro Savitz
Staff Counsel

NOTICE OF TRIAL COUNSEL AND DESIGNATION OF PRIMARY EMAIL ADDRESS

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the trial counsel in this matter is Dina Hyppolite, Bar Counsel, whose address, telephone number and primary email address are The Florida Bar, Fort Lauderdale Branch Office, Lake Shore Plaza, II, 1300 Concord Terrace, Suite, 130 Sunrise, Florida 33323, (954)835-0233 and dhypolite@floridabar.org and smiles@floridabar.org. Respondent need not address pleadings, correspondence, etc. in this matter to anyone other than trial counsel and to Staff Counsel, The Florida Bar, 651 E. Jefferson Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-2300, psavitz@floridabar.org.

NOTICE OF MANDATORY ELECTRONIC FILING

All parties must file all pleadings, motions, and notices in this matter electronically, with a copy to the referee, through the Florida Courts E-Filing Portal, www.myflcourtagency.com, under Rule Regulating The Florida Bar 3-7.6(h)(5)(A) and (B).

MANDATORY ANSWER NOTICE

RULE 3-7.6(h)(2), RULES REGULATING THE FLORIDA BAR, PROVIDES THAT A RESPONDENT SHALL ANSWER A COMPLAINT.