

IN THE SOLICITORS DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL

BETWEEN:

SOLICITORS REGULATION AUTHORITY LTD

Applicant

and

SHAFIQ – UL HASSAN

Respondent

A N S W E R

1. The Respondent (“SH”) denies the allegations set out at paragraphs 1.1 and 1.2 of the Rule 12 Statement (“R12”) in their entirety.
2. It follows that SH denies having acted dishonestly as alleged at R12 paragraph 1.3.
3. R12 paragraphs 5-8 are admitted.
4. R12 paragraphs 9-17 relate to a meeting between SH, Client A, Mr B (a member of Client A’s family) and Mr C (Mr B’s business partner). SH was unaware that the meeting was being recorded. The meeting was conducted in Punjabi.

5. SH does not accept that the transcript represents a fair and accurate record of what was said.

6. Salient points are as follows: -
 - (a) The transcripts referred to at R12 paragraph 25 represent literal translations from Punjabi into English;

 - (b) They do not cater for the fact that the Punjabi language is highly idiomatic and has shades of meaning. It is not well served by a literal translation;

 - (c) Mr B and Mr C (among others) were exerting pressure upon Client A and, by extension, upon SH to withdraw the litigation that was being discussed at the meeting;

 - (d) Those present were asking SH as to what circumstances would have to arise to enable a successful adjournment application to be made at a very late stage;

 - (e) SH gave examples of extreme circumstances which might lead to that outcome. He was speaking hypothetically so as to demonstrate the practical impossibility of obtaining an adjournment. SH was not suggesting steps that might or should be taken – quite the contrary;

- (f) SH was making it clear to Client A that he should not provide false information or give untrue evidence in Court;
 - (g) The whole conversation was being steered by Mr C. He had agreed to pay the legal costs of Client A and was exerting pressure upon him to withdraw the litigation;
 - (h) Mr C held a grudge against SH;
- and
- (i) The context of the conversation has to be seen in light of earlier conversations.

7. R12 paragraphs 8-21 related to SH's evidence in Court. Salient points are as follows: -

- (a) In giving evidence in Court SH was being asked questions about the meeting referred to at paragraph 4 above;
- (b) The points set out at paragraph 6 above are repeated;
- (c) In particular SH had given extreme and hypothetical examples of circumstances which might have produced a last minute

adjournment of the litigation. Such an outcome was virtually impossible in any event;

- (d) In his own mind SH was conflating the concepts of exaggerating and lying;
 - (e) At no stage had SH ever made untrue statements to his client who was clearly being put under undue influence by the other parties at the meeting;
 - (f) SH regarded the approaches of those asking him questions at Court as being hostile and very aggressive;
 - (g) For that reason SH was not paying proper attention to the questions. He was anticipating his answer before the question had been concluded;
 - (h) In giving his answers SH was hindered by his command of the English language and, more particularly, by the nuanced differences of meaning between words spoken in Punjabi and those spoken in English;
- and
- (i) SH's intentions in answering the questions was to explain

why, at the meeting, he had made remarks with a view to preventing the third parties attending the meeting exercising improper pressure upon Client A to abandon his claim and which in SH's opinion had excellent prospects of success. SH was concerned that those third parties may have indulged in criminal activity.

8. R12 paragraphs 29-31 and 33-43 consist of submissions which are not accepted.
9. R12 paragraph 32 is accepted.
10. R12 paragraph 45 is accepted.
11. R12 paragraphs 46-48 are submissions which are not accepted.
12. R12 paragraph 50 is accepted.
13. R12 paragraphs 52 and 59 are factually accurate.
14. In the course of the SRA investigation SH has provided full explanations with respect to the allegations against him. They appear on Caselines at: -
 - (a) X90-X97 – from SH's previous Solicitors;
 - (b) X287-289 – from SH;

and

(c) X323-354 – from SH.

15. SH repeats the contents of those statements in this Answer in so far as they are relevant to the allegations now being pursued.

Dated: 22nd May 2024

Geoffrey Williams KC
Farrar's Building
Temple
London
EC4Y 7BD

I confirm that the facts and matters set out in this document are true to the best of my knowledge information and belief.



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Dated: 27-05-2025
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Signed: Shafiq-Ul Hassan