

IN THE MATTER OF RIMINDEEP BEDI,  
A person (not being a solicitor) employed or remunerated by a solicitor

- AND -

IN THE MATTER OF THE SOLICITORS ACT 1974

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Mr R B Bamford (in the chair)  
Mr D Green  
Lady Maxwell-Hyslop

Date of Hearing: 15th July 2008

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## **FINDINGS**

of the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal  
Constituted under the Solicitors Act 1974

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An application was duly made on behalf of The Law Society by Peter Harland Cadman, a partner in the firm of Russell Cooke LLP of 8 Bedford Row, London WC1R 4BX on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2007 that Rimindeep Bedi, a solicitor's clerk, of Golders Green, London NW11 9PG have an Order be made by the Tribunal directing that, as from a date to be specified in such Order, no solicitor, Registered European Lawyer or incorporated solicitor's practice shall, except in accordance with permission in writing granted by the Society for such period and subject to such conditions as the Society may think fit to specify in the permission, employ or remunerate, in connection with his practice as a solicitor, Registered European Lawyer or member, director or shareowner of an incorporated solicitor's practice, the person with respect to whom the Order is made, or any such other Order as the Tribunal shall think right.

The allegation against the Respondent is that she, having been employed or remunerated by solicitors but not herself being a solicitor had been a party to acts or defaults in relation to a solicitor's practice which involved the conduct on her behalf such that it would be undesirable for her to be employed or remunerated by a solicitor in connection with that practice and in particular:-

- (a) That she created a copy letter on a client's file that was inaccurate, untrue and or a forgery.
- (b) That she removed client files from the premises of Glazer Delmar.
- (c) That she misled a client Mr L in a telephone call and a letter of 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2006 by falsely stating that she had submitted an application on his behalf to the Immigration and National Directorate.
- (d) That she misled a client Mrs CH (nee N) in a conversation by stating to her that she had submitted an application to Immigration and National Directorate on her behalf.
- (e) That she misled her former employers, Glazer Delmar, by denying that she held at her above address the client files referred to in allegation (b) above.
- (f) That she was convicted of six offences of theft at Inner London Crown Court on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2008.

The application was heard at The Court Room, Third Floor, Gate House, 1 Farringdon Street, London EC4M 7NS on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2008 when Peter Harland Cadman appeared as the Applicant and the Respondent did not appear and was not represented. At the commencement of the hearing the Applicant gave the Tribunal details of the steps he had taken to ensure that the Respondent had been properly served. He confirmed he had served a Civil Evidence Act Notice on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2008 regarding the original Rule 4 Statement. On 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2008 both supplementary statements had been served on the Respondent. There had been no counter notice and no communication from the Respondent other than the Applicant had received one communication from the Respondent asking for a copy of the Rule 4 statement and he had received one letter from the Respondent's solicitors dealing with the criminal matter indicating that they were instructed only to deal with criminal proceedings and notifying the Applicant of the date of the trial for criminal proceedings. Other than these two communications, the Respondent had not participated in the process.

**At the conclusion of the hearing the Tribunal made the following Order:-**

The Tribunal Orders that as from 15<sup>th</sup> day of July 2008 no solicitor, Registered European Lawyer or incorporated solicitor's practice shall, except in accordance with permission in writing granted by the Law Society for such period and subject to such conditions as the Society may think fit to specify in the permission, employ or remunerate in connection with the practice as a solicitor, Registered European Lawyer or member, director or shareowner of an incorporated solicitor's practice Rimindeep Bedi of Golders Green, London, NW11 9PG a person who is or was a clerk to a solicitor and the Tribunal further Order that she do pay the costs of and incidental to this application and enquiry fixed in the sum of £4,000.00.

**The facts are set out in paragraphs 1 - 9 hereunder:-**

1. The Respondent was born on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1971 and her last known address is Golders Green, London NW11 9PG.
2. In the course of her employment, the Respondent had conduct of an immigration file on behalf of a lay client. In due course the lay client complained about the Respondent to the Respondent's employers and to the Solicitors Regulation Authority.
3. After the Respondent's employers received the lay client's complaint, they considered the file of papers relating to the client and in due course found a letter dated 17<sup>th</sup> November 2005 purportedly sent to the lay client at a given address. The copy letter would have been to the benefit of the Respondent in rebutting suggestions that she failed to provide prompt and relevant advice to the lay client.
4. That letter was not and could not have been a genuine copy letter for the following reasons:-
  - (a) By a letter dated 31<sup>st</sup> October 2006, the client advised the Applicant that she did not move to the address where the letter dated 17<sup>th</sup> November 2005 had purportedly been sent until 30<sup>th</sup> November 2005. Further, a file entry on the solicitor's file dated 30<sup>th</sup> November 2005 confirmed that it was only on that date that the firm became aware of the new address. This was 13 days after the date of the purported letter to the client.
  - (b) The letter contained information about the firm's Christmas holiday closing and the firm confirmed in their letter dated 31<sup>st</sup> January 2007 to the Applicant that the message with regard to Christmas holiday closing was not in use as at 17<sup>th</sup> November 2005.
5. The Respondent had been notified by her employers that six client files could not be located and when she was asked if she had any of those six files she replied that she had only dealt with two of the files and that she had given those files to be billed and they had never been returned to her.
6. Subsequently on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2007, the police arrested the Respondent at her home address and recovered the six files from her premises. The files had been stacked on top of one another inside a walk-in closet at the address which was a one bedroom flat. There was no visual obstruction in front of the files. The Respondent must therefore have been aware that she was in possession of those files.
7. The Respondent misled two clients by advising them that she had made an application to the Home Office on their behalf when no such application was ever lodged.

8. The Respondent was tried at the Inner London Crown Court on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2008 where she was convicted of theft of all six files from her employers. A certificate of conviction was produced together with a copy of the Judge's sentencing comments. The Respondent was fined £150.00 on each count on the indictment making a total of £900.00 together with a £15.00 victim surcharge.
9. The Respondent had therefore been convicted of criminal offences of dishonesty relating to her employment as a clerk employed by a firm of solicitors.

#### **The Submissions of the Applicant**

10. The Respondent had not attended and had not responded to the Tribunal. She had not participated in the process and the allegations were serious.
11. The Respondent had been dishonest and indeed, had been convicted of six offences of theft.
12. The Applicant sought his costs in the sum of £8,900.62 in full. The Applicant pointed out that as there had been no communication from the Respondent, he had had to prepare the case in full, not knowing whether she would attend Court today and whether she intended to contest the allegations.

#### **The Findings of the Tribunal**

13. The Tribunal carefully considered the documentation and the submissions of the Applicant. In the absence of any evidence or submissions put forward by the Respondent, the Tribunal were satisfied from the documentation available that all the allegations were substantiated.
14. There was no mitigation before the Tribunal on behalf of the Respondent. The Tribunal felt that it had been of paramount importance that the Law Society had to take these proceedings particularly in light of allegations of dishonesty.
15. The Tribunal was concerned that the Respondent had no employment and may not have the means to pay for any costs. The Tribunal would have liked to investigate the Respondent's means but as she was not represented before the Tribunal, and as she had not dealt with any correspondence to date, the Tribunal was unable to investigate her means.
16. In all the circumstances, the Tribunal was satisfied that the Law Society had brought the proceedings quite properly and summarily assessed the costs of the Law Society at £4,000.00.
17. The Tribunal Ordered that as from 15<sup>th</sup> day of July 2008 no solicitor, Registered European Lawyer or incorporated solicitor's practice shall, except in accordance with permission in writing granted by the Law Society for such period and subject to such

conditions as the Society may think fit to specify in the permission, employ or remunerate in connection with the practice as a solicitor, Registered European Lawyer or member, director or shareowner of an incorporated solicitor's practice Rimiindeep Bedi of Golders Green, London, NW11 9PG a person who is or was a clerk to a solicitor and the Tribunal further Ordered that she do pay the costs of and incidental to this application and enquiry fixed in the sum of £4,000.00.

Dated this 24th day of October 2008

On behalf of the Tribunal

R B Bamford  
Chairman