

# SOLICITORS DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL

IN THE MATTER OF THE SOLICITORS ACT 1974

Case No. 12736-2025

## BETWEEN:

SOLICITORS REGULATION AUTHORITY LTD

Applicant

and

RAYMOND JOHN MCKEEVE

Respondent

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Before:

Mr J Johnston (in the Chair)

Ms A E Banks

Ms K Wright

Date of Hearing: 23 March 2026

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## Appearances

Tom Walker, Counsel employed by Blake Morgan LLP of Apex Plaza, Forbury Road, Reading, RG1 1AX for the Applicant.

Mr McKeeve attended the hearing and represented himself.

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## JUDGMENT

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## **Allegations**

The allegation against the Respondent, Raymond John McKeeve, made by the SRA are that, whilst in practice as a Registered Foreign Lawyer and Partner at Jones Day LLP (“the Firm”) he:

1. On 4 July 2019, in response to being told that a Search Order to preserve evidence had been obtained against Client A and Person A, you gave instructions of ‘*burn it*’ (or words similar to) to Person B in respect of electronic material held by Client A, and which led to a determination that you were criminally liable for contempt of court.
  - 1.1 In doing so, he breached any or all of the following SRA Code of Conduct 2011 (‘the 2011 Code’):
    - a. Outcome 5.4
  - 1.2 In doing so, he breached any or all of the following SRA Principles 2011 (‘the 2011 Principles’);
    - a. Principle 1
    - b. Principle 2
    - c. Principle 6

## **Executive Summary**

2. The Respondent was authorised by the Applicant as a Registered Foreign Lawyer on 20 February 2017. At the relevant time, the Respondent was a partner at Jones Day LLP specialising in private equity.
3. The Respondent acted from 2018 for Client A, an online grocery business founded by Person A, who had previously founded O (a company). He advised Client A and Person A in relation to proposed commercial arrangements with Marks & Spencer, which did not proceed, and later in connection with Client A’s agreement with Waitrose.
4. During this period, Person A recruited Person C, then a senior employee of O, to join Client A as Chief Operating Officer. After Person C resigned from O and was placed on gardening leave, O suspected that confidential information had been disclosed to Client A. O subsequently obtained a Search Order against Person C, Client A and Person A.
5. The Respondent’s conduct in relation to the execution of that Search Order later gave rise to proceedings against him, resulting in a judgment dated 3 August 2022 finding him in Contempt of Court.
6. Following an SRA investigation, an allegation was brought against the Respondent citing breaches of Principles 1, 2 and 6 of the SRA Principles 2011 and Outcome 5.4 of the SRA Code of Conduct 2011.
7. The allegation was admitted by the Respondent and the Tribunal ordered that the Respondent be Suspended from practice as a Registered Foreign Lawyer for a period

of 2 years commencing on 23 March 2026 and it further Ordered that he do pay the costs of and incidental to this application and enquiry fixed in the sum of £20,000.00.

### **Admissions**

8. The Respondent admitted the allegation.

### **Documents**

9. The Tribunal had, amongst other things, the following documents before it: -
  - The Form of Application dated 19 February 2025
  - Rule 12 Statement and exhibit JD1 dated 19 February 2025
  - Respondent's Statement of Mitigation dated 10 March 2026
  - Statement of Agreed Facts dated 10 March 2026

### **Preliminary Application**

10. The Applicant applied that several of the individuals and parties named in the proceedings be anonymised throughout the proceedings. This application applied to Client A, Person A, Person B, Person C and O.
11. The application was not opposed by the Respondent and was granted by the Tribunal pursuant to Rule 35 of The Solicitors (Disciplinary Proceedings) Rules 2019 as it was in the interests of justice.

### **Background**

12. The Respondent was authorised by the Applicant as a Registered Foreign Lawyer ('RFL') on 20 February 2017. At the relevant time, the Respondent was a partner at Jones Day LLP ('the Firm'), specialising in private equity. At the relevant time, the Respondent was married to his wife, Belinda de Lucy.
13. From around 2018, the Respondent acted for Client A, which was founded by Person A by incorporation on 16 July 2018. Prior to founding Client A, Person A had been a founder of O, website for online grocery shopping. Client A was similar in function to O.
14. In around 2018 Marks & Spencer ('M&S') were looking to enter into online grocery shopping. Meetings between M&S and Client A took place during June and October 2018 but did not lead to a successful agreement. The Respondent advised Client A and Person A in respect of the potential agreement. M&S and O, instead, entered into an arrangement in February 2019.
15. Whilst setting Client A up in business, Person A made contact with Person C, who was at the time a senior employee of O.
16. Whilst the potential deal between Client A and M&S did not conclude, Client A did enter into arrangements with Waitrose supermarket. The Respondent remained instructed by Client A in respect of this deal.

17. On 15 May 2019, Person C resigned from his position at O and accepted an offer of employment as Chief Operating Officer with Client A. The following day, 16 May 2019, Waitrose announced the commercial deal that had been entered into with Client A. On 23 May 2019, Person C was placed on gardening leave by O. During the time of his gardening leave, he remained an employee of O.
18. Due to suspicions that O had in respect of confidential information potentially being disseminated by Person C, it obtained a Search Order against him, Client A and Person A.
19. As a result of the Respondent's actions in respect of the Search Order, O brought proceedings against him, which led to a judgment of Contempt of Court on 3 August 2022.

### **Witnesses**

20. The evidence is quoted or summarised in the Findings of Fact and Law below. The evidence referred to will be that which was relevant to the findings of the Tribunal, and to facts or issues in dispute between the parties. For the avoidance of doubt, the Tribunal read all of the documents in the case. The absence of any reference to particular evidence should not be taken as an indication that the Tribunal did not read, hear or consider that evidence.
21. No witnesses gave oral evidence during the hearing.

### **Findings of Fact and Law**

22. The Applicant was required to prove the allegation on the balance of probabilities. The Tribunal had due regard to its statutory duty, under Section 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998, to act in a manner which was compatible with the Respondent's rights to a fair trial and to respect for his private and family life under Articles 6 and 8 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.
23. **Allegation 1:- On 4 July 2019, in response to being told that a Search Order to preserve evidence had been obtained against Client A and Person A, you gave instructions of 'burn it' (or words similar to) to Person B in respect of electronic material held by Client A, and which led to a determination that you were criminally liable for contempt of court.**

### The Applicant's Case

- 23.1 The Rule 12 Statement setting out the Applicant's case can be viewed – [[here](#)].

### The Statement of Agreed Facts

- 23.2 The Statement of Agreed Facts setting out the agreed position adopted by the parties, including the Respondent's admissions can be viewed – [[here](#)].

- 23.3 The Tribunal reviewed all the material before it and considered with great care the submissions made by Mr Walker and the Respondent. All findings were made on the balance of probabilities. The burden of proof lay entirely with the Applicant.
- 23.4 The agreed facts set out that around 17 May 2019 Client A's IT manager, Person B, created an account for a number of employees of Client A on the 3CX App ('3CX'). This application allowed for discussions, both electronic and voice, to take place between users.
- 23.5 3CX also contained a 'burner box' facility that, if used, would destroy the communications held on it. Person C, who was on gardening leave from O at the time, had an account created for him on 3CX. On 18 May 2019, Person B texted Person C stating:
- "In the interim you shall be called Belinda. I don't know why it was a joint effort of 4 egg heads round a table who couldn't even come up with a decent name".*
- 23.6 The reference to Belinda was a reference to the Respondent's wife, whose full name was used as a pseudonym for Person C's email account with Client A.
- 23.7 On 23 May 2019, the Respondent's wife was elected as a Member of the European Parliament.
- 23.8 From the time of Person C's email account for Client A being created, he sent the Respondent a number of emails. Due to the pseudonym applied to Person C's account, it appeared that the Respondent was receiving emails from his wife.
- 23.9 In addition to emails from Person C, the Respondent also spoke to him via 3CX on three occasions (26 June, 28 June and 1 July 2019).
- 23.10 Due to Person C being on gardening leave from O, the Respondent raised concerns with Client A on the appropriateness of Person C's conduct. The Respondent also raised issues with the use of his wife's name as a pseudonym for Person C. On or around 26 June 2019, Person C's pseudonym was amended from 'Belinda' to 'Josephine'.
- 23.11 During June and July 2019, O became concerned in respect of Person C's behaviour and the communication that he might be having with Person A despite being on gardening leave. Part of the concerns related to suspicions that O held that Person C was handing confidential information regarding O to Person A whilst still an employee of O.
- 23.12 On 3 July 2019, the Respondent met with Person A and a number of employees of Client A at the company's offices.
- 23.13 The Respondent again raised his concerns that the contact taking place between Client A and Person C was not appropriate, and that Person C had access to Client A's internal systems whilst on gardening leave from O.

- 23.14 On the same date, O obtained an “*order for search of premises and preservation of evidence*” (“the Order”). This was ordered by Fancourt J and was in support of anticipated proceedings to be brought by O against Person A, Client A and Person C.
- 23.15 Paragraph 7 of the Order confirmed the extent of the search allowed against the three respondents:

*“The Respondents and any Controller of Access must permit the Supervising Solicitor; the Independent Computer Specialist and the Applicants’ Solicitors identified in Schedule A to this order (together ‘the Search Party’) to:*

- (a) enter the Premises;*
- (b) access any containers within the Premises such as (without limitation) safes, boxes, briefcases and suitcases (‘Containers’); and*
- (c) access any electronic data storage devices at or accessible from the Premises, such as (without limitation) computers, tablets, PDAs, mobile telephones, server data (including file shares and email), backup media (whether cloud-based, hard drive or tapes), USB Storage devices, cloud-based IT Systems (including file shares and email), online storage/data sharing platforms such as (without limitation) Dropbox and web based email accounts (not including anything which is the property of the Connaught Hotel, but otherwise irrespective of whether such items are the property of the Respondents or not) (the ‘Electronic Data Storage Devices’), so that they can search for, inspect, photograph, electronically copy or photocopy, and deliver into the safekeeping of the Applicants’ Solicitors all the documents and articles which are listed in Schedule C to this order (‘Listed Items’) or which the Supervising Solicitor believes to be Listed Items.”*

- 23.16 The Order included a condition that the respondents could ask for the search to be delayed up to two hours to be allowed to take legal advice on its content. The Order did, however, also contain restrictions as to what the respondents could do during that period.

*“32. Except for the purpose of obtaining legal advice, the Respondents and any Controller of Access must not directly or indirectly inform anyone of these proceedings or of the contents of this order, or warn anyone that proceedings have been or may be brought against it by the Applicants until 4.30 p.m. on the return date or further order of the court or such earlier time as agreed in writing by the Applicants.*

*33. Until 4.30 p.m. on the Return Date, the Respondents and any Controller of Access must not destroy, tamper with or part with possession, power, custody or control of any Listed Items otherwise than in accordance with the terms of this order provided that, after the making of the electronic copies as set out in paragraph 21 above, the Respondent is permitted to make use of any Electronic Data Storage Devices in the ordinary course of business or personal use.*

*34. Until the Return Date or further order of the Court, the Respondent must not use, disclose or in any way deal with the Confidential Information (as*

*defined in Schedule C), save for the purposes of receiving advice from the Respondent's legal advisers or as provided for in this Order."*

23.17 In respect of the 'Listed Items', Schedule C of the Order stated:

*"For the purposes of this order, Listed Items shall constitute:*

*1. Any document, in hard or soft copy, (i) created by or on behalf of either of the Intended Claimants and (ii) containing Confidential Information, including:*

*a. Any reproductions of the 'dashboard' summary of the performance of the*

*[O] business;*

*b. Any reproductions of the [O] businesses' weekly or monthly key performance indicator (KPI) summaries;*

*c. Any reproductions of documents relating to the projects entitled [O] "Zoom" or [O] 'Orbit';*

*d. Any of the underlying information or data used to produce any document in category (1) a, b or c above;*

*2. Any document, in hard or soft copy, incorporating or reproducing information from a document in category (1);*

*3. Any document, in hard or soft copy, incorporating or reproducing information about the [O] business (i) which was obtained directly from a person who was at the time an employee of an [O] company and (ii) which was not also publicly available at the time of its receipt by the Respondent;*

*4. Any document evidencing:*

*a. the provision to the Respondents, or obtaining by the Respondents, of any document in category (1);*

*b. the creation of any document in categories (2) and (3);*

*c. any use made by the Respondents, whether directly or indirectly, of any document in categories (1), (2) or (3), including (without limitation) any transmission or disclosure of any such document or the contents thereof to third parties; and*

*d. any work carried out directly or indirectly by any current employee of an [O] company for or on behalf of the First or Second Respondents or the '[Client A] Development Partners' business.*

*5. In respect of the First and Second Respondents only, any property belonging to the Applicants and which was provided to the First and Second Respondents by the Third Respondent.*

*For the purposes of this order:*

*'Confidential Information' shall constitute:*

*a) Information in whatever form (including, without limitation in written, oral, visual or electronic form or on any magnetic or optical disk or memory and wherever located) relating to the business, clients, customers, products, affairs and finances of the Applicants or any Group Company for the time being confidential to the Applicants or any Group Company and trade secrets including, without limitation, technical data and know-how relating to the business of the Applicants or of any Group Company or any of its or their suppliers, clients, customers, agents, distributors, shareholders or management, that the Third Respondent created, developed, received or obtained in connection with his employment with the Second Applicant, whether or not such information (if in anything other than oral form) is marked confidential; and*

*b) Any information described at a) above that was, at the time of its provision or disclosure to the Respondent, confidential to the Applicants or any Group Company.*

*‘Group Company’ shall mean the Applicants, their Subsidiaries or Holding Companies from time to time and any Subsidiary of any Holding Company from time to time.*

*‘Subsidiary and Holding Company’ shall mean in relation to a company, “subsidiary” and “holding company” as defined in section 1159 of the Companies Act 2006 and a company shall be treated, for the purposes only of the membership requirement contained in subsections 1159(1)(b) and (c), as a member of another company even if its shares in that other company are registered in the name of (a) another person (or its nominee), whether by way of security or in connection with the taking of security, or (b) a nominee.”*

- 23.18 The Order was executed on 4 July 2019 on Person A at the Connaught Hotel, where he was based at the time, by the Supervising Solicitor, Alex de Jongh at around 08:20am.
- 23.19 Upon receipt of the Order, Person A confirmed that he wished to take legal advice on the Order from the Respondent. It was agreed that Mr de Jongh would speak to the Respondent so that the situation, and the restrictions, could be explained to the Respondent.
- 23.20 Person A and the Respondent spoke between 08:30am and 08:38am. During that time period, Mr de Jongh also spoke to the Respondent on the telephone for a short time (approximately 1 ½ minutes).
- 23.21 During this conversation Mr de Jongh confirmed the following points to the Respondent:
- That an order had been served on Person A;
  - The Order had been obtained, on behalf of O, in respect of underlying proceedings;
  - That the Respondent should not inform others of the Order, but that the respondents were allowed two hours to take legal advice;
  - That he would send a copy of the Order to the Respondent and O’s lawyers.

- 23.22 After the telephone conversation between the Respondent and Person A (and Mr de Jongh), the Respondent sent a message to Person B via 3CX. The message stated (or used words similar) that Person B was to ‘*burn it*’.
- 23.23 Following the Respondent sending the message to Person B, he also telephoned him to ensure the message was understood, and that Person B would proceed to delete 3CX.
- 23.24 Following the 3CX message from the Respondent and the telephone call, Person B deleted the 3CX App and all of its contents. This deletion resulted in the information being irretrievably destroyed.
- 23.25 After the Respondent contacted Person B, he subsequently contacted one his fellow partners at the Firm, Mr Sion Richards. Mr Richards specialised in litigation and advised Person A and Client A on what was required.
- 23.26 By email of 08:59, Mr de Jongh emailed the Respondent and attached a copy of the Order and related documents.
- 23.27 The existence of 3CX, and another set of email accounts, was not made known to Mr Richards until 9 July 2019.
- 23.28 Due to the actions taken by the Respondent, O commenced a Part 8 claim against the Respondent regarding an allegation of contempt of court (criminal). The claim was issued by on 25 September 2019. The basis of the contempt of court application was:
- The Respondent intentionally caused the deletion of documentary materials relevant to the underlying action brought by O, in support of which the search order had been obtained and
  - He intentionally took steps which thwarted the purpose of the search order
- 23.29 The hearing took place in the Business and Property Court of England and Wales (‘the court’) between 28 June 2022 and 4 July 2022. The Respondent gave evidence on his own behalf during the contempt proceedings. During the Respondent’s evidence, he confirmed that:
- He was aware that mobile phones and electronic devices were being seized, and was concerned that his wife’s name, and the use of that on 3CX would be made public, and suggest that she was involved with Client A in some manner;
  - This concern caused him to panic and to instruct Person B to ‘burn it’ (in reference to 3CX), both via the app itself and by telephone, to avoid the use of his wife’s name being discovered;
  - He had no intention to breach any court order or destroy any evidence that may be relevant to court proceedings, and litigation was not his area of law, which was in respect of ‘deals’.

- 23.30 An approved judgment by Mr Justice Johnson was handed down on 3 August 2022. It was determined that the Respondent was criminally liable for contempt of court on the final ground of the claim, in respect of the destruction of 3CX.
- 23.31 The Respondent accepted that he gave a message to the applicable person, both in writing and orally, to 'burn' some electronic material. Following that message being given by the Respondent, the electronic material was deleted and that led to that material being irretrievably destroyed.
- 23.32 In respect of four of the grounds advanced during the contempt proceedings, the court found that the necessary intention required to establish the mens rea element had not been proven.
- 23.33 However, the court was satisfied that the requisite intention existed in relation to Ground 5, which resulted in the finding of contempt of court. Ground 5 succeeded because the Respondent intended to prevent the 3CX platform from being searched.
- 23.34 The Applicant acknowledged that the platform was not treated by the court as a repository containing extensive confidential documentation. Rather, it was a communications tool used for messaging and logistical arrangements. It may not have contained large numbers of documents, but it remained relevant because it recorded communications involving Person C and activity linked to Client A. The destruction of the platform therefore interfered with the purpose of the search order. The order was intended to permit investigators to examine electronic communications, and the deletion prevented that from happening.
- 23.35 The Applicant asserted that the Respondent had already recognised the sensitivity of involving Person C in the messaging system and had expressed concern about the use of his wife's name. This demonstrated awareness of risk and context before the search order was executed. The court had effectively rejected any suggestion that the Respondent lacked understanding of the search order's significance. Notwithstanding any limitations in the Respondent's specialist litigation expertise, the Respondent should have recognised that material subject to a court order must not be destroyed.
- 23.36 It was agreed between the parties that the case did not involve a sustained conspiracy or prolonged campaign of concealment. There was no finding by the court that extensive confidential information had been hidden. Instead, the significance lay in the destruction of the communications trail itself. The loss of the messaging platform deprived investigators of the opportunity to examine patterns of communication, chronology, and the interactions between those involved.
- 23.37 The court stated that, whatever the Respondent's motive, he acted with the precise intention of preventing a search of the 3CX platform. This finding was central to the contempt decision. The court concluded that the Respondent knew the purpose of the order was to preserve and inspect electronic communications. By directing the destruction of the platform, he intentionally frustrated that process.
- 23.38 The Tribunal carefully considered the findings of the court and had regard for the Statement of Agreed Facts setting out the agreed position adopted by the parties,

including the Respondent's unequivocal admissions. The Tribunal was satisfied on the balance of probabilities that the Respondent's admissions were properly made.

- 23.39 The Tribunal found on the balance of probabilities that on 4 July 2019, in response to being told that a Search Order to preserve evidence had been obtained against Client A and Person A, the Respondent gave instructions of '*burn it*' (or words similar to) to Person B in respect of electronic material held by Client A, and which led to a determination that he was criminally liable for contempt of court.
- 23.40 Having found the factual matrix of Allegation 1 proved, the Tribunal went on to consider the alleged breaches of the 2011 Principles and the 2011 Code. The Tribunal found that the Respondent had thereby breached Principle 1 of the 2011 Principles which required that he uphold the rule of law and the proper administration of justice, Principle 2 of the 2011 Principles which required that he act with integrity and Principle 6 of the 2011 Principles which required that he behave in a way that maintained the trust the public placed in him and the provision of legal services.
- 23.41 The Tribunal further found that the Respondent breached Outcome 5.4 of the 2011 Code which required that he did not place himself in contempt of court.

### **Previous Disciplinary Matters**

24. The Respondent had no previous findings recorded against him.

### **Mitigation**

25. The Respondent accepted that the findings of contempt of court were matters of the utmost seriousness and acknowledged that his conduct fell significantly below the standards expected of a solicitor and officer of the court. He did not seek to minimise the gravity of the misconduct but invited the Tribunal to consider the circumstances in which the conduct occurred and the mitigating features advanced on his behalf.
26. The Respondent submitted that his actions were neither dishonest nor premeditated. He maintained that the conduct did not form part of any calculated or planned attempt to obstruct justice, a position which he submitted had been accepted by the court. It was emphasised that the Respondent had not acted for personal financial gain, commercial benefit, or to secure any litigation advantage. Rather, the Respondent stated that he had acted impulsively and whilst under acute personal stress. Whilst recognising that such matters could not excuse the misconduct, the Respondent submitted that the absence of premeditation or improper motive were relevant to the Tribunal's assessment of culpability.
27. The Respondent further submitted that his actions were motivated by personal concerns relating to the privacy of his family and not by any desire to obtain professional or tactical advantage in the litigation. He accepted that personal considerations could never justify interference with the administration of justice and acknowledged that he ought to have exercised greater restraint and judgment.
28. It was also submitted that the conduct was limited in scope. The deletion concerned a specific messaging application only, whilst all other devices, servers, and

documentation were surrendered pursuant to the search order without obstruction. The Respondent accepted that any interference with material potentially subject to a search order was inherently serious, but he submitted that the conduct did not form part of any wider attempt to frustrate the court process.

29. The Respondent cited his previously unblemished professional career which spanned more than 25 years. It was submitted that prior to this incident he had held senior positions within international law firms and had not previously been the subject of disciplinary findings, complaints, or regulatory concerns. Whilst acknowledging that his seniority rendered the misconduct more serious, the Respondent submitted that his longstanding commitment to professional standards and ethical practice should also be afforded significant weight.
30. The Respondent submitted that he had already suffered profound professional, reputational, financial, and personal consequences arising from the High Court proceedings and the associated publicity. These consequences were said to be relevant to considerations of proportionality, whilst accepting that disciplinary proceedings are protective rather than punitive in nature.
31. The Respondent also stated that he had demonstrated genuine remorse, insight, and rehabilitation. He expressed profound regret for his actions and acknowledged that he had failed to uphold the standards of integrity and judgment expected of an officer of the court. The Respondent submitted that he had reflected deeply upon the misconduct, recognised the importance of strict compliance with court orders irrespective of personal circumstances, and he emphasised that he remained capable of safe and ethical practice.
32. Finally, the Respondent submitted that there was no evidence of any broader pattern of misconduct involving dishonesty. He characterised the events as an isolated lapse within an otherwise distinguished professional career and submitted that the protective objectives of disciplinary proceedings could properly be met by a sanction short of strike off.

### **Sanction**

33. The Tribunal considered the Guidance Note on Sanction (11th Edition February 2025), and the proper approach to sanctions as set out in *Fuglers and others v SRA* [2014] EWHC 179. The Tribunal's overriding objective when considering sanction, was the need to maintain public confidence in the integrity of the profession.
34. In determining sanction, the Tribunal's role involved an assessment of the seriousness of the proven misconduct in order to impose a sanction that was fair and proportionate in all the circumstances. In determining the seriousness of the misconduct, the Tribunal considered the identifiable culpability and harm together with the aggravating and mitigating factors that existed.
35. The Tribunal found that the Respondent's motivation for the misconduct was to prevent embarrassment being caused to his wife. The Tribunal concurred with the assessment of the court, in that the Respondent was frustrated and annoyed at himself for having permitted the line between his personal and professional life to become blurred. The

Respondent's motivation was not to implement a pre-arranged plan to destroy potentially relevant documents, his actions were not inspired by a conspiracy but rather a spontaneous act of "*colossal stupidity*".

36. Although the Respondent was an experienced solicitor, he was not a litigator and was acting outside his area of expertise at the material time. Consequently, the Tribunal noted that the Respondent lacked a detailed working knowledge of the implications of the search order and the obligations arising from it. The Respondent did though have direct control of, and responsibility for, the circumstances giving rise to the misconduct and the Tribunal therefore assessed his culpability as medium.
37. In assessing harm, the Tribunal considered the impact of the Respondent's misconduct upon those directly and indirectly affected, the public, and the reputation of the legal profession.
38. The Tribunal considered the extent of the harm that was intended, or which might reasonably have been foreseen, as arising from the misconduct. Although it was not determined that the electronic devices contained confidential information, the Respondent's actions nevertheless constituted a clear breach of the search order and thereby caused harm to the proceedings and to the parties. The Tribunal found that the misconduct also caused harm to the reputation of the profession. In particular, the determination that the Respondent was criminally liable for contempt of court significantly undermined public confidence in the profession.
39. In addition, the Tribunal found that the Respondent knew, or ought reasonably to have known, that his actions amounted to a material breach of obligations designed to protect the public and maintain the reputation of the legal profession, particularly given that the misconduct involved the frustration of a search order made by the court. The Tribunal assessed the level of harm as high.
40. The Respondent's misconduct was aggravated by the determination that he was criminally liable for contempt of court.
41. The Tribunal also took account of several mitigating factors. The Respondent cooperated with the Applicant throughout its investigation and the resultant proceedings. The misconduct constituted a single episode of very brief duration within the context of a previously unblemished professional career. The Tribunal further accepted that the Respondent had demonstrated insight, remorse, and remediation, as evidenced by his statement in mitigation.
42. The Tribunal determined that No Order, a Reprimand or a Fine were inadequate sanctions. None of these options were commensurate with the seriousness of the misconduct or the risk to the public and the reputation of the profession.
43. The Tribunal determined that a lengthy suspension from the Roll was the appropriate penalty in this case. Public confidence in the legal profession demanded no lesser sanction. The Tribunal identified the need to protect both the public and the reputation of the legal profession from future harm from the Respondent by removing his ability to practise.

44. The Tribunal recognised that a suspension of two years represented a significant sanction and that a suspension of such length ordinarily reflected misconduct approaching the level at which strike off could properly be considered. Nevertheless, having regard to the particular circumstances of this case, including the absence of dishonesty, the Respondent's insight and remorse, his previously unblemished career, and the isolated nature of the misconduct, the Tribunal concluded that the protection of the public and the maintenance of public confidence in the profession did not require that the Respondent be struck off the Roll.
45. The Tribunal therefore imposed a suspension from practice as a Registered Foreign Lawyer on the Respondent for a period of 2 years.

### **Costs**

46. The Applicant applied for costs in the sum of £30,930.00. The case was said to have properly brought with all allegations found proved. Mr Walker submitted that the Applicant was therefore entitled to its costs.
47. The Respondent did not file a statement of means supported by evidence in advance of the hearing pursuant to Rule 43(5) of The Solicitors (Disciplinary Proceedings) Rules 2019. The Respondent accepted that this omission was his responsibility, and he acknowledged that as a consequence the Tribunal would determine the amount of costs payable without reference to his means.
48. The Applicant submitted that the costs claimed reflected a fixed fee payable to Blake Morgan LLP pursuant to an agreed complexity-based fee arrangement between the Applicant and Blake Morgan LLP. The Tribunal enquired whether any reduction had been applied to the costs claimed following the reduction in the hearing estimate after the parties filed the Agreed Statement of Facts. Mr Walker confirmed that, as the costs claimed were based upon a fixed-fee arrangement, no reduction had been applied arising from the shortened listing.
49. The Tribunal reviewed the Applicant's Statement of Costs in detail pursuant to Rule 43 of the Solicitors (Disciplinary Proceedings) Rules 2019 and had regard for the conduct of the parties including the extent to which the Tribunal's directions and time limits imposed had been complied with, whether the amount of time spent on the matter was proportionate and reasonable and whether any or all of the allegations were pursued reasonably. The Tribunal determined in light of the hearing being reduced to 1 day and the issues narrowing significantly it was appropriate to reduce the amount of costs payable by the Respondent.
50. The Tribunal ordered that the Respondent do pay the costs of and incidental to this application and enquiry fixed in the sum of £20,000.00.

### **Statement of Full Order**

51. The Tribunal Ordered that the Respondent, RAYMOND JOHN MCKEEVE, Registered Foreign Lawyer, be **SUSPENDED** from practice as a Registered Foreign Lawyer for the period of 2 years, to commence on 23 March 2026 and it further Ordered that he do pay the costs of and incidental to this application and enquiry fixed in the sum of £20,000.00.

DATED AND FILED WITH THE LAW SOCIETY  
This 2<sup>nd</sup> day of June 2026

On behalf of the Tribunal

*J Johnston*

J Johnston  
Chair