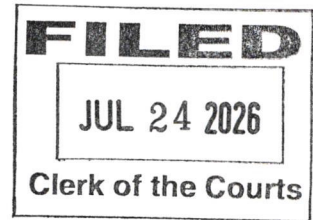


**BEFORE THE SUPREME COURT COMMITTEE ON PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT
PANEL A**

IN RE: PRISCILLA G. COPELIN-NEELEY
ARKANSAS BAR ID #2005242
CPC Docket No. 2026-014



FINDINGS AND ORDER

The formal charges of misconduct upon which this Findings and Order is based arose from information provided to the Committee by Bobby Hawkins ("Hawkins"). The information is related to Pricilla Copelin-Neeley's ("Copelin-Neeley") representation of Hawkins in a domestic relations

1. Hawkins hired Copelin-Neeley in a domestic relations matter sometime in January 2023. He was paying child support to his child's mother but the child was living with the grandparents who sought guardianship/adoption of the child.

2. Hawkins paid Copelin-Neeley the quoted fee for her representation of \$2,500.00, with the first payment of \$1,250.00 up front and made monthly payments until the remainder was paid in full. There was no signed fee agreement.

3. Hawkins agreed to relinquish is parental rights and consent to the grandparents' adoption of the child and the grandparents agreed to release income tax payments that had been intercepted for child support.

4. The grandparents' attorney sent Copelin-Neeley a check in the amount of \$5,749.00.

5. Copelin-Neeley kept \$2,000.00 from the \$5,749.00 refund for herself and issued Hawkins a payment for \$3,749.00 without Hawkins's consent.

6. When Hawkins received only the \$3,749.00, he contacted Copelin-Neeley regarding the discrepancy and advised he wanted the entire refund that was paid over to him.

7. Copelin-Neeley responded by telling him she would stop payment on the \$3,749.00 check she issued and then called him a profane name. Two days later, Hawkins was notified by his bank that Copelin-Neeley stopped payment on the check and the money was backed out of his account.

8. When Hawkins again contacted Copelin-Neeley regarding his child support refund, she emailed him on November 6, 2023, what she said was a final invoice for hourly billing (although there was no fee agreement signed by Hawkins for hourly billing because he paid a flat fee).

9. In addition to Hawkins not signing a fee agreement, there was also no written agreement between Copelin-Neeley and Hawkins authorizing Copelin-Neeley to retain the child support refund for attorney fees. Copelin-Neeley converted funds belonging to Hawkins to herself in violation of Arkansas Code Annotated § 5-36-103(a).

10. Pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 5-36-103(a), “a person commits theft of property if he or she knowingly: (1) takes or exercises unauthorized control over or makes an unauthorized transfer of an interest in the property of another person with the purpose of depriving the owner of the property; or (2) obtains the property of another person by deception or by threat with the purpose of depriving the owner of the property.

11. Hawkins filed a grievance with the Office of Professional Conduct (“OPC”) in 2025.

12. The OPC began its investigation of the grievance and on separate occasions requested information and documents from Copelin-Neeley to aid in the investigation. Copelin-Neeley responded to the first request for information.

13. While Copelin-Neeley personally responded to the first request for information, she failed to provide some of the requested documents. On July 9, 2025, after being notified that

Copelin-Neeley hired counsel Patrick Benca ("Benca") to represent her, the subsequent request for her to provide the information/document(s) was directed to her attorney

14. When Benca failed to respond to the first request, a second request by email was sent to Benca requesting information/document(s). The requested information/document(s) were due March 6, 2026.

15. On March 6, 2026, Benca advised that Copelin-Neeley would be handling her own matters from that point forward. Thereafter, the request for information/document(s) was sent directly to Copelin-Neeley to her email address of pcneeleylaw@hotmail.com, the email address listed as her official email address with the Arkansas Supreme Court Clerk and which she has used to communicate with the OPC.

16. Shortly after the emails to Copelin-Neeley, while the OPC was working to conclude its investigation into the matter, Copelin-Neeley contacted Hawkins to discuss paying him the proceeds from his child support refund she withheld in exchange for him dismissing the grievance he filed against her.

17. Hawkins informed the OPC that he advised Copelin-Neeley he would agree to dismiss his grievance if she refunded the \$5,749.00 she took in 2023. Hawkins provided Copelin-Neeley with information to deposit the money into his account.

18. On March 6, 2026, Copelin-Neeley sent an email stating she was not provided with the information from the Hawkins grievance and advising that she believed she and Hawkins had resolved the issue.

19. The OPC responded reminding Copelin-Neeley that she had been provided a copy of the grievance, that she had responded to the first investigative request, that the current request was for information/document(s) that she did not provide in her first response as requested, and

that there was concern that she only reached out to return Hawkins's money after he filed his grievance and the OPC began its investigation.

20. On March 26, 2026, Copelin-Neeley emailed to advise of the agreement that had been reached between she and Hawkins. She advised she paid Hawkins \$2,500.00 and alleged Hawkins advised her that the OPC Deputy Director advised Hawkins to return the \$2,500.00.

21. The Deputy Director responded by email giving Copelin-Neeley until March 30, 2026, to provide the requested information/document(s). Copelin-Neeley confirmed she would provide the information on Monday, March 30.

22. Copelin-Neeley then emailed to request that the Deputy Director get the information requested of her from Hawkins. A response was sent advising Copelin-Neeley that she was being requested to provide the information pursuant to Arkansas Rules of Professional Conduct (Arkansas Rule) 8.1(b) and as such she was to provide the information.

23. Hawkins contacted the Deputy Director to advise her of the status of the agreement between he and Copelin-Neeley. Hawkins stated that Copelin-Neeley deposited \$2,500.00 into his account instead of the \$5,749.00 as agreed. When he requested the full amount, Hawkins stated Copelin-Neeley then told him she did not have the funds to pay him the entire amount at that time and that she would just request a hearing from OPC.

24. Hawkins and Copelin-Neeley never met in person during these conversations and all communication was done over the phone and included some text messages.

25. Hawkins returned the \$2,500.00 back to Copelin-Neeley after she failed to pay the full \$5,749.00 and advised Copelin-Neeley he would be continuing with his grievance with the OPC and he was done communicating with her.

26. Copelin-Neeley failed to provide the requested information/document(s) to the OPC as requested.

27. Pursuant to Procedures §17.E(1) "to cause a complaint for disbarment to be prepared and filed against the lawyer in accordance with Section 13. Disbarment proceedings are appropriate when mandated by Section 15(C) of the Procedures or upon a finding of "serious misconduct" for which a lesser sanction would be inappropriate. A finding that a lawyer has committed acts against a client which constitutes theft of property under Ark. Code Ann. § 5-36-103 (or its replacement), regardless of whether the attorney has been criminally charged or convicted, shall result in the automatic filing of disbarment proceedings. Actions for disbarment address the overall fitness of a lawyer to hold a license to practice law. The Committee's written notice to institute a disbarment proceeding need not state specific findings as to the misconduct or Rule violations."

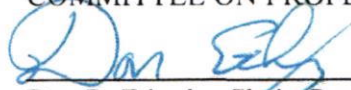
28. Upon consideration of the formal complaint and attached exhibit materials and the Arkansas Rules of Professional Conduct, Panel A of the Arkansas Supreme Court Committee on Professional Conduct find:

That Copelin-Neeley's conduct violates Rules 1.4(a)(1), 1.15(a)(5), 8.1(b), 8.4(a), 8.4(b), and 8.4(c) of the Arkansas Rules of Professional Conduct as alleged in the Formal Complaint.

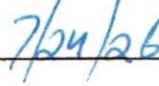
That pursuant to Procedures §17.E(1) disbarment proceedings be initiated against Respondent Priscilla Copelin-Neeley.

WHEREFORE, it is the decision of Panel A of the Committee on Professional Conduct disbarment proceedings be initiated against Respondent Priscilla Copelin-Neele, Arkansas Bar Number 2005242.

ARKANSAS SUPREME COURT
COMMITTEE ON PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT



Don R. Etherly, Chair, Panel A



Date