

PD Under Fire for Blogging Client Secrets

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An assistant public defender who kept a blog of her travails before the bar in Winnebago County, IL in 2007-08 is in hot water for disclosing client confidences. As the [Legal Profession Blog](#) reports, the Illinois disciplinary authority has filed a complaint against the assistant PD for blogging about her cases and identifying the clients by their first names, derivatives of their names, or jail identification numbers.

An example from the blog itself:

"#127409 [the client's jail id number] This stupid kid is taking the rap for his drug-dealing dirtbag of an older brother because 'he's no snitch.'"

Le sigh.

So yeah, it's thoroughly unsurprising that the assistant PD was fired after her supervisor became aware of her colorful blogging.

And while readers presumably understand the dangers of blogging about *actual client confidences*, this story should send up warning bells for those who are putting a lot of content out through informal networks like blogs, twitter, and Facebook. At the very least, if you're discussing facts, keep them extremely hypothetical.

Another question we come away with is this: What if the lawyer had written her blog but ***didn't*** provide the identifying information? The [complaint](#) seems to rely on the fact that the Public Defender disclosed identifying details, but one has to wonder if that is even relevant. Is a client secret not a really a secret if you don't attribute it to the client?

Something, perhaps, for a legal ethics class to decide. For bloggers and all others out there on the social networks, consider actual client facts well out of bounds.