

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

68-0157 (9-06) - 3091078 - EI

**CINA CARTER**  
Claimant

**APPEAL NO: 12A-UI-13008-BT**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**WEST ASSET MANAGEMENT INC**  
Employer

**OC: 10/14/12**  
**Claimant: Appellant (2)**

Iowa Code § 96.5(2)(a) - Discharge for Misconduct

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

Cina Carter (claimant) appealed an unemployment insurance decision dated October 31, 2012, reference 01, which held that she was not eligible for unemployment insurance benefits because she was discharged from West Asset Management, Inc. (employer) without good cause attributable to the employer. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was held on December 4, 2012. The claimant participated in the hearing. The employer participated through Brian Schwabauer, Regional Employee Relations Manager; Jeff Younker Director of Operations; and Rick Dart, Operations Manager. Employer's Exhibits One through Three and Claimant's Exhibit A was admitted into evidence. Based on the evidence, the arguments of the parties, and the law, the administrative law judge enters the following findings of fact, reasoning and conclusions of law, and decision.

**ISSUE:**

The issue is whether the claimant was discharged for misconduct sufficient to warrant a denial of unemployment benefits.

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds that: The claimant was employed from August 15, 2011 through October 12, 2012 and was most recently working as a full-time customer care associate in this collection agency. She was discharged for allegedly making a comment on October 12, 2012 about "running people over with a car and bringing a weapon to shoot someone." Another associate heard the claimant say, "If I got my favorite weapon you would all be dead." The claimant denies making these statements and the employer never indicated who reported they heard the claimant make these statements. The employer did not provide any first hand witnesses but relied on hearsay evidence.

## REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The issue is whether the employer discharged the claimant for work-connected misconduct. A claimant is not qualified to receive unemployment insurance benefits if an employer has discharged the claimant for reasons constituting work-connected misconduct. Iowa Code § 96.5-2-a.

Iowa Code section 96.5-2-a provides:

An individual shall be disqualified for benefits:

2. Discharge for misconduct. If the department finds that the individual has been discharged for misconduct in connection with the individual's employment:

a. The individual shall be disqualified for benefits until the individual has worked in and has been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times the individual's weekly benefit amount, provided the individual is otherwise eligible.

871 IAC 24.32(1)a provides:

Discharge for misconduct.

(1) Definition.

a. "Misconduct" is defined as a deliberate act or omission by a worker which constitutes a material breach of the duties and obligations arising out of such worker's contract of employment. Misconduct as the term is used in the disqualification provision as being limited to conduct evincing such willful or wanton disregard of an employer's interest as is found in deliberate violation or disregard of standards of behavior which the employer has the right to expect of employees, or in carelessness or negligence of such degree of recurrence as to manifest equal culpability, wrongful intent or evil design, or to show an intentional and substantial disregard of the employer's interests or of the employee's duties and obligations to the employer. On the other hand mere inefficiency, unsatisfactory conduct, failure in good performance as the result of inability or incapacity, inadvertencies or ordinary negligence in isolated instances, or good faith errors in judgment or discretion are not to be deemed misconduct within the meaning of the statute.

The employer has the burden to prove the discharged employee is disqualified for benefits for misconduct. *Sallis v. Employment Appeal Bd.*, 437 N.W.2d 895, 896 (Iowa 1989). The issue is not whether the employer made a correct decision in separating claimant, but whether the claimant is entitled to unemployment insurance benefits. *Infante v. IDJS*, 364 N.W.2d 262 (Iowa App. 1984). What constitutes misconduct justifying termination of an employee and what misconduct warrants denial of unemployment insurance benefits are two separate decisions. *Pierce v. IDJS*, 425 N.W.2d 679 (Iowa App. 1988). Misconduct serious enough to warrant discharge is not necessarily serious enough to warrant a denial of job insurance benefits. Such misconduct must be "substantial." When based on carelessness, the carelessness must actually indicate a "wrongful intent" to be disqualifying in nature. *Newman v. Iowa Department of Job Service*, 351 N.W.2d 806 (Iowa App. 1984).

The claimant was discharged on October 12, 2012 for allegedly making threatening comments. She denies making the comments and the employer refused to indicate who claimed they heard the threats. The administrative law judge concludes that the hearsay evidence provided by the employer is not more persuasive than the claimant's denial of such conduct. The employer has not carried its burden of proof to establish that the claimant committed any act of misconduct in connection with employment for which she was discharged. Misconduct has not been established. Benefits are allowed.

**DECISION:**

The unemployment insurance decision dated October 31, 2012, reference 01, is reversed. The claimant was discharged. Misconduct has not been established. Benefits are allowed, provided the claimant is otherwise eligible.

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Susan D. Ackerman  
Administrative Law Judge

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Decision Dated and Mailed

sda/pjs