

Contact the Office of Chief Disciplinary Counsel at 877-953-5535, the Board of Disciplinary Appeals at 512-427-1578 or txboda.org, or the State Commission on Judicial Conduct at 512-463-5533. Some attorneys might share the same or similar names. To identify an attorney, please verify using that attorney's bar card number. Go to [texasbar.com](http://texasbar.com) and use the "Find a Lawyer" tool to search for an attorney.

**JUDICIAL ACTIONS**

To read the entire public sanctions, go to [scjc.texas.gov](http://scjc.texas.gov).

On October 2, 2024, before the State Commission on Judicial Conduct in *In Re: Honorable Tom Gillam, III, Justice of the Peace, Precinct 8, Port Arthur, Jefferson County*, a voluntary agreement to resign from judicial office in lieu of disciplinary action was entered into by **TOM GILLAM III**, justice of the peace, precinct 8, Port Arthur, Jefferson County, and the State Commission on Judicial Conduct.

On October 9, 2024, the State Commission on Judicial Conduct issued a public reprimand to **FRANKLIN BYNUM**, County Court at Law No. 8, Houston, Harris County.

On October 9, 2024, the State

Commission on Judicial Conduct issued a public reprimand to **ELIA CORNEJO LOPEZ**, former 404th district judge, Brownsville, Cameron County.

**REINSTATEMENT**

**BILAL AHMED KHALEEQ** [#24091271], of Richardson, filed a petition in the 493rd District Court of Collin County for reinstatement as a member of the State Bar of Texas.

**BODA**

On January 31, 2024, the Board of Disciplinary Appeals issued a judgment in the appeal filed by El Paso attorney **DEREK ALFONSO QUINATA** [#24072292]. The board affirmed the judgment of disbarment issued by an evidentiary panel of the District 17 Grievance Committee of the State Bar of Texas

on April 14, 2023. The evidentiary panel found that Quinata violated Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct 1.03(a) (communication), 1.15(d) (failure to return unearned fee), 8.04(a)(7) (violation of disciplinary judgment), and 8.04(a)(8) (failure to respond to a grievance). On August 30, 2024, the Supreme Court of Texas dismissed Quinata's appeal of the judgment for want of prosecution. [Case No. 24-0111]. BODA Case No. 67898.

On May 3, 2024, the Board of Disciplinary Appeals issued a judgment in the appeal filed by Bellaire attorney **PEJMAN MAADANI** [#24052152]. The board affirmed the judgment of active suspension issued by an evidentiary panel of the District 4 Grievance Committee of the State Bar of Texas on August 14, 2023. The evidentiary panel found that Maadani violated Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct 4.04(a) (use means with no substantial purpose other than to embarrass, delay, or burden a third person) and 4.04(b)(1) (presenting or threatening to present criminal or disciplinary charges solely to gain an advantage in a civil matter). Maadani is suspended for four years beginning September 1, 2023, and ending August 31, 2027. On September 27, 2024, the Supreme Court of Texas affirmed the judgment. [Case No. 24-0367]. BODA Case No. 68164.

**SUSPENSIONS**

On September 12, 2024, **ROBERT JAMES VIVONA** [#00798260], of Dallas, received a 24-month partially probated suspension beginning November 11, 2024, and ending November 10, 2026, with a 12-month active suspension beginning November 11, 2024, and ending November 10, 2025, and the probated suspension to begin on November 11, 2025, and ending on November 10, 2026. An evidentiary

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panel of the District 6 Grievance Committee found that Vivona was retained to represent the complainant in an immigration matter. In representing the complainant, Vivona neglected the legal matter entrusted to him. Vivona failed to keep the complainant reasonably informed about the status of the immigration matter and failed to promptly comply with reasonable requests for information from the complainant. Vivona failed to explain the immigration matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the complainant to make informed decisions regarding the representation. Upon termination of representation, Vivona failed to refund advance payments of fees that had not been earned. Vivona also failed to file a response to the grievance.

Vivona violated Rules 1.01(b)(1), 1.03(a), 1.03(b), 1.15(d), and 8.04(a)(8). He was ordered to pay \$4,160 in

restitution and \$1,956.50 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

On September 10, 2024, **ALAN EDWARD GOODING** [#24028488], of Tucson, Arizona, received a 54-month partially probated suspension beginning with an active suspension from September 20, 2024, and ending March 19, 2026, and the probated suspension to begin March 20, 2026, and ending March 19, 2029. An evidentiary panel of the District 1 Grievance Committee found that on or about August 13, 2021, the complainant hired Gooding for representation in a real estate matter. Gooding accepted the complainant's legal matter which Gooding knew was beyond his competence. In representing the complainant, Gooding neglected the legal matter entrusted to him by failing to perform any legal services on the

complainant's behalf. Gooding failed to keep the complainant reasonably informed about the status of his real estate matter and failed to promptly comply with reasonable requests for information from the complainant about his real estate matter. Upon termination of representation, Gooding failed to surrender papers and property to which the complainant was entitled. Gooding engaged in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation.

Gooding violated Rules 1.01(a), 1.01(b)(1), 1.03(a), 1.15(d), and 8.04(a)(3). He was ordered to pay \$2,002.50 in attorneys' fees and \$655 in direct expenses.

On November 1, 2024, **HENRY RIDGEWAY** [#16896900], of San Antonio, accepted an 18-month partially probated suspension effective November 1, 2024, with the first six months actively served and the remainder probated. The 150th Judicial District Court of Bexar County found that Ridgeway committed professional misconduct by violating Rule 3.02 [in the course of litigation, a lawyer shall not take a position that unreasonably increases the costs or other burdens of the case or that unreasonably delays resolution of the matter].

Ridgeway was ordered to pay \$2,173.38 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

On September 25, 2024, **CARLOS DANTES MEJIAS JR.** [#24094841], of Houston, accepted a two-year fully probated suspension effective October 1, 2024. The 295th Judicial District Court of Harris County found that Mejias failed to hold funds belonging in whole or in part to clients and third persons in a separate trust account and further failed to promptly deliver trust funds to those who were entitled to receive them. Furthermore, Mejias engaged in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation.

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Mejias violated Rules 1.14(a), 1.14(b), and 8.04(a)(3). He was ordered to pay \$1,500 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

On October 25, 2024, **JENNIFER ANN ZARKA** [#24073769], of Jacksonville, Florida, accepted a five-year partially probated suspension effective November 1, 2024, with one year of active suspension and the remainder probated. An investigatory panel of the District 10 Grievance Committee found that Zarka failed to promptly comply with reasonable requests for information, failed to maintain third party funds in trust, failed to promptly deliver funds to the court registry, and knowingly made a false statement in connection with a disciplinary matter.

Zarka violated Rules 1.03(a), 1.14(a), 1.14(b), and 8.01(a). She agreed to pay \$500 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

Rodriguez violated Rule 1.03(b). He agreed to pay \$1,250 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

**PRIVATE REPRIMANDS**

Listed here is a breakdown of Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct violations for four attorneys, with the number in parentheses indicating the frequency of the violation. Please note that an attorney may be reprimanded for more than one rule violation.

1.01(b)(1)—In representing a client, a lawyer shall not neglect a legal matter entrusted to the lawyer (2).

1.03(b)—Failing to explain a matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions regarding the representation (2).

1.15(a)(2)—Failure to withdraw from representing a client when the attorney's mental condition materially

impaired their fitness to represent the client (1).

1.16(d)—Upon termination of representation, a lawyer shall take steps to the extent reasonably practicable to protect a client's interests, such as giving reasonable notice to the client, allowing time for employment of other counsel, surrendering papers and property to which the client is entitled, and refunding any advance payments of fees that have not been earned. The lawyer may retain papers relating to the client to the extent permitted by other law only if such retention will not prejudice the client in the subject matter of the representation (1).

5.03(a)—With respect to a non-lawyer employed or retained by or associated with a lawyer: a lawyer having direct supervisory authority over the non-lawyer shall make reasonable efforts to ensure that the person's conduct is compatible with the professional obligations of the lawyer (1). **TBJ**

**PUBLIC REPRIMANDS**

On October 1, 2024, **JENNIFER LYNNE GRAF** [#24043699], of Waxahachie, received an agreed judgment of public reprimand. An investigatory panel of the District 7 Grievance Committee found that Graf was hired to represent the complainant in a civil assault trial. Graf failed to properly safeguard in a trust account funds that the complainant was awarded. Graf failed to promptly deliver funds to the complainant that he was entitled to receive. Graf failed to respond to the grievance.

Graf violated Rules 1.14(a), 1.14(b), and 8.04(a)(8). She was ordered to pay \$750 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

On October 22, 2024, **ROSS A. RODRIGUEZ** [#24025756], of San Antonio, accepted a public reprimand. An investigatory panel of the District 10 Grievance Committee found Rodriguez failed to explain matters to the extent reasonably necessary to permit his client to make informed decisions.



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