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On February 2, 2023, the Board of Disciplinary Appeals affirmed the judgment of public reprimand against Houston attorney **CRYSTAL DANIELLE HENDERSON** [#24050742] signed by an evidentiary panel of the District 4 Grievance Committee of the State Bar of Texas on February 11, 2022. The panel found that Henderson violated Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct 8.04(a)(3) (conduct involving dishonesty, deceit, or misrepresentation). BODA Case No. 66402.

On February 2, 2023, the Board of Disciplinary Appeals affirmed the judgment of partially probated

suspension against San Antonio attorney **JOE JESSE PONCE III** [#24014329] signed by an evidentiary panel of the District 10 Grievance Committee of the State Bar of Texas on May 15, 2019. The panel found that Ponce violated Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct 1.05(b)(1)(ii) (breach of confidentiality) and 1.14(b) (failure to render accounting). BODA Case No. 62308.

DISBARMENTS

On March 16, 2023, **ANDREW JAIH KAI KAI** [#24055757], of Allen, was disbarred. An evidentiary panel of the District 1 Grievance Committee found that on or about August 25, 2017, Kai Kai was court-appointed to represent the complainant in a criminal matter. In representing the complainant, Kai Kai neglected the legal matter entrusted to him. Kai Kai had direct supervisory authority over a non-lawyer employed by him and failed to make reasonable efforts to ensure that the non-lawyer employee's conduct was compatible with the professional obligations of Kai Kai. Kai Kai also permitted the non-lawyer employee's conduct. Kai Kai also failed to file a response to the grievance.

Kai Kai violated Rules 1.01(b)(1), 5.03(a), and 8.04(a)(8). He was ordered to pay \$2,220 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

On March 16, 2023, **ANDREW STAFFORD PEVETO** [#24056130], of Plano, was disbarred effective March 10, 2023. The District 1 Grievance Committee found that on or about December 12, 2018, the complainant hired Peveto to represent him in a criminal matter. In representing the complainant, Peveto neglected the legal matter entrusted to him. Peveto failed to keep the complainant reasonably informed and comply with his reasonable requests for information. Peveto failed to explain the complainant's matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the complainant to make informed decisions regarding the representation.

Peveto violated Rules 1.01(b)(1), 1.03(a), and 1.03(b). He was ordered to pay \$1,765 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

RESIGNATIONS

On April 18, 2023, the Supreme Court of Texas accepted the resignation in lieu of discipline of **JONATHAN FERRIS**, also known as Jonathan Jefferson-Bearrie [#24034990], of Cedar Park. At the time of Ferris' resignation, the following disciplinary case was pending against him. On three separate occasions (July 26, 2019, August 2, 2019, and August 6, 2019), Ferris presented an out-of-state prescription to a pharmacy in Temple for fentanyl patches. Each time Ferris represented himself as a special agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, or FBI, when he was not. On July 26, 2019, Ferris was wearing a lanyard with an identification card attached to it that was hanging around his neck. An FBI seal, a photograph of Ferris, and the letters "FBI" were displayed on the face of the card. On August 2, 2019, Ferris displayed a pin with the words "Federal Bureau of Investigation" and a small badge in the center of the pin. On August 6, 2019, Ferris gave the pharmacy employee an envelope stamped with the "Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Investigation Seal." As a result of Ferris' actions, Ferris was convicted on June 28, 2021, by a jury on two counts of false personation of an officer or employee of the United States (18 U.S.C. § 912), in *United States of America v. Jonathan Jefferson Ferris*, before the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas. Thereafter, on February 16, 2022, a judgment in a criminal case was entered wherein Ferris was sentenced to one year in the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Additionally, Ferris was ordered to participate in a substance use treatment program and pay an assessment of \$200 and a fine of \$1,000. Ferris appealed his conviction to the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals, which affirmed Ferris' conviction but remanded the case to the district court in Texas for

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resentencing where his term of confinement was reduced to six months.

Ferris violated Rules 8.04(a)(2) and 8.04(a)(3) of the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct.

On April 18, 2023, the Supreme Court of Texas accepted the resignation in lieu of discipline of **MATTHEW SCOTT PILLADO** [#24094899], of Dallas. At the time of Pillado's resignation, there were two pending matters against him alleging professional misconduct. In the first matter, the client hired and paid Pillado \$7,500 cash to represent her and her husband in a criminal case. Shortly thereafter, the client terminated the representation, and Pillado failed to account for the retainer fee paid to him and failed to refund the unearned fees. Pillado failed to safeguard the funds paid to him in his IOLTA. Pillado failed to provide a response to allegations of professional misconduct and refused to provide other information requested by the Office of Chief Disciplinary Counsel. In the second matter, Pillado was retained to represent an appellant in a federal criminal appeal. Pillado filed a brief and two supplemental briefs, all of which were deemed inadequate despite the federal court's clear instructions for remedying the deficiencies. Pillado failed to file a supplemental brief as ordered by the federal court and abandoned his client. A federal disciplinary panel suspended Pillado for 12 months for the misconduct. Pillado failed to notify the Office of Chief Disciplinary Counsel of his suspension by the federal court.

Pillado allegedly violated Rules 1.01(a), 1.01(b)(1), 1.01(b)(2), 1.03(a), 1.04(a), 1.14(a), 1.14(b), 1.15(d), 3.04(d), 8.03(f), and 8.04(a)(8).

SUSPENSIONS

On September 20, 2022, and December 20, 2022, **CURTIS LILLY** [#24030063], of Fort Worth, received a 48-month partially probated suspension beginning with an active suspension from January 23, 2023, and ending July 22, 2024, and the probated suspension to begin July 23, 2024, and ending

January 22, 2027. An evidentiary panel of the District 6 Grievance Committee found that in January 2019, Lilly represented the complainant in a federal criminal matter. On January 28, 2019, Lilly failed to appear for a hearing scheduled in the complainant's matter. In response to the court's request for show cause, Lilly knowingly made false statements of material facts or law to the tribunal. Due to Lilly's false statements, the court found Lilly's conduct unbecoming of a member of the bar and suspended Lilly from the Northern District of Texas for a period of four years.

Lilly violated Rules 3.03(a)(1) and 8.04(a)(3). He was ordered to pay \$4,668.85 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

Lilly filed an appeal on February 9, 2023.

On March 6, 2023, **EUGENE EDWARD TAYLOR III** [#19691550], of Plano, received a 24-month partially probated

suspension effective March 1, 2023, with the first six months actively suspended and the remainder probated. An evidentiary panel of the District 14 Grievance Committee found that in 2016, Taylor was hired by the complainant for representation in a personal injury matter. After receiving settlement monies in the complainant's legal matter, Taylor failed to appropriately safeguard the settlement funds and failed to promptly deliver the funds to the complainant that the complainant was entitled to receive. On August 8, 2019, Taylor issued a check to the complainant in the amount of \$20,000 that was returned for insufficient funds. Taylor had direct supervisory authority over his accountant and failed to make reasonable efforts to ensure that the accountant's conduct was compatible with the professional obligations of Taylor.

Taylor violated Rules 1.14(a), 1.14(b), and 5.03(b)(2). He was

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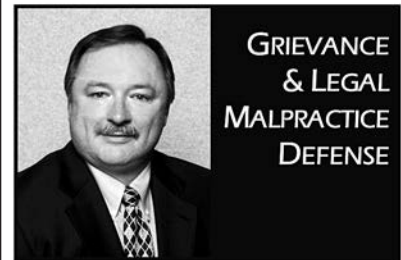
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ordered to pay \$20,000 in restitution to the complainant as well as \$1,700 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

On March 27, 2023, **JAMES R. CHAPMAN JR.** [#04134700], of Lubbock, received a two-year active suspension effective April 1, 2023. An evidentiary panel of the District 16 Grievance Committee found that Chapman failed to hold funds in trust and separate from his own property.

Chapman violated Rule 1.14(a). He was ordered to pay \$5,170 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

On March 9, 2023, **KENNETH NKENG FOMENKY** [#24093442], of Arlington, received a 60-month active suspension effective May 11, 2026. The District 7 Grievance Committee found that Fomenky was hired to represent the complainant regarding a motor vehicle accident but did not file a lawsuit to protect the complainant's interest before the expiration of the statute of

limitations, failed to communicate with the complainant, did not return the file, did not return the unearned fees, and did not furnish the Office of Chief Disciplinary Counsel with a written response to the allegations of misconduct alleged in the complainant's grievance. Further, Fomenky did not comply with the terms of a prior disciplinary judgment and made misrepresentations in declarations that he had complied with a prior disciplinary judgment.

Fomenky violated Rules 1.01(b)(1), 1.03(a), 1.03(b), 1.15(d), 8.04(a)(1), 8.04(a)(3), 8.04(a)(7), and 8.04(a)(8). He was ordered to pay \$1,500 in restitution and \$1,500 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

PUBLIC REPRIMANDS

On April 24, 2023, **OBIOMA S. OSIMIRI** [#24060367], of Dallas, agreed to a public reprimand. The District 6 Grievance Committee found that Osimiri was hired to represent the

complainant with adoption and immigration matters involving her great-nephew and great-niece. Osimiri accepted the complainant's legal matter, which Osimiri knew or should have known was beyond Osimiri's competence. Osimiri collected an unconscionable fee from the complainant. Upon termination of representation, Osimiri failed to surrender papers and property to which the complainant was entitled. Osimiri engaged in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation.

Osimiri violated Rules 1.01(a), 1.04(a), 1.15(d), and 8.04(a)(3). He was ordered to pay \$250 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

On April 19, 2023, **WELSLEY KATHRYN REEH** [#24107960], of Fredericksburg, accepted a public reprimand. An investigatory panel of the District 15 Grievance Committee found that Reeh accepted a legal matter beyond her competence, failed to keep a client reasonably informed, failed to properly safeguard client funds, failed to promptly deliver client funds to the client, and engaged in conduct involving dishonesty and misrepresentation.

Reeh violated Rules 1.01(a)(1), 1.03(b), 1.14(a), 1.14(b), and 8.04(a)(3). She agreed to pay \$4,506.25 in restitution and \$800 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 (1).

1.02(c)—A lawyer shall not assist or counsel a client to engage in conduct that the lawyer knows is criminal or fraudulent. A lawyer may discuss the legal consequences of any proposed course of conduct with a client and may

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DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

counsel and represent a client in connection with the making of a good faith effort to determine the validity, scope, meaning, or application of the law (1).

1.03(a)—A lawyer shall keep a client reasonably informed about the status of a matter and promptly comply with reasonable requests for information (2).

1.14(b)—Upon receiving funds or other property in which a client or third person has an interest, a lawyer shall promptly notify the client or third person. Except as stated in this rule or otherwise permitted by law or by agreement with the client, a lawyer shall promptly deliver to the client or third person any funds or other property that the client or third person is entitled to receive and, upon request by the client or third person, shall promptly render a full accounting regarding such property (1).

1.15(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 (2).

8.04(a)(3)—A lawyer shall not engage in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation (1).

8.04(a)(8)—A lawyer shall not fail to timely furnish to the Office of Chief Disciplinary Counsel or a district grievance committee a response or other information as required by the Texas Rules of Disciplinary Procedure, unless he or she in good faith timely asserts a privilege or other legal ground for failure to do so (1). **TBJ**



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