

**VIRGINIA:**

**BEFORE THE VIRGINIA STATE BAR DISCIPLINARY BOARD**

**IN THE MATTER OF JARED RYAN JENKINS**

**VSB DOCKET NO. 25-080-133136**

**MEMORANDUM ORDER OF REVOCATION**

**THIS MATTER** came on to be heard on April 25, 2025, before a panel of the Disciplinary Board consisting of Jennifer D. Royer, First Vice Chair (“Chair”); Alan S. Anderson, Esquire; Adam M. Carroll, Esquire; Robin J. Kegley, Esquire; and Theodore Smith, Lay Member. The Virginia State Bar (the “VSB” and/or “Bar”) was represented by Jessica C. Beatty, Assistant Bar Counsel. Jared Ryan Jenkins, Esquire (the “Respondent”), failed to appear in person or by counsel.

Jennifer L. Thomas, Registered Professional Reporter of Chandler and Halasz, P.O. Box 9349, Richmond, Virginia 23227 (804-730-1222), after being duly sworn, reported the hearing and transcribed the proceedings.

The Chair opened the hearing by calling the case in the hearing room and causing the Assistant Clerk to call Respondent’s name three times in the lobby outside of the hearing room and confirming with security that Respondent had not signed in at the security checkpoint. Respondent did not answer or appear.

The Chair inquired whether the members of the panel knew of any personal or financial interest or bias which would preclude any of them from fairly hearing this matter and serving on the panel, to which inquiry each member responded in the negative.

The matter came before the Board upon a certification of misconduct by the Eighth District Subcommittee pursuant to Part 6, Section IV, Paragraph 13-18 of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia. The Eighth District Subcommittee certified violations of Rule 3.4(i), 8.1(c), and 8.1(d). All legal notices of the date and place were timely sent by the Clerk of the Disciplinary System (“Clerk”) in the manner prescribed by the Rules of the Supreme Court of

Virginia, Part Six, Section IV, Paragraph 13-18 of the Rules of Court to Respondent's address of record with the Virginia State Bar. Notices were also sent to additional addresses identified by the Bar Investigator. The following witnesses were sworn under oath and testified: Paul Beers, Esquire, Complaint, who testified remotely via the Microsoft Teams platform, and Rob Baker, VSB Investigator, who appeared in person. Bar Exhibits 1 through 9 were admitted without objection at the onset of the hearing. The Board considered the exhibits, testimony of the witnesses, and arguments of the Bar and met in private to consider its decision.

### **I. FINDINGS OF FACT**

The Board makes the following findings of fact on the basis of clear and convincing evidence:

1. At all times relevant hereto, Respondent was an attorney licensed to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia. His address of record with the Virginia State Bar is Jenkins Esq, PLLC, Post Office Box 1581, Lexington, VA 24450.
2. The Bar provided Notice of these proceedings to Respondent on September 10, 2024, by sending a copy of the Complaint via U.S. first class mail to Respondent at his address of record with the Bar, which letter was not returned to sender. Such Notice is proper pursuant to Part 6, Section IV, Paragraph 13-12 and 13-18.A of the Rules of Virginia Supreme Court.
3. Respondent filed a defamation lawsuit against Laurence A. Mann, Esquire and Julie H. Crowder ("Mann" and "Crowder") *pro se* in the Circuit Court of Rockbridge County, Case Number CL23000782-00 (hereinafter "Defamation Lawsuit").
4. Respondent filed such action *pro se* because he had been barred from appearing as an attorney in any matter in the Rockbridge County Circuit Court by Judge Christopher B. Russell for making disparaging remarks and accusations against the Judge.
5. Attorneys Robert A. Ziogas, Jeremy E. Carroll, and Julian F. Harf initially appeared on behalf of and represented Mann and Crowder as counsel of record in the Defamation Lawsuit. Respondent raised concerns that Mr. Carroll had a conflict of interest in his representation of Mann and Crowder due to his separate representation of an entity to

which the Respondent had issued a subpoena *duces tecum*. To resolve any potential claim of conflict, attorneys Ziogas, Carroll, and Harf moved to substitute Paul Beers, Esquire (“Complainant”) as counsel of record for Mann and Crowder. Respondent refused to sign the Order of Substitution, and Complainant filed a Notice of Appearance on behalf of Mann and Crowder.

6. Before the Court could act on the motion to substitute counsel, Respondent sent an email to Complainant and attorneys Ziogas, Carroll, and Harf on March 20, 2024, (hereinafter “Email”), which email stated in pertinent part:

...Julie Crowder, while testifying under oath, admitted she signed a false affidavit...

As you all are no doubt aware, violating Va. Code § 18.2-435 (“Giving conflicting testimony on separate occasions as to the same matter”) is a Class 5 felony...

Julie’s admission of perjury will be used to impeach her testimony at the defamation trial, but with an uncertain trial date the criminality may need to be addressed sooner. I write to offer the opportunity to respond with a proposed resolution of the matter. If I don’t receive an adequate proposal by March 27<sup>th</sup>, I intend to refer the matter to the Commonwealth’s Attorney for investigation and prosecution. In light of the consequences of her perjury, I would push for the maximum sentence of ten years in prison for each count.

7. Complainant interpreted Respondent’s email to be a “clear threat” that if his clients did not come forth with a settlement offer, presumably a monetary offer, then Respondent would pursue criminal charges against Crowder. Complainant interpreted this threat of criminal prosecution as an attempt to gain an advantage over Mann and Crowder in the Defamation Lawsuit.
8. During a subsequent meeting at the courthouse, Respondent made the statement, “there are other ways to get justice – not just in the courtroom” to Complainant in referring to the suit against Mann and Crowder. To address this threat, Complainant filed a Motion to Show Cause against Respondent. Complainant, therefore, did not include this threat in the

Complaint he filed against Respondent with the VSB.

9. Complainant did not immediately file the Complaint against Respondent because Respondent was acting *pro se* in the Defamation Lawsuit because he had been barred from appearing as an attorney in any matter in Rockbridge County Circuit Court, and Complainant wanted to consider whether the Rules of Professional Conduct applied to Respondent in his capacity as a *pro se* litigant. Complainant also wanted to ensure that his Complaint would not be considered an attempt by Complainant to gain an advantage for his clients in the Defamation Lawsuit.
10. Investigator Rob Baker made the following attempts to notify Respondent of the VSB Complaint and to obtain Respondent's participation in these proceedings:
  - a. Letter to Respondent's address of record with VSB on 10/09/2024 and 10/16/2024.
  - b. Email to Respondent's email account of record with the VSB on 09/10/2024, 10/09/2024, 10/10/2024 and 10/16/2024.
  - c. Telephone call on 10/10/2024 to Hotchkiss Law PLLC, a law firm that the Respondent had identified to the VSB as an affiliated organization with which he served as an administrator. Attorney Kevin Hotchkiss advised Investigator Baker that Respondent was not associated with Hotchkiss Law PLLC, and Attorney Hotchkiss did not know Respondent.
  - d. Telephone call on 10/10/2024 to Respondent's telephone number of record, which was associated with Mann Legal Group. A representative of Mann Legal Group informed Investigator Baker that Respondent no longer worked for the firm and provided Mr. Baker with two possible alternative telephone numbers for Respondent.
  - e. Four (4) telephone calls on 10/10/2024 to the first of the two telephone numbers provided by Mann Legal Group.
  - f. Telephone call on 10/10/2024 to the second telephone number provided by Mann Legal Group. The voicemail for this second telephone number identified the owner

of the voicemail box as Jared Jenkins. Investigator Baker left a message on this voicemail identifying himself, his title, his employer, and his telephone number, and requested Respondent return the call regarding VSB Docket No. 25-080-133136.

- g. Text message to the second telephone number provided by Mann Legal Group, in which Investigator Baker identified himself, his title, his employer, and his telephone number and requested that Respondent call Investigator Baker regarding VSB Docket No. 25-080-133136. Investigator Baker received notice on his iPhone that this text message was “Delivered.”
  - h. Telephone calls to two telephone numbers obtained through an online search regarding Respondent.
  - i. Email to an email account obtained through an online search regarding Respondent.
11. Respondent’s address of record with the VSB is located within a two-minute walk from the General District Court of Rockbridge County, so Investigator Baker contacted the Clerk of the Rockbridge General District Court on 10/10/2024 in an attempt to locate Respondent. The Clerk was unable to provide contact information for Respondent and referred Investigator Baker to the Circuit Court of Rockbridge County.
12. On 10/10/2024, Investigator Baker contacted the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Rockbridge County. The Clerk was unable to provide contact information for Respondent.
13. Investigator Baker never received a response from Respondent.
14. Respondent did not change his address of record at any time during the pendency of this Complaint.
15. Respondent did not file an Answer to the Complaint filed against him nor did he respond to any attempts by the Bar to contact him with regard to this Complaint or the investigation thereof.

The Board considered the testimony of the witnesses, the Bar's exhibits and arguments, and met in private to consider its decision as to whether the Respondent's conduct constituted misconduct under the Rules of Professional Conduct by clear and convincing evidence.

## **II. NATURE OF MISCONDUCT AND RULE VIOLATIONS**

The Board finds, by clear and convincing evidence, that the following conduct by Respondent constitutes misconduct in violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct:

By preparing and sending the email dated March 20, 2024, to Complainant and attorneys Ziogas, Carroll, and Harf, wherein Respondent threatened criminal prosecution against the opposing party in order to gain advantage in a pending civil matter, Respondent violated Rule 3.4(i), which provides as follows:

### **Rule 3.4 Fairness to Opposing Party and Counsel**

A lawyer shall not

- (i) Present or threaten to present criminal or disciplinary charges solely to obtain an advantage in a civil matter.

By failing to respond to the Complaint and by failing to respond to Investigator Baker despite multiple attempts by the VSB and Investigator Baker to obtain information related to the Complaint, Respondent violated Rule 8.1 (c), which provides as follows:

### **Rule 8.1 Bar Admission and Disciplinary Matters**

An applicant for admission to the bar, or a lawyer already admitted to the bar, in connection with a bar admission application, any certification required to be filed as a condition of maintain or renewing a license to practice law, or in connection with a disciplinary matter, shall not:

...

(c) fail to respond to a lawful demand for information from an admissions or disciplinary authority, except that this Rule does not require disclosure of information otherwise protected by Rule 1.6

The Board did not find, by clear and convincing evidence, that Respondent's failure to respond to the VSB or his failure to participate in these proceedings constituted obstruction in violation of Rule 8.1 (d).

### **III. IMPOSITION OF SANCTION**

Thereafter, the Board received evidence, including the Respondent's disciplinary record and his letter to the Bar attempting to forfeit his license, which were admitted into evidence as VSB Exhibits 10 and 11, and argument from the Bar regarding the imposition of sanctions.

Respondent's disciplinary record included a nine-month suspension (the "Suspension") entered February 8, 2024, by a Three-Judge Circuit Court panel and made effective on January 3, 2025, after the panel's decision was affirmed by the Supreme Court of Virginia. The suspension was for violation of Rules 3.4 and 8.2 of the Rules of Professional Conduct.

The Bar also submitted a letter to the VSB dated August 26, 2024, from the Respondent in which he stated his unequivocal desire to resign from the Virginia State Bar and his refusal to participate in any way with the Bar because the Bar pursued disciplinary charges against him as stated in the underlying action that gave rise to the Suspension.

No evidence or argument in mitigation was presented to the Board for consideration.

The Board then retired to deliberate the appropriate sanction.

The Board found the following factors to be aggravating: (1) prior disciplinary offenses, (2) dishonest or selfish motive, (3) pattern of misconduct, (4) multiple offenses, (5) refusal to acknowledge wrongful nature of conduct, and (6) substantial experience in the practice of law. The Board did not find evidence of any factors in mitigation.

The Board considered Standard 6.31(a) of the American Bar Association's Standards for Imposing Lawyer Discipline, which provides that "disbarment is generally appropriate when a lawyer: intentionally tampers with a witness and causes serious or potentially serious injury to a

party, or causes significant or potentially significant interference with the outcome of the legal proceeding...” and Standard 6.31(c) which also provides that disbarment is appropriate when a lawyer “improperly communicates with someone in the legal system, other than a witness, judge, or juror, with the intent to influence or affect the outcome of the proceeding, and causes significantly or potentially significant interference with the outcome of the proceeding.”

The Board was particularly troubled by Respondent’s intentional tampering with Crowder’s testimony as a witness by threatening her – through her counsel – with criminal prosecution if she did not propose a settlement in the Defamation Lawsuit that he would find favorable, the significant potential harm caused to Crowder as a party to that litigation, and the potential for significant adverse effects on and interference with the litigation process in the Defamation Lawsuit, including the potential to chill a witness’ willingness to participate in the litigation process.

The Board considered Respondent’s letter to the Bar as Respondent’s unequivocal intention to disassociate himself from the Virginia State Bar and never again to comply with its Rules.

Thereafter the Board reconvened and announced that the appropriate sanction was the revocation of the Respondent’s license to practice law. The Board found that Respondent’s conduct justified revocation, as any lesser sanction would be a disservice to the Virginia legal community and the public at large.

Accordingly, it is

**ORDERED** that Jared Ryan Jenkins’s license to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia be and hereby is **REVOKED**, effective April 25, 2025.

It is further **ORDERED** that, as directed in the Board's April 25, 2025, Summary Order in this matter, Respondent must comply with the requirements of Part 6, Section IV, Paragraph 13-29 of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia. Respondent must forthwith give notice by certified mail of the Revocation of his license to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia to all clients for whom he is currently handling matters and to all opposing Attorneys and

presiding Judges in pending litigation. Respondent must also make appropriate arrangements for the disposition of matters in his care in conformity with the wishes of his clients. Respondent must give such notice immediately and in no event later than 14 days of the effective date of the Revocation and must make such arrangements as are required herein as soon as is practicable and in no event later than 45 days of the effective date of the Revocation. Respondent must also furnish proof to the Clerk of the Disciplinary System of the Virginia State Bar within 60 days of the effective date of the Revocation that such notices have been timely given and such arrangements have been made for the disposition of matters.

It is further **ORDERED** that if the Respondent is not handling any client matters on the effective date of the Revocation, he shall submit an affidavit to that effect within 60 days of the effective date of the Revocation to the Clerk of the Disciplinary System at the Virginia State Bar.

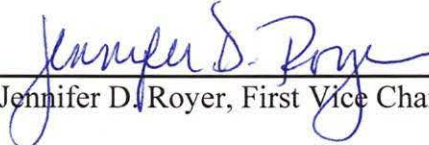
The Board must decide all issues concerning the adequacy of the notice and arrangements required herein. The burden of proof shall be on the Respondent to show compliance. If the Respondent fails to show compliance, the Board may impose additional sanctions for failure to comply with the requirements of subparagraph 13-29.

It is further **ORDERED** that pursuant to Part 6, Section IV, Paragraph 13-9.E of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia, the Clerk of the Disciplinary System shall assess all costs against the respondent.

It is further **ORDERED** that an attested copy of this Order be mailed by the Clerk of the Disciplinary System to the Respondent by electronic, first-class and certified mail, return receipt requested, to his address of record with the Virginia State Bar, being Post Office Box 1581, Lexington, Virginia 24450, and a copy by electronic mail to Jessica C. Beatty, Assistant Bar Counsel.

ENTERED this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of June, 2025.

VIRGINIA STATE BAR DISCIPLINARY BOARD

  
Jennifer D. Royer, First Vice Chair

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