



**BEFORE THE BOARD OF DISCIPLINARY APPEALS  
APPOINTED BY  
THE SUPREME COURT OF TEXAS**

**IN THE MATTER OF  
JAMES MORRIS BALAGIA  
STATE BAR CARD NO. 00783589**

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§

**CAUSE NO. 65867**

**JUDGMENT OF DISBARMENT**

On the 25th day of April, 2024, the Board of Disciplinary Appeals considered the Motion for Entry of Judgment of Disbarment filed by Petitioner, the Commission for Lawyer Discipline, in the above-styled and numbered compulsory discipline case. The Board finds that:

- (1) The Board retains jurisdiction to enter a final judgment in this matter. TEX. RULES DISCIPLINARY P. R. 8.04-.06.
- (2) On May 6, 2022, the Board of Disciplinary Appeals entered an Interlocutory Order of Suspension, finding that Respondent was convicted of an Intentional Crime as defined by Texas Rule of Disciplinary Procedure 1.06(V) and a Serious Crime as defined by Texas Rule of Disciplinary Procedure 1.06(GG).
- (3) On or about May 4, 2021, a Judgment in a Criminal Case was entered in Cause No. 4:16-CR-00176-ALM-KPJ(3), styled *United States of America v. James Morris Balagia*, in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Texas, Sherman Division, wherein Respondent was adjudicated guilty of the following offenses: Conspiracy to Commit Money Laundering, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1956(h) and (a); Obstruction of Justice and Aiding and Abetting, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1503 and § 1503(b)(3); Conspire, Endeavor, and Attempt To Violate The Kingpin Act, in violation of 21 U.S.C. § 1904(c)(2) and § 1906; Conspiracy To Commit Wire Fraud, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1349 and § 1343; and Conspiracy to Obstruct Justice, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 371.
- (4) Respondent was committed to the custody of the United States Bureau of Prisons to be imprisoned for a total term of 188 months. Upon release from imprisonment, Respondent will be on supervised release for a term of three

- (3) years.
- (5) The United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit affirmed Respondent's conviction and sentence by Per Curiam Opinion issued on or about February 6, 2023, in the appeal styled *United States of America vs. James Morris Balagia*, Case No. 21-40366.
  - (6) The Fifth Circuit issued its Mandate and Judgment affirming Respondent's conviction on or about February 6, 2023.
  - (7) Petitioner filed its Motion for Entry of Judgment of Disbarment on or about February 21, 2024, and served same on Respondent in accordance with Texas Rule of Disciplinary Procedure 8.05.
  - (8) Respondent's conviction, for which he was sentenced in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Texas, Sherman Division, has become final and is not subject to further appeal. BODA INTERNAL PROCEDURAL RULE 6.02(a).
  - (9) Respondent filed no response to the Motion for Entry of Judgment of Disbarment and has not otherwise contested the finality of the conviction.
  - (10) Petitioner's Motion for Entry of Judgment of Disbarment shall be granted. TEX. RULES DISCIPLINARY P. R. 8.05.

### **Disbarment**

The Board has determined that disbarment of Respondent is appropriate. It is, therefore, accordingly, **ORDERED, ADJUDGED, and DECREED** that Respondent, James Morris Balagia, State Bar No. 00783589, be and hereby is **DISBARRED** from the practice of law in the State of Texas, and his license to practice law in this state be and hereby is revoked.

It is further **ORDERED, ADJUDGED, and DECREED** that Respondent, James Morris Balagia, is prohibited from practicing law in Texas, holding himself out as an attorney at law, performing any legal service for others, accepting any fee directly or indirectly for legal services, appearing as counsel or in any representative capacity in any proceeding in any Texas court or before any Texas administrative body or holding himself out to others or using his name, in any

manner, in conjunction with the words “attorney at law,” “attorney,” “counselor at law,” “esquire,” “Esq.,” or “lawyer.”

It is further **ORDERED** that Respondent, James Morris Balagia, shall immediately notify each of his current clients, if any, in writing of this disbarment. In addition to such notification, Respondent is **ORDERED** to return any files, papers, unearned monies, and other property, if any, which belongs to clients and former clients and is in Respondent’s possession or control, to the respective clients or former clients or to another attorney at the client’s or former client’s request, within thirty (30) days of the date of this judgment.

It is further **ORDERED** that Respondent, James Morris Balagia, shall file with the State Bar of Texas, Chief Disciplinary Counsel’s Office, P.O. Box 12487, Austin, TX 78711-2487 (1414 Colorado St., Austin, TX 78701) within thirty (30) days of the signing of this judgment, an affidavit stating that all current clients have been notified of Respondent’s disbarment and that all files, papers, monies, and other property belonging to all clients and former clients have been returned as ordered herein. If Respondent should be unable to return any files, papers, monies, or other property requested by any client or former client, Respondent’s affidavit shall state with particularity the efforts made by Respondent with respect to each particular client and the cause of his inability to return to said client any files, papers, monies, or other property.

It is further **ORDERED** that Respondent, James Morris Balagia, shall, on or before thirty (30) days from the signing of this judgment, notify in writing each and every justice of the peace, judge, magistrate, administrative judge or officer, and chief justice of each and every court or tribunal in which Respondent has any matter pending, if any, of the terms of this judgment, the style and cause number of the pending matter(s), and the name, address and telephone number of the client(s) Respondent is representing.

It is further **ORDERED** that Respondent, James Morris Balagia, shall file with the State Bar of Texas, Chief Disciplinary Counsel's Office, P.O. Box 12487, Austin, TX 78711-2487 (1414 Colorado St., Austin, TX 78701) within thirty (30) days of the signing of this judgment by the Board, an affidavit stating that each and every justice of the peace, judge, magistrate, administrative judge or officer, and chief justice has received written notice of the terms of this judgment.

It is further **ORDERED** that Respondent, James Morris Balagia, shall immediately surrender his Texas law license and permanent State Bar Card to the Office of the Chief Disciplinary Counsel, Statewide Compliance Monitor, State Bar of Texas, P. O. Box 12487, Austin, Texas 78711, for transmittal to the Clerk of the Supreme Court of Texas.

It is further **ORDERED** that this Judgment of Disbarment shall be made a matter of public record and that notice of this disciplinary action shall be published in the *Texas Bar Journal*.

Signed this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of May 2024.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kevin H.", written over a horizontal line.

**CHAIR PRESIDING**