



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

IN THE MATTER OF	§	
PAUL HOUSTON LAVALLE	§	CAUSE NO. 64480
STATE BAR CARD NO. 11998625	§	

INTERLOCUTORY ORDER OF SUSPENSION

On the 13th day of May 2021, the above-styled and numbered compulsory disciplinary action was called for hearing before the Board of Disciplinary Appeals. Petitioner, the Commission for Lawyer Discipline, appeared by attorney and announced ready. Respondent, Paul Houston LaValle, appeared in person and announced ready. All questions of fact and issues of law were submitted to the Board of Disciplinary Appeals for determination. Having considered the pleadings on file, having received evidence, and having heard the argument of counsel, the Board of Disciplinary Appeals is of the opinion that Petitioner is entitled to entry of the following findings and orders:

Findings of Fact. The Board of Disciplinary Appeals finds that:

- (1) Respondent, Paul Houston LaValle, whose State Bar Card number is 11998625, is licensed and authorized by the Supreme Court of Texas to practice law in the State of Texas.
- (2) On or about March 21, 2019, Respondent was charged by Indictment with two counts in Cause No. 19CR0918, styled *The State of Texas v. Paul Houston LaValle*, in the 56th Judicial District Court of Galveston County, Texas:
 - Count I: On or about October 14, 2018, Respondent “did then and there, knowing that an investigation was in progress, namely furnishing alcohol to a minor intentionally and knowingly make and/or present a document, namely the affidavit of Sara Carlin, with

knowledge of its falsity and with intent to affect the course or outcome of the furnishing alcohol to a minor investigation;” and

Count II: On or about October 14, 2018, Respondent “did then and there, knowing that an investigation was in progress, namely furnishing alcohol to a minor intentionally and knowingly make and/or present a document, namely the affidavit of Jailene Soliz, with knowledge of its falsity and with intent to affect the course or outcome of the furnishing alcohol to a minor investigation.”

- (3) On or about February 28, 2020, a Judgment of Conviction by Jury was entered in Cause No. 19CR0918, styled *The State of Texas v. Paul Houston LaValle*, in the 56th Judicial District Court of Galveston County, Texas, wherein Respondent was found guilty of Tampering with or Fabricating Physical Evidence and was sentenced to five (5) years in the Institutional Division of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. The sentence of confinement was suspended and Respondent was placed on community supervision for five (5) years and ordered to pay court costs in the amount of \$290 and reimbursement in the amount of \$87.00.
- (4) Respondent, Paul Houston LaValle, is the same person as the Paul Houston LaValle, who is the subject of the criminal case described above.
- (5) Respondent has appealed the criminal conviction. The appeal is pending before the Fourteenth Court of Appeals, Houston, Texas, in Case No. 14-20-00245-CR, styled *Paul Houston LaValle v. The State of Texas*.
- (6) On May 12, 2021, Respondent filed a civil lawsuit in the United States District Court for the Southern District of Texas, Galveston Division, in Case No. 3:21-CV-106, styled *Paul Houston LaValle v. Seana Willing*, asserting claims relating to alleged harm resulting from this interlocutory compulsory discipline proceeding.
- (7) Also on May 12, 2021, Respondent filed a document titled Notice of Removal, which asserted that the interlocutory compulsory discipline proceeding before the Board was stayed, as well as removed to federal court and joined with the case described above.
- (8) On May 13, 2021, Petitioner filed a response to the Notice of Removal, articulating four bases for the Board to conclude that it was not divested of jurisdiction and asserting that the Board should proceed to consider and decide the interlocutory matter pending before the Board.
- (9) At the hearing before the Board on May 13, 2021, Respondent was given an opportunity to address and respond to each of Petitioner’s arguments as to removal; Respondent declined to do so.

Conclusions of Law. Based upon the foregoing findings of facts the Board of Disciplinary

Appeals makes the following conclusions of law:

- (1) This Board has exclusive jurisdiction to hear and determine compulsory discipline matters, including petitions seeking interlocutory suspension pending disposition on appeal. TEX. RULES DISCIPLINARY P. R. 7.08(G).
- (2) Respondent's purported notice of removal did not divest the Board of jurisdiction to perform its duty under TEX. RULES DISCIPLINARY P. R. 8.04.
- (3) Respondent, Paul Houston LaValle, having been convicted of Tampering with or Fabricating Physical Evidence, has been convicted of an Intentional Crime as defined by TEX. RULES DISCIPLINARY P. R. 1.06(V).
- (4) Respondent has also been convicted of a Serious Crime as defined by TEX. RULES DISCIPLINARY P. R. 1.06(GG).
- (5) Having been convicted of an Intentional and Serious Crime and having appealed such conviction, Respondent, Paul Houston LaValle, shall have his license to practice law in Texas suspended during the appeal of his criminal conviction. TEX. RULES DISCIPLINARY P. R. 8.04.
- (6) The Board retains jurisdiction to enter a final judgment in this matter when the criminal appeal is final. TEX. RULES DISCIPLINARY P. R. 8.04-.06.

It is, accordingly, **ORDERED, ADJUDGED, and DECREED** that Respondent, Paul Houston LaValle, State Bar Card No. 11998625, is hereby **SUSPENDED** from the practice of law in the State of Texas effective immediately upon entry of this order and continuing hereafter until further order of this Board.

It is further **ORDERED, ADJUDGED, and DECREED** that Respondent, Paul Houston LaValle, during said suspension is hereby prohibited, effective immediately, 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 not completed before the date of this order, appearing as counsel 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,” “counselor,” or “lawyer.”

It is further **ORDERED** that Respondent, Paul Houston LaValle, shall notify in writing, no later than thirty (30) days from the date of this Order, each and every justice of the peace, judge, magistrate, and chief justice of each and every court in which Respondent, Paul Houston LaValle, has any legal matter pending, if any, of his suspension, of the style and cause number of the pending matter(s), and of the name, address, and telephone number of the client(s) Respondent is representing in that court. Respondent is also **ORDERED** to mail copies of all such notifications to the Statewide Compliance Monitor, Office of the Chief Disciplinary Counsel, State Bar of Texas, P.O. Box 12487, Capitol Station, Austin, Texas 78711. Respondent is further **ORDERED** to file with the Statewide Compliance Monitor, Office of the Chief Disciplinary Counsel, State Bar of Texas, P.O. Box 12487, Capitol Station, Austin, Texas 78711, within the same thirty (30) days, an affidavit stating either (a) that each and every justice of the peace, judge, magistrate, and chief justice of each and every court in which Respondent, Paul Houston LaValle, has any legal matter pending, has been notified of his suspension; or (b) that Respondent has no legal matters pending in any court.

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

Compliance Monitor, Office of the Chief Disciplinary Counsel, State Bar of Texas, P.O. Box 12487, Capitol Station, Austin, Texas 78711, within the same thirty (30) days, an affidavit stating either (a) that all current clients have been notified of his suspension and that all files, papers, unearned fees paid in advance, and all other monies and properties belonging to clients have been returned as ordered herein; or (b) that Respondent had no current clients as of the date of this Order. If Respondent is unable to return any files, papers, money, or other property to any 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 file, paper, money, or other property. Respondent is also **ORDERED** to mail a copy of all notification letters to the Statewide Compliance Monitor, Office of the Chief Disciplinary Counsel, State Bar of Texas, P.O. Box 12487, Capitol Station, Austin, Texas 78711.

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

It is further **ORDERED** that a certified copy of the Second Amended Petition for Compulsory Discipline on file herein, along with a copy of this Order, be sent to the Chief Disciplinary Counsel of the State Bar of Texas, P.O. Box 12487, Austin, Texas 78711.

It is further **ORDERED** that this Order is interlocutory and that the Board retains jurisdiction to enter a final judgment when the appeal of the criminal conviction is final. TEX. RULES DISCIPLINARY P. R. 8.04-.06; *In the Matter of Mercier*, 242 SW 3d 46 (Tex. 2007).

It is further **ORDERED** that Respondent shall promptly notify the Board and the State Bar of Texas Chief Disciplinary Counsel when the appeal of the criminal conviction becomes final.

It is further **ORDERED** that the Chief Disciplinary Counsel of the State Bar of Texas shall

monitor the status of the appeal of the criminal conviction on at least a quarterly basis and promptly file an appropriate motion for entry of final judgment with the Board if the criminal conviction is finally affirmed on appeal.

Signed this 17th day of May 2021.



CHAIR PRESIDING