

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

IN THE MATTER OF	§	
RICHARD PLEZIA	§	CAUSE NO. 68989
STATE BAR CARD NO. 16072800	§	

AGREED INTERLOCUTORY ORDER OF SUSPENSION

On this day the above-styled and numbered compulsory disciplinary action was called for hearing before the Board of Disciplinary Appeals. Petitioner appeared by attorney and Respondent, Richard Plezia, appeared in person by and through attorney of record, as indicated by their respective signatures below and announced that they agree to the findings of fact, conclusions of law and orders set forth below. The Board of Disciplinary Appeals, having reviewed the file and in consideration of the agreement of the parties, 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, Richard Plezia, Bar Card number 16072800, is licensed and authorized by the Supreme Court of Texas to practice law in the State of Texas.
- (2) On or about August 6, 2019, Respondent was charged by Superseding Indictment with Count One – Conspiracy to Defraud the United States in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 371; in Cause No. 4:19-cr-00450 (Criminal No. H-19-450), styled *United States of America v. Jeffrey Stern, Frederick Morris, Lamont Ratcliff, Deborah Bradley, Richard Plezia, Defendants*, in the United States District Court Southern District of Texas, Houston Division.
- (3) On or about January 21, 2020, Respondent was charged by Second Superseding Indictment with Count One – Conspiracy to Defraud the United States in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 371; in Cause No. 4:19-cr-00450 (Criminal No. H-19-450), styled *United States of America v. Jeffrey Stern*,

Lamont Ratcliff, Deborah Bradley, Richard Plezia, Defendants, in the United States District Court Southern District of Texas, Houston Division.

- (4) On or about January 18, 2022, Respondent was charged by Third Superseding Indictment with Count One – Conspiracy to Defraud the United States in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 371; Count Five – False Statement in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1001(a)(2); Count Six – False Statement in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1001(a)(2); and Count Seven – Falsification of Records in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1519; in Cause No. 4:19cr-00450 (Criminal No. H-19-450-S3), styled *United States of America v. Lamont Ratcliff, Richard Plezia, Defendants*, in the United States District Court Southern District of Texas, Houston Division.
- (5) On or about October 4, 2023, a Judgment in a Criminal Case was entered in Cause No. 4:19-cr-00450-005, styled *United States of America v. Richard Plezia*, in the United States District Court Southern District of Texas, Houston Division, that states Respondent was found guilty of Count 1SS – Conspiracy to defraud the United States in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 371; Count 5SS – False Statement in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1001(a)(2); Count 6SS – False Statement in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1001(a)(2); and Count 7SS – Falsification of records in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1519; on February 2, 2023. Respondent was ordered to be committed to the custody of the Federal Bureau of Prisons for a term of six months and one day with the term consisting of six (6) months and one (1) day as to each of Counts 1SS, 5SS, 6SS, and 7SS, to run concurrently, for a total term of six (6) months and one (1) day. Upon release from imprisonment, Respondent will be on supervised release for a term of 2 years. Respondent was further ordered to pay an assessment in the amount of \$400.00 and a fine in the amount of \$5,000. The U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas has entered an order that Richard Plezia may remain on bond pending the outcome of his appeal of these convictions.
- (6) Respondent, Richard Plezia, is the same person as the Richard Plezia who is the subject of the criminal case described above.
- (7) Respondent has appealed the criminal conviction.

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 jurisdiction to hear and determine this matter. TEX. R. DISCIPLINARY P. R. 7.08(G), 8.01-04.

- (2) Respondent, Richard Plezia, having been found guilty of Count 1SS – Conspiracy to defraud the United States in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 371; Count 5SS – False Statement in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1001(a)(2); Count 6SS – False Statement in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1001(a)(2); and Count 7SS – Falsification of records in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1519, has been convicted of Intentional Crimes as defined by TEX. R. DISCIPLINARY P. R. 1.06(V).
- (3) Respondent has also been convicted of a Serious Crime as defined by TEX. R. DISCIPLINARY P. R. 1.06(GG).
- (4) Having been found guilty and convicted of an Intentional and Serious Crime and having appealed such conviction, Respondent, Richard Plezia, should have his license to practice law in Texas suspended during the appeal of his criminal conviction. TEX. R. DISCIPLINARY P. R. 8.04.
- (5) The Board retains jurisdiction to enter a final judgment in this matter when the criminal appeal is final.

It is, accordingly, **ORDERED, ADJUDGED, and DECREED** that Respondent, Richard Plezia, State Bar Card No. 16072800, is hereby **SUSPENDED** from the practice of law in the State of Texas effective April 20, 2024, and continuing hereafter until further order of this Board.

It is further **ORDERED, ADJUDGED, and DECREED** that Respondent, Richard Plezia, during said suspension is hereby prohibited, effective April 20, 2024, 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, Richard Plezia, 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 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 wither (a) that each and every justice of the peace, judge, magistrate, and chief justice of each and every court in which Respondent has any legal matter pending, if any, of his suspension, has been notified or (b) that Respondent has no legal matters pending in any court.

It is further **ORDERED** that Respondent, Richard Plezia, effective upon entry of this order, shall notify each of his current clients, if any, in writing, of his suspension. In addition to such notification, Respondent is **ORDERED** to return all files, papers, unearned fees paid in advance, and all other monies and properties which are in his possession but which belong to current or former clients with active cases pending, if any, to those respective clients or former clients with active cases pending within thirty (30) days after the date of this Order. 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 and former clients with active cases pending have been returned as ordered herein or (b) that Respondent has no current clients, files, or papers, and that any unearned fees paid in advance or other monies or properties belonging to clients have previously been

returned to the appropriate client. If Respondent is unable to return any file, papers, money or other property to any client or former client with active cases pending, 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, Richard Plezia, 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 this Order is interlocutory and that the Board retains jurisdiction to enter a final judgment when the appeal of the criminal conviction is final. *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 is 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 and when the appeal of the criminal conviction is final.

Signed this 28th day of March 2024.




CHAIR PRESIDING

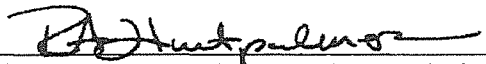
APPROVED AS TO FORM AND CONTENT:



Richard Plezia
Respondent
State Bar Card No. 16072800



Christopher L. Tritico
Counsel for Respondent State
Bar Card No. 20232050



Richard A. Huntpalmer, Assistant Disciplinary Counsel
Attorney for Petitioner
State Bar Card No. 24097857