

The Supreme Court of the State of Louisiana

IN RE: DREW M. LOUVIERE

No. 2026-B-00036

IN RE: Office of Disciplinary Counsel - Applicant Other; Findings and
Recommendations (Formal Charges);

March 18, 2026

Disbarment imposed. See per curiam.

JDH

JLW

JBM

PDG

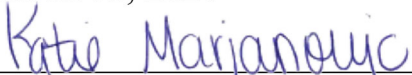
CRC

AHP

Guidry, J., recused.

Supreme Court of Louisiana

March 18, 2026



Chief Deputy Clerk of Court
For the Court

SUPREME COURT OF LOUISIANA

NO. 2026-B-0036

IN RE: DREW M. LOUVIERE

ATTORNEY DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDING

PER CURIAM

This disciplinary matter arises from formal charges filed by the Office of Disciplinary Counsel (“ODC”) against respondent, Drew M. Louviere, an attorney licensed to practice law in Louisiana, but currently suspended from practice.

PRIOR DISCIPLINARY HISTORY

Before we address the current charges, we find it helpful to review respondent’s prior disciplinary history. Respondent was admitted to the practice of law in Louisiana in 1982.

In 1993, respondent was admonished by the disciplinary board for neglecting a legal matter, failing to communicate with a client, and failing to refund an unearned fee. In 1998, respondent was admonished by the board for failing to safekeep the property of clients or third persons and failing to fulfill his obligations upon the termination of his representation.

In 2025, this court suspended respondent from the practice of law for one year and one day for neglecting a legal matter, failing to communicate with a client, failing to refund an unearned fee, and engaging in dishonest conduct. *In re: Louviere*, 25-0225 (La. 4/29/25), 407 So. 3d 606 (“*Louviere I*”). The misconduct at issue in *Louviere I* occurred between 2022 and 2024.

Against this backdrop, we now turn to a consideration of the instant misconduct.

FORMAL CHARGES

25-DB-014

The Mason Matter

In November 2022, respondent filed a personal injury suit against State Farm on behalf of Kendal Mason, William Mason, and Helen Jones. In December 2022, State Farm served plaintiffs, through respondent, with discovery requests. Respondent failed to respond to the discovery, despite numerous requests by defense counsel and extensions of time granted at respondent's request. In August 2023, State Farm filed a motion to compel. The motion was set for hearing on November 6, 2023, but respondent failed to appear. Following the hearing, the trial court ordered respondent to reply to the discovery within fifteen days.

Respondent failed to comply with the court's order compelling the discovery. In February 2024, State Farm filed a motion for contempt. The motion was set for hearing on March 18, 2024, but once again, respondent failed to appear. On April 5, 2024, the trial court signed a judgment granting the motion for contempt and dismissing plaintiffs' suit.

Throughout the representation, Mr. Mason made multiple unsuccessful attempts to communicate with respondent. Mr. Mason then made several requests to respondent for his file in order to retain new counsel. Despite these requests, respondent failed to provide Mr. Mason with a copy of his file. Moreover, respondent failed to inform Mr. Mason that discovery was outstanding, that a motion to compel and a motion for contempt had been filed and granted, and that respondent failed to attend at least two court dates.

On April 15, 2024, after the case was dismissed, respondent appeared at Mr. Mason's home with the discovery requests he had received in December 2022. Respondent did not tell Mr. Mason about the dismissal during this visit, nor did he

address any conflict of interest. Instead, respondent falsely advised his client that the parties were close to settling the case.

Thereafter, Mr. Mason retained new counsel, who made several attempts to contact respondent regarding the status of the case, as well as to obtain a copy of the client file, to no avail. It was only after Mr. Mason retained a new attorney that he learned his case had been dismissed.

In June 2024, Mr. Mason filed a complaint against respondent with the ODC. The complaint was forwarded to respondent for a response via certified mail. Respondent failed to reply, necessitating the issuance of a subpoena. Respondent appeared on September 5, 2024 pursuant to the subpoena and acknowledged receipt of the complaint; however, he never provided a written response.

In 25-DB-014, the ODC alleges that respondent violated the following provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct: Rules 1.1 (failure to provide competent representation to a client), 1.3 (failure to act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client), 1.4 (failure to communicate with a client), 1.7 (conflict of interest: current clients), 1.16(a)(d) (declining or terminating representation), 3.2 (failure to make reasonable efforts to expedite litigation), 3.4(c) (knowing disobedience of an obligation under the rules of a tribunal), 8.1(c) (failure to cooperate with the ODC in its investigation), 8.4(a) (violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct), 8.4(c) (engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation), and 8.4(d) (engaging in conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice).

25-DB-021

Count I – The Armstead Matter

In 2022, Anthony Armstead retained respondent to represent him in post-conviction proceedings. Respondent was paid \$4,200 toward the \$5,000 fee quoted

for the representation. Nevertheless, respondent failed to file any pleadings or make any court appearances on behalf of Mr. Armstead, and he failed to visit Mr. Armstead in jail as he had promised. Because respondent failed to do any work in the matter, Mr. Armstead and his family requested their fees be returned. Respondent failed to comply with this request.

In September 2024, Mr. Armstead filed a complaint against respondent with the ODC. The complaint was forwarded to respondent for a response via certified mail. Respondent failed to reply, necessitating the issuance of a subpoena. Respondent appeared on February 20, 2025 pursuant to the subpoena and acknowledged receipt of the complaint; however, he never provided a written response.

In Count I of 25-DB-021, the ODC alleges that respondent violated the following provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct: Rules 1.3, 1.4, 1.5(f)(5) (failure to refund an unearned fee), 3.2, 8.1(c), 8.4(a), and 8.4(c).

Count II – The Starr/Thornton Matter

In September 2022, respondent was retained to represent Mrs. Billie Starr in a challenge to the last will and testament of her late brother, Earl Bertinot. Mrs. Starr's daughter, Dawn Thornton, and son-in-law, Perry Thornton, paid respondent \$10,000 in connection with the representation.

Respondent filed pleadings on Mrs. Starr's behalf in October 2022. In November 2022, counsel for Mr. Bertinot's succession served Mrs. Starr, through respondent, with discovery requests, but respondent failed to respond to the discovery. In February 2023, counsel for the succession filed a motion to compel. The motion was set for hearing on March 20, 2023. Following the hearing, the trial court ordered respondent to reply to the discovery by March 23, 2023. The trial court also assessed costs of \$250 against Mrs. Starr.

Respondent failed to ever produce the discovery ordered by the court. Moreover, respondent failed to make his clients aware that discovery had been propounded and that his failure to respond was the subject of a court hearing and subsequent order requiring Mrs. Starr to pay costs.

In April 2023, without his clients' consent, respondent stipulated, in writing, to the validity of Mr. Bertinot's will. Thereafter, the trial court issued an amended judgment per the stipulation placing the prior parties back into possession. Respondent failed to advise his clients of the amended judgment. In fact, respondent misled the Thorntons about the status of the matter with respect to the viability of the action and with respect to the work he was doing in furtherance thereof. The Thorntons repeatedly expressed frustration with respondent's handling of the matter and requested status updates. Respondent repeatedly misrepresented to the Thorntons that he would be contacting them about the matter, then failed to do so. Moreover, throughout the course of the litigation, the Thorntons made multiple requests for an accounting of the fees paid to respondent. Respondent failed to ever provide the Thorntons with an accounting or return any of the unearned fee.

In December 2024, the Thorntons filed a complaint against respondent with the ODC. The complaint was forwarded to respondent for a response via certified mail. Respondent failed to reply, necessitating the issuance of a subpoena. Respondent appeared on February 20, 2025 pursuant to the subpoena and acknowledged receipt of the complaint; however, he never provided a written response.

In Count II of 25-DB-021, the ODC alleges that respondent violated the following provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct: Rules 1.3, 1.4, 1.5(f)(5), 1.16, 3.2, 8.1(c), 8.4(a), 8.4(c), and 8.4(d).

Count III – The Hebert Matter

In November 2023, Jude Hebert paid respondent \$15,000 to represent him in a criminal matter. Despite receiving payment of his fees, respondent never enrolled in Mr. Hebert's pending criminal case and never made any court appearances on his behalf. Respondent made representations to Mr. Hebert on several occasions that he would be present in court, but then failed to appear. In September 2024, Mr. Hebert terminated respondent and was forced to retain, and pay, new counsel. Respondent failed to comply with Mr. Hebert's request for an accounting and the return of the unearned fee.

In January 2025, Mr. Hebert filed a complaint against respondent with the ODC. The complaint was personally served upon respondent via hand delivery by an ODC investigator. Respondent failed to reply, necessitating the issuance of a subpoena. Respondent appeared on February 20, 2025 pursuant to the subpoena and acknowledged receipt of the complaint; however, he never provided a written response.

Respondent obtained Mr. Hebert's representation through a lawyer referral service known as Legal Match. According to its website, Legal Match "operates by connecting its users with local attorneys through its proprietary software." Member lawyers pay a monthly membership fee to receive "leads," which include details about legal matters that were provided by the potential client to the Legal Match platform. Legal Match is a private, for-profit, business; it is not operated by the Louisiana State Bar Association, a local bar association, or another not-for-profit organization. During his sworn statement, respondent testified that he has paid Legal Match for its referral services for at least ten years. At the time of his statement, respondent was paying \$895 per month for a two-year Legal Match membership.

In Count III of 25-DB-021, the ODC alleges that respondent violated the following provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct: Rules 1.3, 1.4, 1.5(f)(5),

1.16, 7.2(c)(13) (a lawyer may pay the usual charges of a lawyer referral service or other legal service organization only as permitted by the rule), 8.1(c), 8.4(a), 8.4(c), and 8.4(d).

DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS

The ODC filed formal charges against respondent under disciplinary board docket number 25-DB-014 in March 2025. The ODC filed formal charges against respondent under disciplinary board docket number 25-DB-021 in May 2025. Respondent failed to answer either set of formal charges. Accordingly, the factual allegations contained therein were deemed admitted and proven by clear and convincing evidence pursuant to Supreme Court Rule XIX, § 11(E)(3).

The matters were consolidated before being considered by a single hearing committee. No formal hearing was held, but the parties were given an opportunity to file with the committee written arguments and documentary evidence on the issue of sanctions. Respondent filed nothing for the committee's consideration.

Hearing Committee Report

After considering the ODC's deemed admitted submission, the hearing committee acknowledged that the factual allegations set forth in the formal charges were deemed admitted. The hearing committee found that the evidence established, across the multiple counts, that respondent accepted representation and collected substantial fees from multiple clients, then failed to perform any meaningful legal work or to advance the matters. Respondent failed to communicate with his clients regarding critical developments. He engaged in dishonest and misleading conduct, assuring clients that work was being performed or that cases were progressing when, in fact, they were neglected or dismissed. Respondent failed to return unearned fees after being terminated or abandoning the representation. Respondent repeatedly

failed to cooperate with the ODC, despite multiple written notices, extensions, and subpoenas directing him to respond. Based on these facts, the committee determined respondent violated the Rules of Professional Conduct as charged.

The committee determined respondent violated duties owed to his clients, the public, the legal system, and the legal profession. He acted knowingly and intentionally, causing actual harm and potential harm to his clients. Respondent's clients lost confidence in the judicial process, suffered the dismissal of their claims, and were forced to incur additional expenses to hire new counsel. Respondent's dishonesty and failure to cooperate caused unnecessary expenditure of disciplinary resources and delayed resolution of the valid grievances. The record shows that respondent was fully aware of his clients' pending matters, the deadlines imposed by court orders, and the repeated notices from the ODC. Despite that knowledge, respondent chose not to act, not to communicate with clients, and not to comply with disciplinary requests. Respondent's repeated assurances to clients that matters were "being handled" when they were not demonstrates intentional misrepresentation, not mere negligence. Relying on the ABA's *Standards for Imposing Lawyer Sanctions*, the committee determined the baseline sanction is disbarment.

The committee found the following aggravating factors present: a prior disciplinary record (although remote in time), a pattern of misconduct, multiple offenses, and substantial experience in the practice of law. The committee found no mitigating factors present.

Turning to the issue of an appropriate sanction, the committee noted that the misconduct in this matter occurred within the same time period as the misconduct in *Louviere I*; as such, a *Chatelain* analysis is applicable.¹ After further considering the

¹ In *Louisiana State Bar Ass'n v. Chatelain*, 573 So. 2d 470 (La. 1991), this court held that when a second disciplinary proceeding against an attorney involves misconduct which occurred during the same time period as the first proceeding, "the overall discipline to be imposed should be determined as if both proceedings were before the court simultaneously."

court's prior jurisprudence addressing similar misconduct, the committee recommended respondent be disbarred. The committee also recommended that he be assessed with the costs and expenses of this proceeding.

Neither respondent nor the ODC filed an objection to the committee's report and recommendation. Therefore, pursuant to Supreme Court Rule XIX, § 11(G), the disciplinary board submitted the committee's report directly to the court for review.

DISCUSSION

Bar disciplinary matters fall within the original jurisdiction of this court. La. Const. art. V, § 5(B). Consequently, we act as triers of fact and conduct an independent review of the record to determine whether the alleged misconduct has been proven by clear and convincing evidence. *In re: Banks*, 09-1212 (La. 10/2/09), 18 So. 3d 57.

In cases in which the lawyer does not answer the formal charges, the factual allegations of those charges are deemed admitted. Supreme Court Rule XIX, § 11(E)(3). Thus, the ODC bears no additional burden to prove the factual allegations contained in the formal charges after those charges have been deemed admitted. However, the language of § 11(E)(3) does not encompass legal conclusions that flow from the factual allegations. If the legal conclusion the ODC seeks to prove (i.e., a violation of a specific rule) is not readily apparent from the deemed admitted facts, additional evidence may need to be submitted in order to prove the legal conclusions that flow from the admitted factual allegations. *In re: Donnan*, 01-3058 (La. 1/10/03), 838 So. 2d 715.

The record in this deemed admitted matter supports a finding that respondent engaged in a pattern of serious attorney misconduct, including the neglect of multiple client matters, failure to communicate with his clients, engaging in dishonest or misleading conduct, failure to refund unearned fees, and failure to

cooperate with the ODC. Respondent's conduct amounts to a violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct as charged.

Having found evidence of professional misconduct, we now turn to a determination of the appropriate sanction for respondent's actions. In determining a sanction, we are mindful that disciplinary proceedings are designed to maintain high standards of conduct, protect the public, preserve the integrity of the profession, and deter future misconduct. *Louisiana State Bar Ass'n v. Reis*, 513 So. 2d 1173 (La. 1987). The discipline to be imposed depends upon the facts of each case and the seriousness of the offenses involved considered in light of any aggravating and mitigating circumstances. *Louisiana State Bar Ass'n v. Whittington*, 459 So. 2d 520 (La. 1984).

Respondent violated duties owed to his clients, the public, the legal system, and the legal profession. His conduct was at least knowing, causing serious actual harm and the potential for harm. The applicable baseline sanction is disbarment. The hearing committee's assessment of aggravating factors is supported by the record, and there are no mitigating factors.

As the committee noted, respondent's misconduct here occurred at the same time as the misconduct at issue in *Louviere I*. Therefore, the overall discipline to be imposed should be determined as if both proceedings were before the court simultaneously. *Louisiana State Bar Ass'n v. Chatelain*, 573 So. 2d 470 (La. 1991).

In *Louviere I*, respondent neglected a legal matter, failed to communicate with a client, failed to refund an unearned fee, and engaged in dishonest conduct. This misconduct occurred between 2022 and 2024, and resulted in a one year and one day suspension from the practice of law. Respondent's misconduct in the instant matter is nearly identical in both time and scope to *Louviere I*.

If the misconduct in *Louviere I* and the instant matter had been considered together, we would have imposed a more severe sanction than that imposed in

Louviere I. Without question, disbarment is the appropriate sanction for the combined misconduct.

Based on this reasoning, we will adopt the hearing committee's recommendation and disbar respondent. We will further order respondent to submit to fee dispute arbitration in the Armstead, Starr/Thornton, and Hebert matters and refund any unearned fees as determined by the arbitrator. Participation in fee dispute arbitration and payment of the refunds to these clients shall be completed prior to respondent's submission of any application for readmission.²

DECREE

Upon review of the findings and recommendation of the hearing committee, and considering the record, it is ordered that Drew M. Louviere, Louisiana Bar Roll number 8826, be and he hereby is disbarred. His name shall be stricken from the roll of attorneys and his license to practice law in the State of Louisiana shall be revoked. Prior to seeking readmission to the practice of law, respondent shall participate in fee dispute arbitration with Anthony Armstead, Mrs. Billie Starr and Dawn and Perry Thornton, and Jude Hebert and refund any unearned fees as determined by the arbitrator. All costs and expenses in the matter are assessed against respondent in accordance with Supreme Court Rule XIX, § 10.1, with legal interest to commence thirty days from the date of finality of this court's judgment until paid.

² A similar condition was imposed in *Louviere I*, and respondent shall continue to be bound by that condition as well.