

## **ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION**

**Bowman Gilfillan Inc. v. gavin campbell**  
**Case No. D2025-1677**

### **1. The Parties**

1.1 The Complainant is Bowman Gilfillan Inc. c/o Coulson Harney LLP, Kenya (the “Complainant”).

1.2 The Respondent is gavin campbell, South Africa (the “Respondent”).

### **2. The Domain Name and Registrar**

2.1 The disputed domain name <bowmans-law.net> (the “Disputed Domain Name”) is registered with PDR Ltd. d/b/a PublicDomainRegistry.com (the “Registrar”).

### **3. Procedural History**

3.1 The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on April 25, 2025. On April 25, 2025, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the Disputed Domain Name. On April 26, 2025, the Registrar transmitted by email to the Center its verification response disclosing registrant and contact information for the Disputed Domain Name which differed from the named Respondent (PUBLIC DOMAIN REGISTRY) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on April 30, 2025, providing the registrant and contact information disclosed by the Registrar, and inviting the Complainant to submit an amendment to the Complaint. The Complainant filed an amended Complaint on May 2, 2025.

3.2 The Center verified that the Complaint together with the amended Complaint satisfied the formal requirements of the Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Policy” or “UDRP”), the Rules for Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Rules”), and the WIPO Supplemental Rules for Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Supplemental Rules”).

3.3 In accordance with the Rules, paragraphs 2 and 4, the Center formally notified the Respondent of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on May 8, 2025. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was May 28, 2025. On May 16, 2025, the Center received an email communication from a third party which appears to be the Admin/Technical/Billing contact of the Disputed Domain Name. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the commencement of panel appointment process on June 4, 2025.

3.4 The Center appointed Ike Ehiribe as the sole panelist in this matter on June 8, 2025. The Panel finds that it was properly constituted. The Panel has submitted the Statement of Acceptance and Declaration of Impartiality and Independence, as required by the Center to ensure compliance with the Rules, paragraph 7.

#### **4. Factual Background**

4.1 The Complainant in this matter Bowman Gilfillan Inc (“Bowmans”) is known as a prominent Pan-African law firm with a well-established reputation within Africa and beyond. It is said that the Complainant has offices in six Africa countries namely, Kenya, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zambia. The Complainant has in addition registered its BOWMANS trademark mainly under classes 35, 36, and 45 in respect of services related to legal, security, personal services, business management, advertising, and financial services in countries such as Kenya, Ethiopia, Botswana, Ghana, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Madagascar, Zambia, Malawi, and Mauritius. Copies of the Complainant’s certificates of registration in the relevant countries and copies of the Registration of the BOWMANS trademark are attached to this proceeding as annexures. The Complainant owns, inter alia, Kenya trademark registration No. 1091625 for BOWMANS, registered on October 10, 2016. The Complainant is also the owner of the domain name <bowmanslaw.com>.

4.2 The Respondent in this proceeding is gavin campbell, who is said to be based in Johannesburg, South Africa. The Disputed Domain Name <bowmans-law.net> was created on March 16, 2025. The Complainant has received an email from a third party stating that the third party has been contacted by the Respondent. The Respondent used the Disputed Domain Name to impersonate the Complainant in connection with a fake transaction.

#### **5. Parties’ Contentions**

##### **A. Complainant**

5.1 The Complainant contends that it has satisfied each of the elements required under the Policy for a transfer of the Disputed Domain Name.

5.2 Notably, the Complainant contends that it owns several trademark registrations for the BOWMANS trademark in several jurisdictions and it also holds the domain name <bowmanslaw.com>. It is also submitted that the Complainant owns various country code Top-Level Domain (“ccTLD”) and generic Top-Level Domain (“gTLD”) domain names that incorporate the Complainant’s BOWMANS trademark. In particular, the Disputed Domain Name reproduces entirely the Complainant’s BOWMANS trademark, with the intention to exploit the Complainant’s goodwill and reputation in the BOWMANS trademark.

5.3 It is further submitted that there is a high degree of phonetic and visual similarity between the Disputed Domain Name and the Complainant’s trademark which is likely to cause confusion in the minds of those who have access to the Disputed Domain Name and those who may be genuinely seeking the services of the Complainant.

5.4 Accordingly, it is submitted that the Disputed Domain Name is indeed identical and confusingly similar to the Complainant’s BOWMANS trademark and domain names such as <bowmanslaw.com> thereby creating a high likelihood of confusion in the minds of the Complainant’s consumers in the legal and business service industry, following previous UDRP decisions such as: (1) *TEVA Pharmaceutical Industries limited v. Privacy Service Provided by Withheld for Privacy ehf / Victor Mike*, WIPO Case No. [D2022-2541](#); (2) *Esquire Innovations, Inc. v. Iscrub.com c/o Whois Identity Shield*; and *Vertical Axis, Inc, Domain Administrator*, WIPO Case No. [D2007-0856](#); and (3) *Gilead Sciences, Inc. v. Kyoung S Park*, WIPO Case No. [D2025-0006](#).

5.5 The Complainant submits that the Respondent has not provided any evidence which demonstrates that it should be considered as having any rights or legitimate interests in respect of the Disputed Domain Name because the Complainant has no connection with the Respondent nor has the Respondent been licensed or otherwise permitted to use its trademark. The Complainant relies on a number of recent previous UDRP decisions such as: (1) *Groupon, Inc. v. Domain Admin, Whois Privacy Corp.*, WIPO Case No. [D2020-0001](#); and (2) *F. Hoffmann-La Roche AG v. Registration Private, Domains By Proxy, LLC / James Onuoha Doe*, WIPO Case No. [D2021-0811](#).

5.6 On the question of bad faith registration and use, the Complainant contends that the registration of the Disputed Domain Name was carried out in bad faith with the intention of misleading consumers into associating the Respondent with the Complainant. In support of this contention, reference is made to the fact that the Respondent is based in South Africa, where the Complainant maintains an office and is known as a well-established law firm. The Complainant also places reliance on the fact that on two distinct occasions the Respondent has attempted to impersonate members of the Complainant's staff to perpetrate fraud by enticing third parties to illegally transfer funds as further evidence of abusive registration and bad faith use following recent previous UDRP decisions considering the use of fraudulent activities including impersonation and deceptive mail communications by registrants of disputed domain names, namely; (1) *Taylor Wessing Limited v. Name Redacted*, WIPO Case No. [D2024-3344](#); and (2) *Archer-Daniels-Midland Company v. Dolly deone, adm Company*, WIPO Case No. [D2024-4466](#).

## **B. Respondent**

5.7 On May 16, 2025, the Center received an email communication from a third party which appears to be the Admin/Technical/Billing contact of the Disputed Domain Name stating that it is a hosting provider. The Respondent did not reply to the Complainant's contentions and therefore the Panel shall draw such adverse inferences from the Respondent's failure to respond as may be deemed appropriate.

## **6. Discussion and Findings**

### **A. Identical or Confusingly Similar**

6.1 It is well accepted that the first element functions primarily as a standing requirement. The standing (or threshold) test for confusing similarity involves a reasoned but relatively straightforward comparison between the Complainant's trademark and the Disputed Domain Name. WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Selected UDRP Questions, Third Edition ("[WIPO Overview 3.0](#)"), section 1.7.

6.2 The Complainant has shown rights in respect of a trademark or service mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.2.1.

6.3 The entirety of the mark is reproduced within the Disputed Domain Name. Accordingly, the Disputed Domain Name is confusingly similar to the mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.7.

6.4 Although the addition of other terms, here "-law" may bear on assessment of the second and third elements, the Panel finds the addition of such term does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity between the Disputed Domain Name and the mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.8.

6.5 The Panel finds the first element of the Policy has been established.

### **B. Rights or Legitimate Interests**

6.6 Paragraph 4(c) of the Policy provides a list of circumstances in which the Respondent may demonstrate rights or legitimate interests in a disputed domain name.

6.7 Although the overall burden of proof in UDRP proceedings is on the complainant, panels have recognized that proving a respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in a domain name may result in the difficult task of “proving a negative”, requiring information that is often primarily within the knowledge or control of the respondent. As such, where a complainant makes out a prima facie case that the respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests, the burden of production on this element shifts to the respondent to come forward with relevant evidence demonstrating rights or legitimate interests in the domain name (although the burden of proof always remains on the complainant). If the respondent fails to come forward with such relevant evidence, the complainant is deemed to have satisfied the second element. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.1.

6.8 Having reviewed the available record, the Panel finds the Complainant has established a prima facie case that the Respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in the Disputed Domain Name. The Respondent has not rebutted the Complainant’s prima facie showing and has not come forward with any relevant evidence demonstrating rights or legitimate interests in the Disputed Domain Name such as those enumerated in the Policy or otherwise. Furthermore, the Panel considers that the composition of Disputed Domain Name carries a risk of implied affiliation with the Complainant. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.5.1.

6.9 Panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegal activity such as, claimed impersonation, or other types of fraud can never confer rights or legitimate interests on a respondent. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.13.1.

6.10 The Panel finds the second element of the Policy has been established.

### **C. Registered and Used in Bad Faith**

6.11 The Panel notes that, for the purposes of paragraph 4(a)(iii) of the Policy, paragraph 4(b) of the Policy establishes circumstances, in particular, but without limitation, that, if found by the Panel to be present, shall be evidence of the registration and use of a domain name in bad faith.

6.12 In the present case, the Panel notes that the Respondent registered the Disputed Domain Name on a date that postdates the registration of the Complainant’s numerous trademarks. Accordingly, the Panel finds and holds that the Respondent intentionally set out to exploit the reputation of the Complainant’s trademarks in the legal services industry.

6.13 Paragraph 4(b) of the Policy sets out a list of non-exhaustive circumstances that may indicate that a domain name was registered and used in bad faith, but other circumstances may be relevant in assessing whether a respondent’s registration and use of a domain name is in bad faith. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.2.1.

6.14 Panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegal activity, such as, claimed impersonation, or other types of fraud constitutes bad faith as has been perpetrated by the Respondent in this case. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.4. Having reviewed the record, the Panel finds the Respondent’s registration and use of the Disputed Domain Name constitutes bad faith under the Policy.

6.15 The Panel finds that the Complainant has established the third element of the Policy.

## 7. Decision

7.1 For the foregoing reasons, in accordance with paragraphs 4(i) of the Policy and 15 of the Rules, the Panel orders that the Disputed Domain Name <bowmans-law.net> be transferred to the Complainant

*/Ike Ehiribe/*

**Ike Ehiribe**

Sole Panelist

Date: June 24, 2025