

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Ropes & Gray LLP v. Simon Taylor

Case No. D2025-5255

1. The Parties

Complainant is Ropes & Gray LLP, United States of America (“United States”), represented internally.

Respondent is Simon Taylor, United States.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <ropesgnray.com> is registered with Wild West Domains, LLC (“Registrar”).

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (“Center”) on December 16, 2025. On December 17, 2025, the Center transmitted by email to Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On December 17, 2025, Registrar transmitted by email to the Center its verification response, disclosing registrant and contact information for the disputed domain name that differed from that in the Complaint (Unknown / Registration Private, Domains By Proxy, LLC). The Center sent an email communication to Complainant on December 18, 2025, providing the registrant and contact information disclosed by Registrar and inviting Complainant to submit an amendment to the Complaint. Complainant filed an amended Complaint on December 18, 2025 naming “Simon Taylor” as Respondent.

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

In accordance with the Rules, paragraphs 2 and 4, the Center formally notified Respondent of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on December 23, 2025. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was January 12, 2026. Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified Respondent’s default on January 14, 2026.

The Center appointed Debra J. Stanek as the sole panelist in this matter on January 21, 2026. 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

Complainant is a large law firm with offices in the United States and in other regions. It owns a United States trademark registration for the mark ROPES & GRAY, Reg. No. 2,902,936, registered November 16, 2004 for its legal and other services. Complainant also owns the ropesgray.com domain name, which it uses for its website and for email addresses used by its professional staff.

The disputed domain name was created on November 10, 2025. Complainant asserted that the disputed domain name did not lead to an active website as of the filing of the Complaint; nor does it at the time of this Decision. According to the evidence filed by Complainant, Respondent has used the disputed domain name in an email address used to send messages purporting to be from an employee of Complainant.

5. Parties' Contentions

A. Complainant

Complainant contends that it has satisfied each of the elements required under the Policy for a transfer of the disputed domain name.

In particular:

- Complainant has rights in its registered ROPES & GRAY mark and in the unregistered mark ROPESGRAY.COM as a result of its use of the ropesgray.com domain name for its website and in email addresses, and its use of the website in connection with its legal services.
- The disputed domain name resembles both of Complainant's marks: It differs from the ROPES & GRAY mark only by the deletion of the ampersand and addition of the letter "n". It differs from the ROPESGRAY.COM mark only by the addition of the letter "n".
- Complainant has no relationship with Respondent and has not authorized it to use a domain name that incorporates its registered mark.
- Respondent is using the disputed domain name to impersonate Complainant. Respondent created an email address using the disputed domain name. The message forward to a third party contained an invoice "for services rendered", and indicating that because "the bank details shown" on the invoice were "compromised," new banking information would be sent after the recipient confirmed a payment date. The signature block of the email message identifies the individual by name and the title "Legal Executive Assistant" above Complainant's name and the address of its Boston, Massachusetts offices.

B. Respondent

Respondent did not reply to Complainant's contentions.

6. Discussion and Findings

To prevail under the Policy a complainant must prove, as to the domain name at issue, that: (a) it is identical or confusingly similar to a mark in which the complainant has rights, (b) the respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect to it, and (c) it has been registered and is being used in bad faith. Policy, paragraph 4(a). A respondent's failure to respond does not automatically result in a finding for the complainant; the complainant continues to have the burden of establishing each element. Rules, paragraphs 5(f) and 14(a); see also WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Selected UDRP Questions, Third Edition ("WIPO Overview 3.0"), section 4.3. The Panel may, however, draw appropriate inferences from the default. See Rules, paragraph 14(b).

The Panel determines that "Simon Taylor" is the appropriate Respondent. See [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 4.4.5 (in cases involving a privacy service, a panel has discretion to determine the appropriate respondent).

A. Identical or Confusingly Similar

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 Complainant's trademark and the disputed domain name. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.7.

Complainant has shown rights in respect of its ROPES & GRAY service mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.2.1.

The disputed domain name is not identical to Complainant's registered mark;¹ spaces and the ampersand have been removed, and the letter "n" inserted. Nonetheless, the Panel finds the registered mark is recognizable within the disputed domain name – in the Panel's view, the disputed domain name is an intentional misspelling. Accordingly, the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), sections 1.7 and 1.9.

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

B. Rights or Legitimate Interests

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

Although the overall burden of proof in proceedings under the Policy 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 remains on the complainant). If the respondent fails to come forward with relevant evidence, the complainant is deemed to have satisfied the second element. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.1.

¹ Complainant asserts common law rights in the unregistered ROPESGRAY.COM mark based on the domain name registration of <ropesgray.com>, which it in turn has used for its website and in email addresses for many years. Mindful that (as discussed below), Respondent appears to have targeted Complainant, the Panel need not determine whether the evidence of duration and nature of use is adequate; Complainant has established its rights in its registered mark.

The Panel finds Complainant has established a *prima facie* case that Respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name. Respondent has not rebutted 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. Further, Complainant has provided credible evidence that Respondent used the disputed domain name to pass itself off as an employee of Complainant, apparently in an attempt to divert a payment intended for Complainant. Consistent with determinations by other panels, the Panel finds that this use of the disputed domain name cannot confer rights or legitimate interests on Respondent. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.13.1.

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

C. Registered and Used in Bad Faith

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. The list in paragraph 4(b) is not exhaustive; 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.

Complainant's evidence shows: Complainant's rights in its ROPES & GRAY mark long predate registration of the disputed domain name. Respondent knew of Complainant's mark; he used it (along with Complainant's name and address) in a message purporting to be from an employee of Complainant. Respondent used the disputed domain name intending that a third party believe Respondent's email communication was from Complainant. That email communications was part of a deceptive scheme. In addition, Respondent has failed to respond in these proceedings. Under these circumstances, the Panel finds Respondent's registration and use of the disputed domain name constitutes bad faith under the Policy.

The Panel finds the third element of the Policy has been established.

7. Decision

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 <ropesgnray.com> be transferred to Complainant.

/Debra J. Staneck/

Debra J. Staneck

Sole Panelist

Date: January 28, 2026