

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Latham & Watkins LLP v. Miguel Lopez, ArkAnimals
Case No. D2026-2528

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Latham & Watkins LLP, United States of America ("United States"), internally represented.

The Respondent is Miguel Lopez, ArkAnimals, Colombia.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <lathamwatkins.cloud> is registered with Hostinger Operations, UAB (the "Registrar").

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the "Center") on June 10, 2026. On June 11, 2026, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On June 11, 2026, 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 (Unknown) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on June 12, 2026, 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 June 15, 2026.

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").

In accordance with the Rules, paragraphs 2 and 4, the Center formally notified the Respondent of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on June 17, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for the Response was July 7, 2026. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent's default on July 9, 2026.

The Center appointed Reyes Campello Estebaranz as the sole panelist in this matter on July 14, 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

The Complainant is a global law firm founded in the United States in 1934, operating with over 3,500 attorneys across 30 offices in 14 countries. Recognized in major legal publications such as The American Lawyer, MergerMarket, and Chambers and Partners, the Complainant provides its professional legal services under the LATHAM & WATKINS trademark, which has been continuously used since 1934.

The Complainant holds multiple trademark registrations for the LATHAM & WATKINS mark, including United States Trademark Registration No. 2,413,795 for LATHAM & WATKINS (word), registered on December 19, 2000.

The Complainant further owns numerous domain names in connection with its LATHAM & WATKINS mark, including <latham.com> (registered on March 14, 1994) and <lw.com> (registered on October 25, 1994), which resolve to its corporate website. The Complainant further owns domain names under various generic Top-Level Domains (“gTLDs”) and country code Top-Level Domains (“ccTLDs”), such as <lathamwatkins.com>, <lathamandwatkins.cn>, <lathamandwatkins.co.kr>, <lathamandwatkins.fr>, <lathamandwatkins.jp>, <lathamandwatkins.mobi>, <lathamwatkins.mx>, <lathamwatkins.ru>, <lathamwatkins.tel>, <lathamawatkins.com>, <lathamswatkins.com>, <lathamwatkins-llp.com>, <lathanwatkins.com>, <lathamw.com>, and <us-lw.com>.

The disputed domain name was registered on April 21, 2026. At present, the disputed domain name is inactive, resolving to a browser error message indicating “This site can’t be reached”. However, according to evidence provided by the Complainant, the disputed domain name previously hosted a Spanish-language website that offered free case analyses for users who suffered financial losses on digital platforms, promising confidential and effective recovery solutions. The website featured an online submission form for case details and claimed that its team was experienced in digital matters.

On May 5, 2026, the Complainant sent a cease-and-desist letter to the Respondent via the Registrar’s abuse contact email address. Following the Complainant’s request, the Registrar suspended the disputed domain name.

5. Parties’ Contentions

A. Complainant

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

Notably, the Complainant contends that the LATHAM & WATKINS mark has acquired a strong global reputation and common-law rights through extensive use and promotion since 1934, making it well-known both in the United States and internationally.

The Complainant further asserts that the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to its LATHAM & WATKINS mark. The disputed domain name incorporates the mark in its entirety, merely omitting the ampersand symbol (“&”), which cannot be used in the domain name system and is routinely omitted or replaced in domain names corresponding to law firms. In support, the Complainant cites

Latham & Watkins LLP v. Domain Hostmaster Customer ID: 01528735113163, Whois Privacy Services Pty Ltd / Mike Patterson, WIPO Case No. [D2016-2169](#), and references its domain name <lathamwatkins.com>, which follows the same structure.

The Complainant further contends that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name. The LATHAM & WATKINS mark has no meaning other than identifying the Complainant and its services. The Respondent is not affiliated with or authorized by the Complainant, nor is there any evidence that the Respondent is commonly known by the disputed domain name. Furthermore, the disputed domain name hosted a website impersonating the Complainant by offering legal services related to digital platform disputes. The Complainant submits that using a domain name for illegal activities, such as impersonation, can never confer rights or legitimate interests on a respondent.

Finally, the Complainant contends that the disputed domain name was registered and is being used in bad faith. Given the reputation of the LATHAM & WATKINS mark, the Respondent intentionally targeted the Complainant without any plausible justification. By impersonating the Complainant, the Respondent sought to attract Internet users to its website for commercial gain by creating a likelihood of confusion. Additionally, the Complainant asserts that the Respondent's use of a privacy shield service under these circumstances further evidences bad faith aimed at concealing his identity.

B. Respondent

The Respondent did not reply to the Complainant's contentions.

6. Discussion and Findings

The Complainant has submitted all relevant assertions under the Policy, and the dispute properly falls within its scope. The Panel has the authority to decide the dispute by examining the three elements set forth in paragraph 4(a) of the Policy, taking into account all relevant evidence, annexed materials, and submissions. The Panel may also conduct limited independent research pursuant to its general powers, as provided, inter alia, in paragraph 10 of the Rules.

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 the Complainant's trademark and the disputed domain name. WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Select UDRP Questions (["WIPO Overview 3.1"](#)), section 1.7.

The Complainant has shown rights in respect of a trademark or service mark for the purposes of the Policy, namely the LATHAM & WATKINS mark. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.2.1.

Furthermore, the Panel finds that the Complainant has established common law trademark rights through its continuous and extensive use of the LATHAM & WATKINS mark for over 90 years. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.3.

The disputed domain name incorporates the Complainant's trademark in its entirety, with the sole omission of the ampersand symbol ("&"). As noted in prior UDRP decisions, an ampersand is technically unavailable in the domain name system and is therefore routinely omitted or replaced by the term "and" or a hyphen in domain names. See, e.g., *BA&SH v. Stefan Beyer*, WIPO Case No. [D2024- 2131](#) ("[...] an ampersand is not a valid character in domain name registrations. When converting a trademark which contains an ampersand in a domain name, the ampersand is either deleted or replaced by the letters 'and' or by a hyphen").

Accordingly, the Panel finds that the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the Complainant's mark. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.7.

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 the Respondent may demonstrate rights or legitimate interests in a disputed domain name.

Although the overall burden of proof in UDRP proceedings is on the complainant, panels have recognized that proving that 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 3.1](#), section 2.1.

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.

Therefore, the Panel highlights that the Respondent failed to submit any formal Response or dispute the Complainant's allegations, and, under Paragraph 14(b) of the Rules, the Panel may draw inferences from the Respondent's default, as it considers appropriate.

The Panel notes that nothing on the record indicates that the Respondent holds any rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name.

In particular, the Respondent's name shares no similarity with the terms "Latham Watkins" or "lathamwatkins", and there is no evidence suggesting that the Respondent has been commonly known by these terms. The Panel has further verified through various searches on the Global Brand Database that the Respondent holds no trademark registrations corresponding to these terms.¹

The Panel further notes that the terms "Latham" and "Watkins" are surnames with no dictionary meaning.

Additionally, according to the website screenshots provided in the cease-and-desist communication, the disputed domain name was used to host a Spanish-language website that offered consulting or legal services regarding disputes with digital platforms. This website apparently operated without any disclaimer clarifying the absence of any relationship with the Complainant or its well-known trademark, a use that creates a false impression of affiliation and cannot be considered a bona fide offering of goods or services under the Policy.

The Panel also observes that the Respondent did not challenge the Registrar's suspension of the disputed domain name, nor did he submit a response to the Complaint.

¹ Under the general powers articulated in paragraphs 10 and 12 of the Rules, a panel may undertake limited factual research into public records if such information is useful to assessing the case merits and reaching a decision. WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Select UDRP Questions ("[WIPO Overview 3.1](#)"), [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 4.8.

UDRP panels have consistently held that using a domain name for illegal or illegitimate activities, such as passing off or fraud, can never confer rights or legitimate interests on a respondent.

[WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 2.13.1. While the screenshots provided in the Annexes may not conclusively establish whether the Respondent's website was actively impersonating the Complainant or trying to pass itself off as an affiliated firm, the Panel finds that this distinction is not decisive here.

In any event, the disputed domain name carries a risk of implied affiliation that precludes a finding of a bona fide offering of goods or services. The disputed domain name incorporates the Complainant's trademark in its entirety, merely omitting the ampersand symbol, which is technically unavailable in domain name registrations. Given that omitting the ampersand, replacing it with the word "and", or inserting a hyphen are standard methods of adapting trademarks containing ampersands into domain names, this composition inherently heightens the risk of implied affiliation. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 2.5.1.

Consequently, 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.

In the present case, given the extensive length of time the Complainant's LATHAM & WATKINS mark has been registered and used, as well as its distinctiveness and reputation, the Panel is persuaded that the Respondent knew of the Complainant and its mark at the time of registering the disputed domain name, and specifically targeted the mark. The use of the disputed domain name in connection with legal and consulting services - the exact industry in which the Complainant operates and holds its reputation - further corroborates this intentional targeting.

Prior UDRP panels have consistently recognized the reputation of the Complainant's LATHAM & WATKINS mark in the legal sector (see, e.g., *Latham & Watkins LLP v. Domain Hostmaster Customer ID: 01528735113163, Whois Privacy Services Pty Ltd / Mike Patterson*, WIPO Case No. [D2016-2169](#); and *Latham & Watkins LLP v. Mathias Wulf*, WIPO Case No. [D2023-4054](#)), a view with which this Panel concurs.

Furthermore, the Panel notes that the disputed domain name is currently inactive, and, although this inactivity appears to stem from the Registrar's intervention following the Complainant's cease-and-desist letter, the Respondent has neither objected to the Registrar's suspension nor rebutted the Complainant's prima facie showing of bad faith.

It is well established that the non-use or passive holding of a domain name does not prevent a finding of bad faith under the doctrine of passive holding. To the contrary, in looking at the totality of circumstances in each case, panels have found that the registration and non-use of a domain name can still constitute bad faith for purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 3.3. Having reviewed the available record, taking into account the high degree of distinctiveness and reputation of the Complainant's mark, alongside the composition of the disputed domain name, which is virtually identical to the mark save for the technical omission of the ampersand symbol, the Panel finds that the current passive holding of the disputed domain name does not preclude a finding of bad faith under the Policy.

Accordingly, the Panel finds that the Respondent registered and is using the disputed domain name in bad faith. Specifically, the Respondent has intentionally attempted to attract, for commercial gain, Internet users to its website by creating a likelihood of confusion with the Complainant's mark as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of its website or the services offered thereon, within the meaning of paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy.

Therefore, the Panel finds that the Complainant has established the third element of the Policy.

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 <lathamwatkins.cloud> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Reyes Campello Estebaranz/

Reyes Campello Estebaranz

Sole Panelist

Date: July 27, 2026