

SUPREME COURT OF GEORGIA

In the Matter of Andrew Thurston Murphy

No. S26Y0623 (Ga. June 16, 2026) · No. S26Y0623 · Decided June 16, 2026

SUMMARY

The Supreme Court of Georgia disbarred Andrew Thurston Murphy after his felony convictions for terroristic threats and intimidation of a court officer. The Court held that his convictions violated Georgia Rule of Professional Conduct 8.4(a)(2) and agreed that disbarment was appropriate.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Supreme Court of Georgia
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Per Curiam; All the Justices
JURISDICTION	Supreme Court of Georgia
DECIDED	June 16, 2026
DOCKET	S26Y0623
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Attorney-discipline proceeding initiated by the State Bar of Georgia after Andrew Thurston Murphy's felony convictions; the Court reviewed a Special Master's report and recommendation of disbarment.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The Supreme Court reviewed the record and the Special Master's findings and conclusions; it stated that the record supported the findings and conclusions but did not articulate a distinct formal standard of review.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published opinion

TOPICS

- appellate procedure
- criminal procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

- legal ethics and attorney discipline
- professional responsibility
- criminal law

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Murphy violated Georgia Rule of Professional Conduct 8.4(a)(2) by being convicted of felonies.
2. Whether disbarment was the appropriate sanction for Murphy's felony convictions and interference with the administration of justice.

HOLDINGS

1. Murphy violated Rule 8.4(a)(2) because he was convicted of felonies.
2. Disbarment was appropriate, and Murphy's name was ordered removed from the rolls of persons authorized to practice law in Georgia.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Upon our review of the record, we agree with the Special Master that Murphy violated Rule 8.4(a)(2) and that disbarment is appropriate, as it is consistent with the discipline imposed in similar cases where an attorney violates Rule 8.4(a)(2) by committing a felony that involves the interference with justice.” (at 3)

“Accordingly, it is hereby ordered that the name of Andrew Thurston Murphy be removed from the rolls of persons authorized to practice law in the State of Georgia.” (at 4)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Murphy, an attorney representing a criminal defendant, sent harassing emails containing opprobrious language and terroristic threats to the superior court judge, the Cobb County District Attorney, senior assistant district attorneys, the assistant district attorney assigned to his client's case, and other court personnel. He pleaded guilty to 13 felony counts of terroristic threats and four felony counts of intimidation of a court officer. The Special Master found that the felony convictions violated Georgia Rule of Professional Conduct 8.4(a)(2), and identified aggravating factors that outweighed Murphy's lack of a prior disciplinary record.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Murphy pleaded guilty in the Superior Court of Cobb County to 13 felony counts of terroristic threats and four felony counts of intimidation of a court officer and was sentenced to 15 years, with the first seven years in confinement. The State Bar petitioned the Supreme Court of Georgia to appoint a Special Master, who conducted a show-cause hearing and recommended disbarment for violation of Georgia Rule of Professional Conduct 8.4(a)(2). Neither Murphy nor the Bar sought review by the Review Board or filed exceptions, and the Supreme Court adopted the recommendation.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- In the Matter of Murphy, S24Y0065 (Aug. 24, 2023)
- In the Matter of Barnes, 320 Ga. 589 (2024)

- In the Matter of Hutto, 292 Ga. 556 (2013)
- In the Matter of Skandalakis, 279 Ga. 865 (2005)

OPINION

In the Matter of Andrew Thurston Murphy

PER CURIAM.

NOTICE: This opinion is subject to modification resulting from motions for reconsideration under Supreme Court Rule 27, the Court’s reconsideration, and editorial revisions by the Reporter of Decisions. The version of the opinion published in the Advance Sheets for the Georgia Reports, designated as the “Final Copy,” will replace any prior version on the Court’s website and docket. A bound volume of the Georgia Reports will contain the final and official text of the opinion. In the Supreme Court of Georgia No. S26Y0623 In the Matter of Andrew Thurston Murphy Decided: June 16, 2026 PER CURIAM. This disciplinary matter is before the Court on the report and recommendation of Special Master LaRae Dixon Moore pursuant to Bar Rule 4-106 (governing the disciplinary process following an attorney’s conviction for a felony or misdemeanor involving moral turpitude). In her report, the Special Master recommends that the Court disbar Andrew Thurston Murphy (State Bar No. 516099), who has been a member of the State Bar since 2013, for his violation of Rule 8.4(a)(2) of the Georgia Rules of Professional Conduct (“GRPC”), found in Bar Rule 4-102(d).¹ The maximum penalty for a violation of this Rule is disbarment. Neither Murphy nor the Bar has sought review by the Review Board or filed exceptions to the Special Master’s report, and the record before us supports the Special Master’s findings of fact and conclusions of law. Therefore, we agree that disbarment is appropriate under the facts of this case. The record shows that on December 6, 2024, Murphy pled guilty to 13 felony counts of Terroristic Threats pursuant to OCGA § 16-11-37(b) and four felony counts of Intimidation of a 1 Murphy is currently suspended for failing to adequately respond to a notice of investigation issued in a related but separate matter. See In the Matter of Murphy, S24Y0065 (Aug. 24, 2023). Court Officer pursuant to OCGA § 16-10-97 in the Superior Court of Cobb County. Murphy was sentenced to serve a total of 15 years, with the first seven in confinement. The record underlying the criminal matter showed that Murphy served as trial counsel for a defendant charged with aggravated assault and possession of a firearm during the commission of a crime. During his representation of the client, Murphy sent a barrage of harassing emails containing opprobrious language and terroristic threats to the superior court judge overseeing his client’s case, the then-elected District Attorney of the Cobb County Judicial Circuit, the then-Chief Assistant District Attorney, the Assistant District Attorney assigned to his client’s case, and other court personnel. On February 11, 2025, the State Bar petitioned this Court to appoint a Special Master to conduct a show cause hearing. See Bar Rule 4-106(a).² This Court appointed the Special Master, who held the show cause hearing on November 21, 2025. At the hearing, the State Bar introduced certified copies of the disposition, indictment, and waiver of rights form for Murphy’s non-

negotiated guilty plea and argued that Murphy should be disbarred. Murphy did not attend the hearing. Following the show cause hearing, the Special Master issued her report and recommendation, in which she recounted the crimes for which Murphy was convicted and concluded that he violated Rule 8.4(a)(2).³ The Special Master then noted that the presumptive penalty for Murphy's misconduct under the ABA

2 Rule 4-106(a) provides that "[u]pon receipt of information or evidence that a conviction for any felony ... has been entered against a lawyer, ... [t]he Office of the General Counsel shall petition the Supreme Court of Georgia for the appointment of a Special Master to conduct a show cause hearing."

3 Rule 8.4(a)(2) provides that "[i]t shall be a violation of the [GRPC] for a lawyer to ... be convicted of a felony".² Standards was disbarment. See ABA Standards 5.11(a) (disbarment is generally appropriate when "a lawyer engages in serious criminal conduct, a necessary element of which includes intentional interference with the administration of justice"); 6.31(c) (disbarment is generally appropriate when a lawyer "improperly communicates with someone in the legal system other than a witness, judge, or juror with the intent to influence or affect the outcome of the proceeding"). Next, the Special Master determined that there were five applicable aggravating factors: dishonest or selfish motive, a pattern of misconduct, multiple offenses, substantial experience in the practice of law, and illegal conduct. See ABA Standard 9.22(b), (c), (d), (i), (k). In mitigation, the Special Master noted that Murphy had no prior disciplinary record, see ABA Standard 9.32(a), but explained that the "aggravating factors outweigh the single mitigating factor." The Special Master then concluded that "the only appropriate discipline in this matter is disbarment." Upon our review of the record, we agree with the Special Master that Murphy violated Rule 8.4(a)(2) and that disbarment is appropriate, as it is consistent with the discipline imposed in similar cases where an attorney violates Rule 8.4(a)(2) by committing a felony that involves the interference with justice.⁴ See, e.g., In the Matter of Barnes, 320 Ga. 589 (2024) (disbarring attorney who violated Rule 8.4(a)(2) by being convicted of felony obstruction of a law enforcement officer among other crimes); In the Matter of Hutto, 292 Ga. 556 (2013) (disbarring attorney who violated Rule 8.4(a)(2) by being convicted of one felony count of withholding information on a crime); In the Matter of Skandalakis, 4 We note that in imposing this sanction, we have not relied on "multiple offenses" in aggravation of discipline under ABA Standard 9.22(d), given that Murphy has not been charged with violating multiple Rules in this matter.³

279 Ga. 865 (2005) (disbarring attorney who violated Rule 8.4(a)(2) by being convicted of one felony count of making a false statement where attorney lied to an agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation). Accordingly, it is hereby ordered that the name of Andrew Thurston Murphy be removed from the rolls of persons authorized to practice law in the State of Georgia.⁵ Murphy is reminded of his duties under Bar Rule 4-219(b). Disbarred. All the Justices concur.⁵ The related pending matter, In the Matter of Murphy (S25Y1477), will be

placed on the Court's inactive docket and held, in the event that Murphy elects to apply for reinstatement to the practice of law in the State of Georgia. 4

Retrieved from lawtools.ai · <https://lawtools.ai/cases/state/supreme-court-of-georgia-supreme-court-of-georgia/2026/in-the-matter-of-andrew-thurston-murphy-zafg3qdc>