



Felony Conviction and Failure to Report Disciplinary Action

This case examines how serious the Real Estate Board takes felony convictions and the failure to report disciplinary action to the Real Estate Board within 30 days of pleading guilty or no contest or being convicted or found guilty of any convictions involving a misdemeanor involving moral turpitude, sexual offense, drug distribution or physical injury, or any felony.

THE SITUATION:

On November 4, 2020, the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation received information from an Intake Supervisor for the department regarding Ms. Shelley Bellinger.

On April 27, 2020, Ms. Bellinger was issued a real estate salesperson license. Her license is currently inactive.

THE INVESTIGATION:

Investigators learned that in March 2013, Ms. Bellinger opened Shell-Bell Motors, a car dealership located in the Shenandoah Valley. Between January 2014 and August 2019, the following allegations were made against Ms. Bellinger for her actions while operating Shell-Bell Motors:

- Obtaining loans in other people's name without their permission. (3 counts)
- Selling service contracts to customers and failing to provide the services that were purchased. (21 counts)
- Selling a vehicle with the promise of a clean title, when there was not a clean title. (15 counts)
- Agreeing to pay off a traded in vehicle and failing to do so. (10 counts)
- Selling a vehicle that had already been sold. (1 count)
- Selling a vehicle and failing to order the vehicle after she was paid to do so. (1 count)

On May 3, 2020, Ms. Bellinger was convicted of fifty felony counts of Obtaining Money by False Pretenses and one felony count of Forgery. There is no appeal pending, and the time for appeal has lapsed.

Ms. Bellinger told the court that she has fully cooperated with investigators and has never denied responsibility for her actions. She has already made restitution to some of the victims and negotiated with financial institutions to remove the financial obligations from other victims and, instead, hold her responsible for the debt.

She further stated that she obtained her real estate salesperson license and negotiated an opportunity to work with a licensed broker. She hoped to go to work immediately following the resolution of her case and begin paying restitution. She noted that the extent of her involvement with loans will be referring clients to brokers or banks, if needed.

On September 24, 2020, Ms. Bellinger was sentenced to fifty-five years in prison, with all but three years suspended on the conditions of good behavior, supervised probation for five years, and paying court costs and \$305,263.02 in restitution.

Ms. Bellinger told investigators that she contacted the Board when she was indicted and was told she needed to notify the Board if she was convicted. Ms. Bellinger said that after she was convicted, she was distracted and did not remember to update the Board of her status.

THE RESULT:

The Board determined that Ms. Bellinger violated the regulations by being convicted of multiple felonies. Further, she failed to inform the Board in writing that she was convicted of fifty-one felonies. The Board issued a fine of \$800, and Ms. Bellinger agreed to a revocation of her license. The Board waived imposition of the \$800 monetary penalty based on Orders for Restitution entered against Ms. Bellinger, which require her to pay restitution due in full by September 24, 2027, to make her victims whole for the offenses convicted.

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