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8	UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT	
9	CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA	
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12	CECUDITIES AND EVOLUNIOS	C N- 2-22 09070
13	SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION,	Case No. 2:23-cv-08079
14	Plaintiff,	COMPLAINT
15	VS.	
16	MARCO A. PEREZ (aka MARC PEREZ), PEDRO PEREZ, JR. (aka	
17	PETER PEREZ), and OLIVIA PEREZ	
18 19	DURBIN, Defendants.	
20	Defendants.	
21		
22	Plaintiff Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC") alleges:	
23	JURISDICTION AND VENUE	
24	1. The Court has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to Sections 21(d)(1),	
25	21(d)(3)(A), 21(e) and 27(a) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 ("Exchange	
26	Act"), 15 U.S.C. §§ 78u(d)(1), 78u(d)(3)(A), 78u(e) & 78aa(a).	
27	2. Defendants have, directly or indirectly, made use of the means or instrumentalities of interstate commerce, of the mails, or of the facilities of a national	
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securities exchange in connection with the transactions, acts, practices and courses of business alleged in this complaint.

Venue is proper in this district pursuant to Section 27(a) of the Exchange 3. Act, 15 U.S.C. § 78aa(a) because certain of the transactions, acts, practices and courses of conduct constituting violations of the federal securities laws occurred within this district. In addition, venue is proper in this district because Defendants Marco A. Perez ("Marc Perez"), Pedro Perez, Jr. ("Peter Perez), and Olivia Perez Durbin all reside in this judicial district.

SUMMARY

- This civil enforcement action concerns insider trading by defendants 4. Marc Perez, Peter Perez, and Durbin in the securities of General Finance Corporation ("General Finance"). Defendants are siblings. Marc Perez, General Finance's accounting manager, learned in February 2021 that United Rentals, Inc. ("United Rentals"), the world's largest equipment rental company, was pursuing an acquisition of General Finance's storage business. Marc Perez traded on that material non-public information and tipped his siblings, knowing that they too would trade. The day after United Rentals' acquisition of General Finance became public in April 2021, General Finance's stock price increased 56% on trading volume 19,000% higher than the company's average daily volume over the prior two months. Defendants then sold, and collectively made about \$660,000 in illegal trading profits.
- By engaging in this conduct, defendants Marc Perez, Peter Perez, and 5. Durbin violated Sections 10(b) and 14(e) of the Exchange Act, 15 U.S.C. §§ 78i(b) and 78n(e), and Rules 10b-5 and 14e-3 thereunder, 17 C.F.R. §§ 240.10b-5 and 240.14e-3.
- With this complaint, the SEC seeks permanent injunctions prohibiting 6. defendants' future violations of the federal securities laws, disgorgement of defendants' ill-gotten gains together with prejudgment interest, civil penalties from defendants, and officer and director bars as to defendants Marc Perez and Peter Perez.

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DEFENDANTS AND RELATED ENTITIES

- 7. **Marco A. Perez, aka Marc Perez**, age 58, resides in Glendora, California. Marc Perez worked as General Finance's accounting manager from 2014 to October 2021. In 2014, Marc Perez acknowledged in writing that he had reviewed and would abide by General Finance's policy prohibiting insider trading and the tipping of material non-public information.
- 8. **Pedro Perez, Jr., aka Peter Perez**, age 54, resides in Pasadena, California. Peter Perez is Marc Perez's brother. Peter Perez is an executive vice president of a privately-held company.
- 9. **Olivia Perez Durbin**, age 46, resides in San Dimas, California. Durbin is Marc Perez's sister. She is a pharmaceutical sales representative.
- 10. **General Finance Corporation** was a Delaware corporation with its principal place of business in Pasadena, California. General Finance provided mobile, liquid, and pod storage space. Before being acquired by United Rentals in 2021, General Finance was an SEC-reporting public company and its stock traded on the Nasdaq Global Market under the ticker symbol GFN.
- 11. **United Rentals, Inc.**, is incorporated in Delaware and its principal place of business is Stamford, Connecticut. United Rentals is an equipment rental company. United Rentals is an SEC-reporting public company, and its stock is traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the ticker symbol URI.

THE ALLEGATIONS

A. Marc Perez Learns About the United Rentals Acquisition Proposal

- 12. From 2019 to February 2020, General Finance retained a financial advisor to approach potential suitors to evaluate market interest in acquiring the company.
- 13. United Rentals was one of the potential acquirors approached by General Finance's financial advisor.
 - 14. After receiving no acceptable offers, General Finance terminated thatCOMPLAINT3

process in February 2020.

- 15. In December 2020, however, General Finance began to receive unsolicited inquiries, including non-binding proposals to acquire the company.
- 16. Starting on February 16, 2021, General Finance's chairman of the board forwarded those communications to Marc Perez, who received emails that enclosed both the proposals and General Finance's analysis of the proposals.
- 17. On February 22, 2021, United Rentals contacted General Finance's chief executive officer and requested a conference call to discuss a potential acquisition.
- 18. Following the contact, Marc Perez who worked in General Finance's head office became aware of United Rentals' renewed interest in acquiring General Finance.
- 19. Three days later, during a February 25 conference call, General Finance encouraged United Rentals to submit an acquisition proposal no later than March 3, 2021. General Finance explained to United Rentals that its board planned to meet on March 3 to consider other acquisition proposals already received from potential suitors.
- 20. On March 2, 2021, United Rentals emailed to General Finance a non-binding proposal to acquire General Finance for \$19-20 per share, subject to satisfactory due diligence and other matters. General Finance's closing price on March 2 was \$10.63 per share.
- 21. At the end of the day, General Finance's chief executive officer emailed the United Rentals \$19-20 per share acquisition proposal to General Finance's chairman of the board, who in turn forwarded the proposal to Marc Perez that same day.
- 22. From March 2 to March 15, 2021, Marc Perez learned more non-public information about the United Rentals acquisition.
- 23. In that period, General Finance's general counsel regularly asked Marc Perez to compile financial documentation related to the United Rentals acquisition.

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24. In addition, on March 15, Marc Perez received a board package for General Finance's March 16 board of directors meeting; those materials contained United Rentals' March 14 revised acquisition proposal that suggested structuring the acquisition as a tender offer.

B. Marc Perez Trades on the United Rentals Acquisition Proposal

- In 2014, Marc Perez signed an acknowledgment that he had reviewed 25. and would abide by General Finance's policy prohibiting insider trading or tipping.
- Over the years of Marc Perez's employment at General Finance, he was 26. also told by the company's general counsel that he would need to pre-clear all of his trades in the company's stock.
- From March 2 to March 3, 2021, Marc Perez purchased 31,250 shares of 27. General Finance worth approximately \$354,000 using his brokerage account.
- 28. Prior to these trades, Marc Perez's shares in General Finance accounted for about 34% of his overall stock portfolio. Following these trades, Marc Perez's shares in General Finance accounted for 99.7% of his overall stock portfolio.
- 29. In addition, on March 3 and March 22, 2021, Marc Perez transferred about \$85,000 from his bank account to a brokerage account opened in the name of his mother.
 - 30. Marc Perez had authority to trade with his mother's brokerage account.
- From March 8 to March 23, 2021, Marc Perez purchased another 35,000 31. shares of General Finance worth approximately \$421,000 using his mother's brokerage account. Marc Perez's mother had no knowledge of these trades.

C. Marc Perez Tips Peter Perez and Durbin, Who Also Trade

- At family gatherings during the relevant period, Marc Perez told his 32. brother, Peter Perez, and his sister, Durbin, that he believed that General Finance was going to be taken over and that he had more confidence that it would occur than prior takeover attempts.
 - At family gatherings during the relevant period, Marc Perez told his 33. **COMPLAINT** 5

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brother, Peter Perez, and his sister, Durbin, that he had purchased General Finance stock and that they should too.

34. At family gatherings during the relevant period, Marc Perez told his brother, Peter Perez, that he was "all in" on General Finance stock.

1. Peter Perez trades on the tip from his brother

- From March 29 to April 14, 2021, Peter Perez purchased approximately 35. 17,500 shares of General Finance worth approximately \$215,000 in his IRA account and a joint brokerage account with his wife.
- To pay for the purchases of General Finance stock by his IRA account, 36. Peter Perez sold all of his existing stake in a managed mutual fund tailored for investors retiring at age 65.
- To pay for the purchases of General Finance stock by his joint brokerage 37. account with his wife, Peter Perez transferred about \$137,000 in cash from his bank account.

2. Durbin trades on the tip from her brother

- 38. After being tipped by her brother, Marc Perez, Durbin opened a new brokerage account, and transferred \$65,000 into that new trading account.
- 39. From April 2 to April 6, 2021, Durbin used all of those funds to purchase about 5,100 shares of General Finance worth approximately \$62,000.

General Finance Publicly Announces the Acquisition and Defendants Sell D. at a Profit

- After market close on April 15, 2021, General Finance and United 40. Rentals publicly announced that United Rentals would acquire General Finance through a cash tender offer for \$19 per share of General Finance stock, followed by a merger of General Finance with a United Rentals acquisition entity.
- Following the announcement, General Finance's stock price increased 41. \$6.78 per share from \$12.17 to \$18.95 per share.
 - On April 16, 2021, one day after the public announcement of the 42. **COMPLAINT** 6

acquisition, Peter Perez sold about 15,500 shares of General Finance for approximately \$333,000.

- 43. From April 20 to April 23, 2021, Marc Perez sold about 66,250 shares of General Finance for approximately \$1.3 million.
- 44. On May 6, 2021, Durbin tendered her General Finance shares as part of the acquisition for approximately \$97,000.
- 45. Defendants' profits from all of the trading alleged above totaled to about \$660,000.

E. The United Rentals Acquisition Proposal Was Material Non-Public Information

- 46. The information that Marc Perez learned, as alleged above, about United Rentals' acquisition of General Finance, was material and non-public.
- 47. The discussions between General Finance and United Rentals alleged above were non-public and subject to a confidentiality agreement between the two companies.
- 48. General Finance's stock price increased 56% on the public announcement of the acquisition.
- 49. On the first trading day following the announcement, trading volume in General Finance stock spiked from an average daily trading volume in the prior two months of about 26,000 shares, to about 5 million shares.
- 50. A reasonable investor would have viewed the information that Marc Perez learned about United Rentals' acquisition of General Finance as significantly altering the total mix of information available to investors.

F. Marc Perez Breached His Fiduciary Duty To General Finance

- 51. As General Finance's accounting manager, Marc Perez was a company insider. He had a duty under the terms of General Finance's insider trading policy to maintain the company's confidential information and not use if for his own benefit.
 - 52. Marc Perez breached the fiduciary duties of trust and confidence he

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owed to General Finance by trading on the material non-public information he obtained concerning the potential acquisition of General Finance by United Rentals.

- Further, when tipping his siblings Peter Perez and Durbin material non-53. public information about United Rentals' plans to acquire General Finance, Marc Perez breached the fiduciary duties of trust and confidence he owed to General Finance, and disclosed that information for a personal benefit by giving valuable insider information to his siblings.
- G. Peter Perez and Durbin Knew or Should Have Known That Marc Perez **Breached His Fiduciary Duty When Tipping Them**

1. **Peter Perez**

- 54. Peter Perez knew that Marc Perez worked for General Finance, that Marc Perez had access to information known only by those who worked at the company, and that his brother believed that General Finance's stock price would increase after its acquisition by United Rentals became public.
- Peter Perez knew or should have known that his brother was tipping him 55. material non-public information so that he could profit on information that the market did not yet have.
- When he traded in the securities of General Finance, Peter Perez knew or 56. should have known that his brother, Marc Perez, had tipped him material non-public information about General Finance with the intent to benefit Peter Perez.
- 57. When he traded in the securities of General Finance, Peter Perez knew or should have known that the material non-public information about General Finance that his brother, Marc Perez, had tipped him was disclosed or misappropriated by Marc Perez in breach of his fiduciary duty, or similar relationship of trust and confidence, to his employer, General Finance.

2. Durbin

Durbin knew that Marc Perez worked for General Finance, that Marc 58. Perez had access to information known only by those who worked at the company,

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and that her brother believed that General Finance's stock price would increase after its acquisition by United Rentals became public.

- 59. Durbin knew or should have known that her brother was tipping her material non-public information so that she could profit on information that the market did not yet have.
- 60. When she traded in the securities of General Finance, Durbin knew or should have known that her brother, Marc Perez, had tipped her material non-public information about General Finance with the intent to benefit Durbin.
- 61. When she traded in the securities of General Finance, Durbin knew or should have known that the material non-public information about General Finance that her brother, Marc Perez, had tipped her was disclosed or misappropriated by Marc Perez in breach of his fiduciary duty, or similar relationship of trust and confidence, to his employer, General Finance.

H. Defendants Acted with Scienter

- 62. Marc Perez acted with scienter. He had acknowledged receipt of General Finance's policy prohibiting insider trading and tipping. General Finance's general counsel had repeatedly told Marc Perez that he needed to pre-clear his trades, but for the trading alleged above, Marc Perez did not seek pre-clearance. In March 2021, Marc Perez continued buying shares of General Finance as he came to learn even more material non-public information demonstrating that the acquisition was ever more likely. Finally, Marc Perez attempted to hide the majority of his trades in General Finance by trading through a brokerage account in the name of his mother, without her knowledge.
- 63. Peter Perez knew or was reckless in not knowing that he was trading on material non-public information. Peter Perez knew that Marc Perez had gone "all in" with his General Finance stock purchases. He then liquidated his retirement holdings and transferred additional funds into another brokerage account in order to buy General Finance shares.

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Durbin knew or was reckless in not knowing that she was trading on 64. material non-public information. After being tipped by her brother, Marc Perez, she opened a new brokerage account and funded it for the sole purpose of buying General Finance stock. When Durbin could not immediately access all of the funds that she had transferred into that brokerage account, she complained to the brokerage about not being able to place trades and communicated that she urgently wanted to trade in General Finance and wanted to buy its stock before the price increased any further.

- **Defendants Traded in General Finance Securities After Substantial Steps** I. Had Been Taken Towards a Tender Offer While in Possession of MNPI
- Defendants' trading in the securities of General Finance alleged above 65. occurred after United Rentals took substantial steps towards a tender offer.
- When defendants began to purchase General Finance shares, United 66. Rentals and General Finance had already entered into a confidentiality agreement concerning their merger discussions.
- When defendants began to purchase General Finance shares, United Rentals and General Finance senior management had already discussed a possible acquisition.
- 68. When defendants began to purchase General Finance shares, United Rentals had already conducted preliminary due diligence of General Finance.
- Marc Perez knew that he was trading on information he had directly 69. obtained as an insider of the stock's issuer, General Finance.
- Peter Perez knew or should have known that the information he was 70. trading on – tipped to him by his brother Marc Perez, General Finance's accounting manager – was acquired directly or indirectly from an insider of the stock's issuer, General Finance.
- Durbin knew or should have known that the information she was trading 71. on – tipped to her by her brother Marc Perez, General Finance's accounting manager - was acquired directly or indirectly from an insider of the stock's issuer, General

Finance.

FIRST CLAIM FOR RELIEF

Fraud in Connection With the Purchase Or Sale Of Securities Violations of Section 10(b) of the Exchange Act and Rule 10b-5 Thereunder (Against All Defendants)

- 72. The SEC realleges and incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 71 above.
- 73. Marc Perez knew, or was reckless in not knowing, that the information he possessed concerning the potential acquisition of General Finance was material non-public information.
- 74. Marc Perez also knew, or was reckless in not knowing, that he owed General Finance a duty of trust or confidence to keep the material, non-public information he possessed concerning the potential acquisition of General Finance confidential.
- 75. By disclosing that material, non-public information concerning General Finance's securities to his siblings, Peter Perez and Durbin, Marc Perez misappropriated confidential information belonging to General Finance for securities trading purposes, in breach of a duty of trust or confidence he owed to General Finance.
- 76. Marc Perez tipped Peter Perez and Durbin with material non-public information concerning the potential acquisition of General Finance with the intent to benefit his siblings, Peter Perez and Durbin.
- 77. Marc Perez knew or recklessly disregarded that Peter Perez and Durbin would trade on the basis of that material non-public information.
- 78. Marc Perez, directly or indirectly, personally benefited from disclosing that material, non-public information to his siblings because giving a gift of trading information is the same as trading by the tipper followed by a gift of proceeds.
 - 79. At the time he traded in the securities of General Finance, Peter Perez

knew or was reckless in not knowing that he was in possession of material non-public information concerning General Finance's securities.

- 80. At the time he traded in the securities of General Finance, Peter Perez knew or should have known that the material, non-public information about General Finance that Marc Perez had disclosed to him was disclosed or misappropriated by Marc Perez in breach of a fiduciary duty, or similar relationship of trust and confidence.
- 81. At the time he traded in the securities of General Finance, Peter Perez knew or should have known that Marc Perez had tipped him material non-public information about General Finance with the intent to benefit Peter Perez.
- 82. At the time she traded in the securities of General Finance, Durbin knew or was reckless in not knowing that she was in possession of material non-public information concerning General Finance's securities.
- 83. At the time she traded in the securities of General Finance, Durbin knew or should have known that the material, non-public information about General Finance that Marc Perez had disclosed to her was disclosed or misappropriated by Marc Perez in breach of a fiduciary duty, or similar relationship of trust and confidence.
- 84. At the time she traded in the securities of General Finance, Durbin knew or should have known that Marc Perez had tipped her material non-public information about General Finance with the intent to benefit Durbin.
- 85. By engaging in the conduct described above, defendants Marc Perez, Peter Perez, and Durbin, directly or indirectly, in connection with the purchase or sale of securities, by use of the means or instrumentalities of interstate commerce, or the mails, or the facilities of a national securities exchange: (a) employed devices, schemes or artifices to defraud; (b) made untrue statements of material facts or omitted to state material facts necessary in order to make the statements made, in light of the circumstances under which they were made, not misleading; and/or

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(c) engaged in acts, practices, or courses of business which operated or would operate as a fraud or deceit upon any person in connection with the purchase or sale of any security.

By engaging in the foregoing conduct, defendants Marc Perez, Peter 86. Perez, and Durbin violated, and unless enjoined will continue to violate, Section 10(b) of the Exchange Act, 15 U.S.C. § 78j(b), and Rule 10b-5 thereunder, 17 C.F.R. § 240.10b-5.

SECOND CLAIM FOR RELIEF

Violations of Section 14(e) of the Exchange Act and Rule 14e-3 Thereunder (Against All Defendants)

- The SEC realleges and incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 87. 71 above.
- 88. By the time of defendants' trading in General Finance's securities in March and April 2021, substantial steps had been taken by United Rentals to complete a tender offer to acquire General Finance's securities.
- 89. Marc Perez was in possession of material information relating to such tender offer which information he knew or had reason to know was non-public and which he knew or had reason to know he had acquired, directly or indirectly, from the offering person, and/or its officers, directors, partners, employees, or other persons acting on behalf of the offering person. Marc Perez was required to refrain from communicating that information to third-parties, including Peter Perez and Durbin, under circumstances in which it was reasonably foreseeable that such communications were likely to result in the trading of General Finance's securities.
- By communicating that material non-public information concerning such 90. tender offer to Peter Perez and Durbin, for the purpose of benefiting them and with the expectation that they would trade in General Finance's securities on the basis of that information, Marc Perez caused Peter Perez and Durbin to purchase and sell General Finance's securities.

- 91. At the time they traded in General Finance's securities, defendants Marc Perez, Peter Perez, and Durbin were in possession of material information regarding such tender offer that they knew or had reason to know was non-public and had been acquired, directly or indirectly, by Marc Perez, an insider of General Finance, from the issuer.
- 92. By engaging in the foregoing conduct, defendants Marc Perez, Peter Perez, and Durbin violated, and unless enjoined will continue to violate, Section 14(e) of the Exchange Act, 15 U.S.C. § 78n(e), and Rule 14e-3 thereunder, 17 C.F.R. § 240.14e-3.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, the SEC respectfully requests that the Court:

I.

Issue findings of fact and conclusions of law that Defendants Marc Perez, Peter Perez, and Durbin committed the alleged violations.

II.

Issue judgments, in forms consistent with Rule 65(d) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, permanently enjoining Defendants Marc Perez, Peter Perez, and Durbin, and their officers, agents, servants, employees and attorneys, and those persons in active concert or participation with any of them, who receive actual notice of the judgment by personal service or otherwise, and each of them, from violating Section 10(b) of the Exchange Act [15 U.S.C. §§ 78j(b)] and Rule 10b-5 thereunder [17 C.F.R. § 240.10b-5] and Section 14(e) of Exchange Act [15 U.S.C. § 78n(e)] and Rule 14e-3 thereunder [17 C.F.R. § 240.14e-3].

III.

Issue a judgment, in a form consistent with Rule 65(d) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and pursuant to Section 21(d)(2) of the Exchange Act [15 U.S.C. § 78u(d)(2) and/or Section 20(e) of the Securities Act [15 U.S.C. § 77t(e)], permanently enjoining Defendants Marc Perez and Peter Perez from acting as an officer or director

of any issuer that has a class of securities registered pursuant to Section 12 of the 1 Exchange Act [15 U.S.C. § 781] or that is required to file reports pursuant to Section 2 15(d) of the Exchange Act [15 U.S.C. § 78o(d)]. 3 IV. 4 5 Order Defendants Marc Perez, Peter Perez, and Durbin to disgorge all funds received from their illegal conduct, together with prejudgment interest thereon, 6 pursuant to Exchange Act Sections 21(d)(3), 21(d)(5) and 21(d)(7) [15 U.S.C. §§ 7 78u(d)(5) and 78u(d)(7)]. 8 9 V. Order Defendants Marc Perez, Peter Perez, and Durbin to pay civil penalties 10 under Section 21A of the Exchange Act [15 U.S.C. § 78u-1]. 11 12 VI. 13 Retain jurisdiction of this action in accordance with the principles of equity and the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure in order to implement and carry out the terms of 14 all orders and decrees that may be entered, or to entertain any suitable application or 15 motion for additional relief within the jurisdiction of this Court. 16 17 VII. Grant such other and further relief as this Court may determine to be just and 18 19 necessary. 20 Dated: September 27, 2023 21 /s/ Gary Y. Leung GARY Y. LEUNG 22 ROBERTO A. TERCERO 23 Attorneys for Plaintiff Securities and Exchange Commission 24 25 26 27 28