

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Before the
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934
Release No. 73123 / September 16, 2014

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEEDING
File No. 3-16127

In the Matter of

JAMES C. PARSONS

Respondent.

**ORDER INSTITUTING CEASE-AND-
DESIST PROCEEDINGS PURSUANT TO
SECTION 21C OF THE SECURITIES
EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934, MAKING
FINDINGS, AND IMPOSING A CEASE-
AND-DESIST ORDER AND CIVIL
PENALTY**

I.

The Securities and Exchange Commission (“Commission”) deems it appropriate that cease-and-desist proceedings be, and hereby are, instituted pursuant to Section 21C of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (“Exchange Act”), against James C. Parsons (“Parsons” or “Respondent”).

II.

In anticipation of the institution of these proceedings, Respondent has submitted an Offer of Settlement (the “Offer”) which the Commission has determined to accept. Solely for the purpose of these proceedings and any other proceedings brought by or on behalf of the Commission, or to which the Commission is a party, and without admitting or denying the findings herein, except as to the Commission’s jurisdiction over it and the subject matter of these proceedings, which are admitted, Respondent consents to the entry of this Order Instituting Cease-and-Desist Proceedings Pursuant to Section 21C of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, Making Findings, and Imposing a Cease-and-Desist Order and Civil Penalty (“Order”), as set forth below.

III.

On the basis of this Order and Respondent's Offer, the Commission finds¹ that:

Summary

1. These proceedings arise out of a violation of Rule 105 of Regulation M of the Exchange Act by James C. Parsons, a resident of New York. Rule 105 prohibits selling short an equity security that is the subject of certain public offerings and purchasing the offered security from an underwriter or broker or dealer participating in the offering, if such short sale was effected during the restricted period as defined therein.

2. In September 2013, Parsons bought offering shares from an underwriter or broker or dealer participating in a follow-on public offering after having sold short the same security during the Rule 105 restricted period. This violation resulted in profits of \$135,531.

Respondent

3. James C. Parsons, age 40, resides in New York, New York. During all relevant times, Parsons engaged in trading for the benefit of his personal trading accounts.

Legal Framework

4. Rule 105 makes it unlawful for a person to purchase equity securities in certain public offerings from an underwriter, broker, or dealer participating in the offering if that person sold short the security that is the subject of the offering during the restricted period defined in the rule, absent an exception. 17 C.F.R. § 242.105; see Short Selling in Connection with a Public Offering, Rel. No. 34-56206, 72 Fed. Reg. 45094 (Aug. 10, 2007) (effective Oct. 9, 2007). The Rule 105 restricted period is the shorter of the period: (1) beginning five business days before the pricing of the offered securities and ending with such pricing; or (2) beginning with the initial filing of a registration statement or notification on Form 1-A or Form 1-E and ending with the pricing. 17 C.F.R. § 242.105(a)(1) and (a)(2).

5. The Commission adopted Rule 105 "to foster secondary and follow-on offering prices that are determined by independent market dynamics and not by potentially manipulative activity." 72 Fed. Reg. 45094. Rule 105 is prophylactic and prohibits the conduct irrespective of the short seller's intent in effecting the short sale. Id.

Respondent's Violation of Rule 105 of Regulation M

6. On September 10, 2013, Parsons sold short 2,673 shares of Virtus Investment Partners, Inc. ("VRTS") during the restricted period at a price of \$168.8848 per share. On

¹ The findings herein are made pursuant to Respondent's Offer of Settlement and are not binding on any other person or entity in this or any other proceeding.

September 11, 2013, VRTS priced a follow-on offering of its common stock at \$155 per share. Parsons received an allocation of 20,000 shares in that offering. The difference between Respondent's proceeds received from the restricted period short sales of VRTS shares and the price paid for the 2,673 shares received in the offering was \$37,114.07. Respondent also improperly obtained a benefit of \$98,417.36 by selling the remaining 17,327 shares at a premium compared to VRTS's offering price.² Thus, Parsons' participation in the VRTS offering resulted in total profits of \$135,531.

7. In total, Parsons' violation of Rule 105 resulted in profits of \$135,531.

Violation

8. As a result of the conduct described above, Parsons violated Rule 105 of Regulation M under the Exchange Act.

Parsons' Remedial Efforts & Cooperation

9. In determining to accept the Offer, the Commission considered remedial acts promptly undertaken by Respondent and cooperation afforded to Commission staff.

IV.

In view of the foregoing, the Commission deems it appropriate to impose the sanctions agreed to in Respondent Parsons' Offer.

Accordingly, it is hereby ORDERED that:

A. Pursuant to Section 21C of the Exchange Act, Respondent Parsons cease and desist from committing or causing any violations and any future violations of Rule 105 of Regulation M of the Exchange Act;

B. Parsons shall within fourteen (14) days of the entry of this Order, pay disgorgement of \$135,531, prejudgment interest of \$3,063.90, and a civil money penalty in the amount of \$67,765.72 (for a total of \$206,360.62) to the United States Treasury. If timely payment is not made on the disgorgement amount, additional interest shall accrue pursuant to SEC Rule of Practice 600. If timely payment is not made on the civil money penalty, additional interest shall accrue pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 3717. Payments must be made in one of the following ways:

(1) Respondent may transmit payment electronically to the Commission, which will provide detailed ACH transfer/Fedwire instructions upon request;³

² Parsons sold the overage shares he purchased in the offering on September 16, 2013, two business days after the offering priced after the close on September 11, 2013. He sold all of the shares at \$160.68 per share.

³ The minimum threshold for transmission of payment electronically is \$1,000,000. For amounts below the threshold, respondents must make payments pursuant to options (2) or (3) above.

- (2) Respondent may make direct payment from a bank account via Pay.gov through the SEC website at <http://www.sec.gov/about/offices/ofm.htm>; or
- (3) Respondent may pay by certified check, bank cashier's check, or United States postal money order, made payable to the Securities and Exchange Commission and hand-delivered or mailed to:

Enterprise Services Center
Accounts Receivable Branch
HQ Bldg., Room 181, AMZ-341
6500 South MacArthur Boulevard
Oklahoma City, OK 73169

Payments by check or money order must be accompanied by a cover letter identifying Parsons as a Respondent in these proceedings, and the file number of these proceedings; a copy of the cover letter and check or money order must be sent to Gerald W. Hodgkins, Associate Director, Division of Enforcement, Securities and Exchange Commission, 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, DC 20549.

By the Commission.

Jill M. Peterson
Assistant Secretary