

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Before the
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934
Release No. 88061 / January 28, 2020

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEEDING
File No. 3-19677

In the Matter of

Richard Fritts,

Respondent.

ORDER INSTITUTING
ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEEDINGS
PURSUANT TO SECTION 15(b) OF THE
SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934,
MAKING FINDINGS, AND IMPOSING
REMEDIAL SANCTIONS

I.

The Securities and Exchange Commission (“Commission”) deems it appropriate and in the public interest that public administrative proceedings be, and hereby are, instituted pursuant to Section 15(b) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (“Exchange Act”) against Richard Fritts (“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 him and the subject matter of these proceedings and the findings contained in paragraph III.2 below, which are admitted, Respondent consents to the entry of this Order Instituting Administrative Proceedings Pursuant to Section 15(b) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, Making Findings, and Imposing Remedial Sanctions (“Order”), as set forth below.

III.

On the basis of this Order and Respondent’s Offer, the Commission finds that:

1. At all relevant times, Richard Fritts, 62, was a resident of Knoxville, Tennessee. Fritts, through Fritts Financial, LLC (“Fritts Financial”), an entity he owned and controlled, acted as an unregistered broker or dealer by selling securities of Woodbridge Group of Companies, Inc., (“Woodbridge”) through Fritts Financial. At all relevant times, neither Fritts nor Fritts Financial were registered as or associated with a registered broker-dealer.

2. On January 13, 2020, a judgment was entered by consent against Fritts, permanently enjoining him from future violations of Sections 5(a) and 5(c) of the Securities Act of 1933 and Section 15(a)(1) of the Exchange Act, in the civil action entitled *Securities and Exchange Commission v. Robert “Lute” Davis et al.*, Civil Action Number 2:18-cv-10481-FMO-JC, in the United States District Court for the Central District of California.

3. The Commission’s first amended complaint alleged that, among other things, between from at least July 2013 to November 2017, Fritts, through Fritts Financial, offered and sold Woodbridge securities. None of Woodbridge’s securities offerings were registered with the Commission. Fritts sold investors two primary types of securities: (1) a twelve-to-eighteen month term promissory note bearing 5% -8% interest that Woodbridge described as First Position Commercial Mortgages (“FPCM”), and (2) seven different private placement fund offerings with five-year terms (“Fund Offerings”). For the FPCMs, Fritts, through Fritts Financial, received a transaction based commission from Woodbridge equivalent to the difference of the 9% wholesale annual interest rate Woodbridge offered to Fritts Financial and Fritts and the 5% to 8% annual interest Fritts Financial and Fritts offered to investors. For the Fund Offerings, Fritts, through Fritts Financial, received a 5% sales commission that Woodbridge purposefully mischaracterized as a “marketing bonus,” to avoid the appearance of paying transaction based commissions. Fritts, through Fritts Financial, received approximately \$842,000 in transaction based commissions from Woodbridge earned as a result of raising approximately \$13.8 million through the sale of Woodbridge securities to investors.

IV.

In view of the foregoing, the Commission deems it appropriate and in the public interest to impose the sanctions agreed to in Respondent Fritts’s Offer.

Accordingly, it is hereby ORDERED pursuant to Section 15(b)(6) of the Exchange Act, that Respondent Fritts be, and hereby is barred from association with any broker, dealer, investment adviser, municipal securities dealer, municipal advisor, transfer agent, or nationally recognized statistical rating organization; and

Pursuant to Section 15(b)(6) of the Exchange Act Respondent Fritts be, and hereby is barred from participating in any offering of a penny stock, including: acting as a promoter, finder, consultant, agent or other person who engages in activities with a broker, dealer or issuer for purposes of the issuance or trading in any penny stock, or inducing or attempting to induce the purchase or sale of any penny stock.

Any reapplication for association by the Respondent will be subject to the applicable laws and regulations governing the reentry process, and reentry may be conditioned upon a number of factors, including, but not limited to, compliance with the Commission's order and payment of any or all of the following: (a) any disgorgement or civil penalties ordered by a Court against the Respondent in any action brought by the Commission; (b) any disgorgement amounts ordered against the Respondent for which the Commission waived payment; (c) any arbitration award related to the conduct that served as the basis for the Commission order; (d) any self-regulatory organization arbitration award to a customer, whether or not related to the conduct that served as the basis for the Commission order; and (e) any restitution order by a self-regulatory organization, whether or not related to the conduct that served as the basis for the Commission order.

For the Commission, by its Secretary, pursuant to delegated authority.

Vanessa A. Countryman
Secretary