1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	JOHN M. MCCOY, III, Cal. Bar No. 166. E-mail: mccoyj@sec.gov LORRAINE B. ECHAVARRIA, Cal. Bar E-mail: echavarrial@sec.gov CAROL LALLY, Cal. Bar No. 226392 E-mail: lallyc@sec.gov Attorneys for Plaintiff Securities and Exchange Commission Rosalind R. Tyson, Regional Director Michele Wein Layne, Associate Regional 5670 Wilshire Boulevard, 11th Floor Los Angeles, California 90036-3648 Telephone: (323) 965-3998 Facsimile: (323) 965-3908		2008 OCT -7 AM IO: 10 CLERK WIT DISTRICT COURT CENTRAL SHAPE SANCLES	Service of the servic
9				
10	UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT			
11	CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA			
12	SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE	Case No. CV08-0	6574 DSF	(MANX)
13	COMMISSION, Plaintiff,	COMPLAINT		
14	vs.			· ·
15				
16	LION GATE CAPITAL, INC., and KENNETH RICKEL,			
17	Defendants.	,		
18				
19				
20				
21				
22	v			
23				

SUMMARY

- 1. This matter involves multiple violations of Rule 105 of Regulation M under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 ("Exchange Act") by Lion Gate Capital, Inc. ("Lion Gate") and its principal, Kenneth Rickel ("Rickel"), who is Lion Gate's beneficiary (collectively, the "Defendants"). From January 2005 through September 2006, Defendants violated Rule 105 when they used shares purchased in at least fourteen registered public offerings to cover short sales that occurred during the five business days before the pricing of those offerings (the "restricted period"). Defendants realized profits of at least \$207,291 from this illegal trading.
- 2. During the time of the conduct alleged in this Complaint, Rule 105 prohibited covering a short sale with securities purchased in a registered offering if the short sale occurred during the restricted period. A "short sale" is any sale of a security that the seller does not own, or any sale that is consummated by the delivery of a security by or for the seller. *See* 17 C.F.R. § 240.3b-3 (now Rule 200(a) of Regulation SHO, 17 C.F.R. § 242.200(a)).
- 3. The purpose of Rule 105 is to prevent manipulative trading by short sellers prior to registered public offerings, and to promote offering prices that are based upon open market prices, determined by supply and demand, rather than by artificial forces. Short sellers who violate the rule's prohibitions can profit unfairly because they largely avoid exposure to market risk by using shares purchased at a discount in a registered offering to cover restricted period short sales.
- 4. At all relevant times, Rickel made all trading and investment decisions on behalf of Lion Gate. Rickel directed and authorized the trading of the securities that are at issue in this Complaint, including the sham transactions that obfuscated the violations.
- 5. By engaging in the conduct described in this Complaint, Defendants have violated, and unless enjoined will continue to violate, Rule 105 of Regulation

/////

M under the Exchange Act, 17 C.F.R. § 242.105 (effective until Oct. 8, 2007).

6. By this Complaint, the U.S. Securities & Exchange Commission ("Commission") seeks an order: (1) permanently enjoining the Defendants from future violations of Rule 105, (2) requiring Lion Gate and Rickel to disgorge the ill-gotten gains and pay prejudgment interest, (3) requiring the Defendants to pay civil monetary penalties, and (4) providing other appropriate relief.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 7. This Court has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to Sections 21(d), 21(e), and 27 of the Exchange Act, 15 U.S.C. §§ 78u(d), 78u(e) and 78aa. Defendants, directly or indirectly, singly or in concert, made use of the means or instrumentalities of interstate commerce, of the mails, or of a facility of a national securities exchange in connection with the transactions, acts, practices, and courses of business alleged in this Complaint.
- 8. Venue is proper in this district pursuant to Section 27 of the Exchange Act, 15 U.S.C. § 78aa, because Lion Gate has its principal place of business within this district, Rickel resided within this district during the relevant time period, and certain of the transactions, acts, practices, and courses of conduct constituting violations of the laws alleged in this Complaint occurred within this district.

DEFENDANTS

- 9. Lion Gate Capital, Inc. is a California corporation with its principal place of business in Beverly Hills, California. Lion Gate engages in the business of actively trading various securities.
- 10. Kenneth Rickel is a resident of Los Angeles, California. Rickel is the president, sole owner and sole employee of Lion Gate, and its only trader. Rickel makes all investment decisions for Lion Gate and has sole discretion over trading orders. Rickel directed and authorized the trading of the securities described in this Complaint.

FACTS

A. Rule 105 Prohibited Both Direct Covering of Restricted Period Short Sales and Sham Transactions

- 11. At all relevant times, Rule 105 provided, in pertinent part: "[i]n connection with an offering of securities for cash pursuant to a registration statement or a notification on Form 1-A... filed under the Securities Act, it shall be unlawful for any person to cover a short sale with offering securities purchased from an underwriter or broker or dealer participating in the offering, if such short sale occurred during [t]he period beginning five business days before the pricing of the offered securities and ending with such pricing" 17 C.F.R. § 242.105 (effective until Oct. 8, 2007). Rule 105 is prophylactic, and its prohibitions apply regardless of the short seller's intent in effecting the short sales.
- 12. At the time of the conduct alleged in this Complaint, Rule 105 prohibited traders from directly covering restricted period short sales with shares obtained in the follow-on offering. Nor could traders avoid liability under Rule 105 by entering into "sham transactions" that gave the appearance that restricted period short sales were covered using shares purchased in the open market, rather than offering shares.
- 13. In a sham transaction, the trader makes short sales within the restricted period and obtains shares in the follow-on offering, but may not use the offering shares directly to cover his short sales. Rather, the trader might sell the offering shares into the open market and, contemporaneously or nearly contemporaneously, purchase shares on the open market to cover the pre-pricing short sales. If those post-offering transactions have no legitimate economic purpose or substance, result in no genuine change in beneficial ownership, and/or incur little to no market risk, those transactions may be sham transactions that violate Rule 105.
 - 14. Frequently, traders engaging in sham transactions make use of a

trading tactic called a "boxed position" to preserve the ability to profit at the time of the follow-on offerings. That is, the trader simultaneously maintains a short position (established during the Rule 105 restricted period) and a long position (established by purchasing in the follow-on offering). Ultimately, the trader "flattens the box" by liquidating or cancelling out both the long and the short positions. It is at this point that the trader realizes his profit, which he locked in at the time he established a boxed position.

15. The Commission amended Rule 105 effective October 9, 2007. The amended rule generally prohibits purchasing a security in a registered offering if the buyer has a restricted period short position in that security. The Defendants' conduct alleged in this Complaint would violate the amended Rule 105 as well.

B. Lion Gate and Rickel Traded in Violation of Rule 105

- 16. Lion Gate and Rickel violated Rule 105 by making restricted period short sales in the shares of at least fourteen issuers, purchasing shares in those issuers' follow-on offerings, using the offering shares to cover the short sales, and engaging in sham transactions designed to obfuscated the violations of Rule 105.
- 17. From January 2005 through September 2006, Lion Gate made short sales of the shares of at least the following fourteen issuers: TC Pipelines, LP (TCLP), Minrad International, Inc. (BUF), IPC Holdings, Ltd. (IPCR), Axsys Technologies, Inc. (AXYS), Randgold Resources, Inc. (GOLD), Fiberstars, Inc. (FBST), Pharmaxis, Ltd. (PXSL), Lifetime Brands, Inc. (LCUT), American Capital Strategies, Ltd. (ACAS), Axesstel, Inc. (AFT), TGC Industries, Inc. (TGE), Brigham Exploration Co. (BEXP), Gasco Energy (GSX), and Extra Storage Space, Inc. (EXR). Each of these issuers' shares was traded, at the relevant times, on the American Stock Exchange, New York Stock Exchange, or NASDAQ stock exchange.
- 18. These short sales occurred during the restricted period prior to the pricing of registered public offerings of the shares of those fourteen issuers.

- 19. Lion Gate subsequently received allocations of shares, and purchased shares, from underwriters, brokers, or dealers participating in those registered public offerings.
- 20. Lion Gate then used the offering shares to cover the short sales. Lion Gate engaged in sham transactions that obfuscated its violations of Rule 105.
- 21. Lion Gate and Rickel used two types of sham transactions to obfuscate the Rule 105 violations: (1) cross trades; and (2) contemporaneous open market sales and purchases.
- 22. In total, Lion Gate and Rickel's illegal trading earned them profits of at least \$207,291.
- 23. Rickel made every trading decision and placed every one of Lion Gate's violative trades described herein.

C. Lion Gate and Rickel Violated Rule 105 Through Cross Trading

- 24. On at least eight occasions, Lion Gate violated Rule 105 while engaging in sham transactions that involved cross trading. On those occasions, Lion Gate sold short during the restricted period and subsequently purchased shares in the offerings, thereby establishing a boxed position, or simultaneous long and short positions in shares of the same issuers. Lion Gate then bought and sold post-pricing shares of the same issuers, purportedly on the open market. Lion Gate's records reflected that the "open market" purchases were used to cover its restricted period short sales and the "open market" sales were of the shares acquired during the offerings, thereby "flattening" the boxed position.
- 25. These post-pricing sales and purchases did not occur on the open market, however. Rather, Lion Gate placed orders to sell and purchase the post-pricing shares through the same broker and directed the broker to mark them as "cross trades." A cross trade occurs when a trader buys and sells the same shares to itself. Lion Gate's cross trades were sham transactions. Lion Gate flattened its boxed positions by using the shares it purchased in the offerings to cover all or part

of its restricted period short sales. These cross trade sham transactions occurred in shares of the following issuers: TC Pipelines, LP (TCLP), Minrad International, Inc. (BUF), IPC Holdings, Ltd. (IPCR), Axsys Technologies, Inc. (AXYS), Randgold Resources, Inc. (GOLD), Fiberstars, Inc. (FBST), Pharmaxis, Ltd. (PXSL), and Lifetime Brands, Inc. (LCUT).

- 26. TC Pipelines, LP (TCLP). On March 18, 2005, Lion Gate purchased 2,200 shares of TCLP at \$37.04 in a registered offering. During the restricted period prior to the pricing of this offering, Lion Gate had sold short 5,125 shares of TCLP at an average of \$37.54 per share. Lion Gate covered a portion of its restricted period short sales with the 2,200 shares purchased in the offering. Lion Gate realized a profit of approximately \$1,096 from its illicit trading. After the pricing of the offering, Lion Gate also placed a cross trade order to buy and sell 5,125 shares of TCLP. The cross trade was a sham transaction that created the false appearance that Lion Gate went to the open market to purchase shares to cover all of its restricted period short sales.
- 27. Axsys Technologies (AXYS). On September 22, 2005, Lion Gate purchased 25,000 shares of AXYS at \$18.00 in a registered offering. During the restricted period prior to the pricing of this offering, Lion Gate had sold short 8,334 shares of AXYS at an average of \$18.21 per share. Lion Gate covered its restricted period short sales with 8,334 of the shares purchased in the offering. Lion Gate realized a profit of approximately \$1,767 from its illicit trading. After the pricing of the offering, Lion Gate also placed a cross trade order to buy and sell 8,334 shares of AXYS. The cross trade was a sham transaction that created the false appearance that Lion Gate went to the open market to purchase shares to cover its restricted period short sales.
- 28. <u>IPC Holdings, Ltd. (IPCR)</u>. On November 1, 2005, Lion Gate purchased 13,500 shares of IPCR at \$26.25 in a registered offering. During the restricted period prior to the pricing of this offering, Lion Gate had sold short

/////

15,000 shares of IPCR at an average of \$26.26 per share. Lion Gate covered a portion of its restricted period short sales with the 13,500 shares purchased in the offering. Lion Gate realized a profit of approximately \$1,650 from its illicit trading. After the pricing of the offering, Lion Gate also placed a cross trade order to buy and sell 15,000 shares of IPCR. The cross trade was a sham transaction that created the false appearance that Lion Gate went to the open market to purchase shares to cover all of its restricted period short sales.

- 29. Randgold Resources, Inc. (GOLD). On November 1, 2005, Lion Gate purchased 45,000 shares of GOLD at \$13.50 in a registered offering. During the restricted period prior to the pricing of this offering, Lion Gate had sold short 7,500 shares of GOLD at an average of \$15.00 per share. Lion Gate covered its restricted period short sales with 7,500 of the shares purchased in the offering. Lion Gate realized a profit of approximately \$11,250 from its illicit trading. After the pricing of the offering, Lion Gate also placed a cross trade order to buy and sell 22,500 shares of GOLD. The cross trade was a sham transaction that created the false appearance that Lion Gate went to the open market to purchase shares to cover its restricted period short sales.
- 30. <u>Fiberstars, Inc. (FBST)</u>. On November 2, 2005, Lion Gate purchased 40,000 shares of FBST at \$8.25 in a registered offering. During the restricted period prior to the pricing of this offering, Lion Gate had sold short 14,000 shares of FBST at an average of \$8.59 per share. Lion Gate covered its restricted period short sales with 14,000 of the shares purchased in the offering. Lion Gate realized a profit of approximately \$4,703 from its illicit trading. After the pricing of the offering, Lion Gate also placed a cross trade order to buy and sell 14,000 shares of FBST. The cross trade was a sham transaction that created the false appearance that Lion Gate went to the open market to purchase shares to cover its restricted period short sales.

- 31. Pharmaxis, Ltd. (PXSL). On November 7, 2005, Lion Gate purchased 15,000 shares of PXSL at \$24.16 in a registered offering. During the restricted period prior to the pricing of this offering, Lion Gate had sold short 2,100 shares of PXSL at an average of \$25.80 per share. Lion Gate covered its restricted period short sales with 2,100 of the shares purchased in the offering. Lion Gate realized a profit of approximately \$3,436 from its illicit trading. After the pricing of the offering, Lion Gate also placed a cross trade order to buy and sell 2,100 shares of PXSL. The cross trade was a sham transaction that created the false appearance that Lion Gate went to the open market to purchase shares to cover its restricted period short sales.
- 32. <u>Lifetime Brands, Inc. (LCUT)</u>. On November 18, 2005, Lion Gate purchased 10,000 shares of LCUT at \$21.50 in a registered offering. During the restricted period prior to the pricing of this offering, Lion Gate had sold short 19,312 shares of LCUT at an average of \$23.10 per share. Lion Gate covered a portion of its restricted period short sales with the 10,000 shares purchased in the offering. Lion Gate realized a profit of approximately \$17,291 from its illicit trading. After the pricing of the offering, Lion Gate also placed a cross trade order to buy and sell 15,000 shares of LCUT. The cross trade was a sham transaction that created the false appearance that Lion Gate went to the open market to purchase shares to cover all of its restricted period short sales.
- 33. Minrad International, Inc. (BUF). On May 24, 2006, Lion Gate purchased 70,000 shares of BUF at \$3.25 in a registered offering. During the restricted period prior to the pricing of this offering, Lion Gate had sold short 60,900 shares of BUF at an average of \$3.77 per share. Lion Gate covered its restricted period short sales with 60,900 of the shares purchased in the offering. Lion Gate realized a profit of approximately \$31,659 from its illicit trading. After the pricing of the offering, Lion Gate also placed a cross trade order to buy and sell 70,000 shares of BUF. The cross trade was a sham transaction that created the

false appearance that Lion Gate went to the open market to purchase shares to cover its restricted period short sales.

D. <u>Lion Gate and Rickel Violated Rule 105 Through Contemporaneous</u> Trading

- 34. Another type of sham transaction utilized by Lion Gate and Rickel to evade Rule 105 was the contemporaneous or nearly contemporaneous sale and purchase of post-pricing shares. On at least six occasions, Lion Gate once again established a boxed position by selling short during the restricted periods and subsequently purchasing shares in the offerings. Lion Gate then entered contemporaneous, post-pricing "sell" and "buy" orders, purportedly to sell the offering shares and to purchase shares to cover its short positions, respectively.
- 35. These contemporaneous, post-pricing transactions were shams. The market risk incurred relative to the gains earned through the trading conduct was minimal. Further, these transactions served no legitimate economic purpose and did not result in meaningful changes in ownership. Rather, they provided Lion Gate with a means of locking in the identical, or nearly identical, gains as it would have achieved by immediately applying the offering shares to cover the short position established during the restricted period. The contemporaneous trading merely obfuscated the violations of Rule 105. These contemporaneous sham transactions occurred in shares of the following issuers: American Capital Strategies, Ltd. (ACAS), Axesstel, Inc. (AFT), TGC Industries, Inc. (TGE), Brigham Exploration Co. (BEXP), Gasco Energy (GSX), and Extra Storage Space, Inc. (EXR).
- 36. American Capital Strategies, Ltd. (ACAS). On February 15, 2005, Lion Gate purchased 4,200 shares of ACAS at \$37.11 in a registered offering. During the restricted period prior to the pricing of this offering, Lion Gate had sold short 11,100 shares of ACAS at an average of \$37.15 per share. Lion Gate covered a portion of its restricted period short sales with the 4,200 shares

purchased in the offering. Lion Gate realized a profit of approximately \$168 from its illicit trading. After the pricing of the offering, Lion Gate entered contemporaneous orders to buy and sell shares of ACAS. The contemporaneous trading was a sham transaction with no legitimate economic purpose or substance, resulted in no genuine change in beneficial ownership, and in which Lion Gate incurred little to no market risk.

- 37. Axesstel, Inc. (AFT). On February 25, 2005, Lion Gate purchased 350,000 shares of AFT at \$4.00 in a registered offering. During the restricted period prior to the pricing of this offering, Lion Gate had sold short 48,800 shares of AFT at an average of \$4.50 per share. Lion Gate covered its restricted period short sales with 48,800 of the shares purchased in the offering. Lion Gate realized a profit of approximately \$24,629 from its illicit trading. After the pricing of the offering, Lion Gate entered contemporaneous orders to buy and sell shares of AFT. The contemporaneous trading was a sham transaction with no legitimate economic purpose or substance, resulted in no genuine change in beneficial ownership, and in which Lion Gate incurred little to no market risk.
- 38. TGC Industries, Inc. (TGE). On October 6, 2005, Lion Gate purchased 215,000 shares of TGE at \$7.50 in a registered offering. During the restricted period prior to the pricing of this offering, Lion Gate had sold short 50,700 shares of TGE at an average of \$8.46 per share. Lion Gate covered its restricted period short sales with 50,700 of the shares purchased in the offering. Lion Gate realized a profit of approximately \$48,451 from its illicit trading. After the pricing of the offering, Lion Gate entered contemporaneous orders to buy and sell shares of TGE. The contemporaneous trading was a sham transaction with no legitimate economic purpose or substance, resulted in no genuine change in beneficial ownership, and in which Lion Gate incurred little to no market risk.
- 39. <u>Brigham Exploration Co. (BEXP)</u>. On November 18, 2005, Lion Gate purchased 75,000 shares of BEXP at \$12.00 in a registered offering. During

the restricted period prior to the pricing of this offering, Lion Gate had sold short 34,929 shares of BEXP at an average of \$13.11 per share. Lion Gate covered its restricted period short sales with 34,929 of the shares purchased in the offering. Lion Gate realized a profit of approximately \$38,911 from its illicit trading. After the pricing of the offering, Lion Gate entered contemporaneous orders to buy and sell shares of BEXP. The contemporaneous trading was a sham transaction with no legitimate economic purpose or substance, resulted in no genuine change in beneficial ownership, and in which Lion Gate incurred little to no market risk.

- 40. <u>Gasco Energy (GSX)</u>. On November 18, 2005, Lion Gate purchased 45,000 shares of GSX at \$6.50 in a registered offering. During the restricted period prior to the pricing of this offering, Lion Gate had sold short 20,000 shares of GSX at an average of \$6.77 per share. Lion Gate covered its restricted period short sales with 20,000 of the shares purchased in the offering. Lion Gate realized a profit of approximately \$5,308 from its illicit trading. After the pricing of the offering, Lion Gate entered contemporaneous orders to buy and sell shares of GSX. The contemporaneous trading was a sham transaction with no legitimate economic purpose or substance, resulted in no genuine change in beneficial ownership, and in which Lion Gate incurred little to no market risk.
- 41. Extra Space Storage, Inc. (EXR). On September 21, 2006, Lion Gate purchased 40,000 shares of EXR at \$17.00 in a registered offering. During the restricted period prior to the pricing of this offering, Lion Gate had sold short 55,000 shares of EXR at an average of \$17.42 per share. Lion Gate covered a portion of its restricted period short sales with 40,000 shares purchased in the offering. Lion Gate realized a profit of approximately \$16,972 from its illicit trading. After the pricing of the offering, Lion Gate entered contemporaneous orders to buy and sell shares of EXR. The contemporaneous trading was a sham transaction with no legitimate economic purpose or substance, resulted in no genuine change in beneficial ownership, and in which Lion Gate incurred little to

1

3

4 5

6

7 8

9

10

11 12

13

14 15

16

17

18

19 20

21 22

23

24

25 26

27

28

no market risk.

FIRST CLAIM FOR RELIEF

VIOLATIONS OF RULE 105 OF REGULATION M UNDER THE **EXCHANGE ACT**

Violations of Rule 105 of Regulation M under the Exchange Act (Against All Defendants)

- The Commission realleges and incorporates by reference ¶¶ 1 through 42. 41 above.
- As set forth above, between January 2005 and September 2006, in 43. connection with at least fourteen public offerings, defendants Lion Gate and Rickel, directly or indirectly, singly or in concert, by use of the means or instruments of transportation or communication in, or the means or instrumentalities of, interstate commerce, or by the use of the mails, or of a facility of a national securities exchange, violated Rule 105 of Regulation M, 17 C.F.R. § 242.105, by covering short sales with offered securities purchased from an underwriter or broker or dealer participating in the offering when the short sales occurred during the five-day period beginning five business days before the pricing of the offered securities and ending with such pricing.
- By engaging in the conduct described above, Lion Gate and Rickel, directly or indirectly, singly or in concert, violated, and unless restrained and enjoined will continue to violate, Rule 105 of Regulation M under the Exchange Act, 17 C.F.R. § 242.105.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, the Commission respectfully requests that the Court:

- Issue findings of fact and conclusions of law that Defendants (a) committed the alleged violations.
- Issue judgments, in a form consistent with Rule 65(d) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, permanently enjoining Lion Gate and Rickel, their

agents, servants, employees, attorneys, and those persons in active concert or participation with them, who receive actual notice of the order by personal service or otherwise, from violating Rule 105 of Regulation M, 17 C.F.R. § 242.105.

- Order Lion Gate and Rickel to disgorge all ill-gotten gains from their (c) illegal conduct, together with prejudgment interest thereon.
- Order Lion Gate and Rickel to pay civil penalties pursuant to Section (d) 21(d)(3) of the Exchange Act, 15 U.S.C. § 78u(d)(3).
- 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 all orders and decrees that may be entered, or to entertain any suitable application or motion for additional relief within the jurisdiction of this Court.
- Grant such other and further relief as this Court may determine to be (f) just and necessary.

DATED: October 7, 2008

Securities and Exchange Commission