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**MANHATTAN U.S. ATTORNEY CHARGES CEO OF SPORTS
COLLECTIBLES COMPANY IN SCHEME TO SELL FAKE MAJOR
LEAGUE BASEBALL JERSEYS**

*Defendant Falsely Claimed Jerseys Had Been Worn By Alex
Rodriguez, Mark McGwire, Albert Pujols And Other Major League
Baseball Players*

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and RONALD J. VERROCHIO, the Inspector-in-Charge of the New York Office of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service ("USPIS"), announced today charges against STEVEN JENSEN, the CEO of Vintage Sports Authentics, LCC ("Vintage Sports"), for orchestrating a scheme to market and sell fraudulent sports memorabilia. As part of the scheme, JENSEN allegedly auctioned sports jerseys of several Major League Baseball players that were advertised as "game used," or worn in an actual game, but which were actually fake. JENSEN, 40, of Osseo, Minnesota, was arrested this morning in Rosemont, Illinois, where he was attending a sports collectors convention. He was presented before a Magistrate Judge in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois earlier today.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney PREET BHARARA said: "Most people see baseball as America's pastime, but Steven Jensen saw only dollar signs. He allegedly took advantage of dedicated fans and sports enthusiasts around the country, trading on the success of some of baseball's biggest names to make a quick buck for himself. I applaud the dedicated efforts of the U.S. Postal

New York USPIS Inspector-in-Charge RONALD J. VERROCHIO said: "Americans have always had a love affair with baseball. By purchasing these jerseys, the victims felt that had a piece of history only to be defrauded and left with a feeling of

heartbreak. Postal Inspectors will continue to identify fraudulent transactions so to preserve the dream and to protect further victimization of those who pursue a piece of history."

According to the Complaint, which was unsealed today in Manhattan federal court:

Vintage Sports is a Plymouth, Minnesota, company that auctions sports memorabilia. Between July 2007 and July 2011, JENSEN and Vintage Sports auctioned off jerseys that were purportedly "game used" jerseys of several Major League Baseball players, including Alex Rodriguez, Mark McGwire, and Albert Pujols. However, JENSEN allegedly knew the jerseys he sold were not genuine and authentic sports memorabilia articles. Furthermore, after customers independently determined that the jerseys were fake, returned them and requested refunds, JENSEN re-auctioned the same jerseys, again misrepresenting that the items were genuine and authentic sports memorabilia.

For example, in July 2007, one customer from the Bronx, New York, paid more than \$3,000 to buy a Seattle Mariners home jersey advertised by Vintage Sports as having been worn by Alex Rodriguez during the 1995 season ("the Rodriguez Jersey"). The customer later learned that the Rodriguez Jersey was a fake. As alleged in the Complaint, the customer had the jersey examined by the Mariners' equipment manager and by a professional authenticator of sports memorabilia, both of whom concluded that the jersey was not authentic. This conclusion was reached for a number of reasons, including that (a) the Mariners kept all of the home jerseys issued to players in 1995, and (b) the fabric of the "Rodriguez" nameplate on the back was different than that used for the rest of the jersey. After the customer informed JENSEN that the jersey was fake, returned it, and sought a refund, JENSEN allegedly caused Vintage Sports to offer the Rodriguez Jersey in another online auction in February 2011, falsely representing that it was authentic.

In another Vintage Sports online auction in December 2010, a postal inspector acting in an undercover capacity ("the Postal Inspector") paid \$477 to purchase an Oakland Athletics jersey that was marketed as having been worn by Mark McGwire during the 1997 season ("the McGwire Jersey"). Through subsequent interviews with Mark McGwire and the Oakland Athletics equipment and clubhouse manager, who has served in that capacity since 1974, law enforcement confirmed that the McGwire Jersey was a fake. During McGwire's interview, the inspector also showed McGwire a list of other memorabilia offered in a Vintage Sports online auction, including a Home Run Derby jersey purportedly

worn by him during the 1999 All Star Game weekend. McGwire stated that he still possessed the only Home Run Derby jersey issued to him in 1999. After the Postal Inspector informed JENSEN that the jersey was fake, returned it, and demanded a refund, JENSEN allegedly caused Vintage Sports to offer the same McGwire Jersey in an online auction in July 2011, again falsely representing that it was authentic.

In February 2011, a Vintage Sports online auction included a St. Louis Cardinals away jersey that, according to the auction website, was worn by Albert Pujols during the 2002 Major League Baseball season (the "Pujols Jersey"). Postal inspectors interviewed Pujols, who said that he still possessed the only two Cardinals away jerseys issued to him for the 2002 season. Accordingly, the Pujols Jersey offered in the Vintage Sports auction was not a St. Louis Cardinals jersey worn by Pujols, as marketed on the Vintage Sports auction website.

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JENSEN is charged with one count of mail fraud and one count of wire fraud. Each charge carries a maximum potential penalty of 20 years in prison and a maximum fine of \$250,000.

Mr. BHARARA praised the work of the USPIS in the investigation of this case. He added that the investigation is continuing.

The case is being handled by the Complex Frauds Unit of the United States Attorney's Office. Assistant U.S. Attorneys ZACHARY FEINGOLD and NIKETH VELAMMOOR are in charge of the prosecution.

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