



*United States Attorney
Southern District of New York*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 2, 2009

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**FORMER STOCK PROMOTER PLEADS GUILTY IN MANHATTAN
FEDERAL COURT TO BRIBERY SCHEME**

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that former stock promoter WILLIAM CURTIS pleaded guilty today in Manhattan federal court before United States District Judge SAMUEL CONTI to participating in a scheme to provide secret bribes to a stock broker in order to induce the broker to purchase a stock on behalf of his clients.

According to the Indictment filed in Manhattan federal court, public court filings made by the United States Attorney's Office, and statements made during CURTIS' guilty plea proceeding:

From July through September 2007, CURTIS agreed to pay secret, cash bribes to a confidential informant ("CI") working with the FBI. The CI posed as a financial advisor who, in exchange for the bribes, would convince "investors" to purchase common stock of G&S Minerals, Inc. ("G&S") that CURTIS and his co-conspirators controlled. In conversations recorded by the FBI, CURTIS specifically agreed that the cash bribes would not be disclosed to the CI's "investors," and that the amount of the bribe would be 30 percent of the purchase orders placed by the CI's retail customers for G&S stock. In September 2007, after purporting to sell to retail customer clients a total of over \$63,000 worth of shares of G&S common stock that CURTIS had provided, the FBI received from CURTIS two cash kickbacks totaling approximately \$19,000, which represented approximately 30 percent of the value of the G&S stock purchased by the CI from CURTIS.

CURTIS, 50, a resident of Naperville, Illinois, pleaded guilty to one count of participating in a conspiracy to commit securities fraud and commercial bribery, and one count of securities fraud. The charges carry a maximum combined penalty of 25 years in prison and a maximum fine of \$5,000,000. CURTIS is scheduled to be sentenced by United States District Judge

LORETTA A. PRESKA on January 5, 2010, at 10:00 a.m.

The charges against CURTIS are the result of a wide-ranging Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI") undercover investigation of related stockbroker bribery schemes involving United States-, Canada-, and Costa Rico-based stock promoters and stockholders. Mr. BHARARA praised the work of the FBI, the Vancouver Integrated Market Enforcement Team of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Vancouver Police Department, the Criminal Prosecution Assistance Group of Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, and the United States Securities and Exchange Commission for their assistance in this investigation.

This case is being prosecuted by the Office's Securities and Commodities Fraud Task Force. Assistant United States Attorneys JULIAN J. MOORE, JOHN J. O'DONNELL, ALEX WILLSCHER, and LISA BARONI, are in charge of the prosecution.

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