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13	UNITED STATES DI	STRICT COURT
14	CENTRAL DISTRICT	OF CALIFORNIA
15		CaCN612-00024AB((SH>)
16	SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION,	
17	Plaintiff,	COMPLAINT FOR VIOLATIONS OF THE FEDERAL SECURITIES LAWS
18	vs.	
10	1	
19	BRUCE A. COLE,	
20	BRUCE A. COLE,  Defendant,	
20 21	·	
20 21 22	Defendant,	
20 21 22 23	Defendant,	
20 21 22 23 24	Defendant, and NANETTE H. COLE,	
20 21 22 23	Defendant, and NANETTE H. COLE,	

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Plaintiff Securities and Exchange Commission ("Commission") alleges as follows:

#### **SUMMARY**

- This matter involves a scheme to defraud and misrepresentations and 1. omissions by Bruce Cole, the former chairman and CEO of Mamtek International ("MI"), a Hong Kong corporation, and its U.S. subsidiary, Mamtek U.S. ("Mamtek"), in connection with a \$39 million municipal bond offering backed by the City of Moberly, Missouri ("Moberly") in July 2010. The bond offering was intended to finance a sucralose processing plant in Moberly that Mamtek would construct and operate. Cole executed his fraud by directing unsuspecting Mamtek employees to take actions that diverted over \$900,000 in bond proceeds for his personal use and by misleading city officials and bondholders about the use of those proceeds.
- Prior to the close of the bond offering, Cole directed unsuspecting 2. Mamtek employees and consultants to create false documentation for a nonexistent company to falsely justify fictitious expenses for the sucralose project. He then instructed Mamtek employees to wire his wife \$900,000 in bond proceeds, which were used to pay for his and his wife's personal expenses, in part, under the false pretense that she was an agent of the sham company.
- In addition, as a precondition to the issuance of the bonds, Cole signed 3. a certificate representing that certain portions of the Official Statement delivered to bondholders for the \$39 million offering were not false or misleading. However, at the time that Cole signed the document, he had already directed the creation of the false documentation and had made preliminary plans to divert and misuse the bond proceeds, rendering his representation in the closing certificate false. In doing so, he misrepresented the use of bond proceeds and the accuracy of the Official Statement.
  - By engaging in this conduct, Cole has violated Section 17(a) of the 4.

 Securities Act and Section 10(b) of the Exchange Act and Rule 10b-5 thereunder, for making material misrepresentations and omissions and engaging in a scheme to defraud the city and bondholders. Through this Complaint, the Commission seeks a permanent injunction, disgorgement with prejudgment interest, and a civil penalty.

5. Furthermore, Relief Defendant Nanette H. Cole is Bruce Cole's wife. Because she obtained certain of the bond proceeds, the Commission has named her as a relief defendant.

#### **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

- 6. This Court has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to Sections 20(b), 20(d)(1) and 22(a) of the Securities Act of 1933 ("Securities Act"), 15 U.S.C. §§ 77t(b), 77t(d)(1) & 77v(a), and Sections 21(d)(1), 21(d)(3)(A), 21(e) and 27 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 ("Exchange Act"), 15 U.S.C. §§ 78u(d)(1), 78u(d)(3)(A), 78u(e) & 78aa. Defendants have, directly or indirectly, made use of the means or instrumentalities of interstate commerce, of the mails, or of the facilities of a national securities exchange, in connection with the transactions, acts, practices, and courses of business alleged in this Complaint.
- 7. Venue is proper in this district pursuant to Section 22(a) of the Securities Act, 15 U.S.C. § 77v(a), and Section 27 of the Exchange Act, 15 U.S.C. § 78aa, because certain of the transactions, acts, practices, and courses of conduct constituting violations of the federal securities laws occurred within this district. At the time of the misconduct, Defendant Bruce Cole and Relief Defendant Nanette Cole resided in this district and many of the financial transactions at issue occurred in this district.

#### THE DEFENDANT AND RELIEF DEFENDANT

8. **Bruce A. Cole**, age 65, was, at all relevant times, a resident of Beverly Hills, California. Cole served as CEO of Mamtek during the time it sought to build a sucralose facility in Moberly, Missouri. Cole helped to form MI

in 2006 for the purpose of constructing a sucralose manufacturing facility in China, and served as MI's chief executive officer and chairman until his separation from the company in July 2011.

9. **Nanette H. Cole**, age 61, was, at all relevant times, a resident of Beverly Hills, California. She is the wife of Defendant Bruce Cole.

#### **STATEMENT OF FACTS**

- A. Cole Unsuccessfully Attempted to Operate a Commercial Sucralose Facility in China
- 10. Bruce Cole and others formed MI in 2006 to manufacture sucralose based on a proprietary process developed and refined by the company. Sucralose is a popular zero-calorie sweetener used worldwide, marketed by a competitor under the registered trademark "Splenda." In addition to home use, sucralose has applications as an additive for the food, beverage, and pharmaceutical industries.
- 11. MI developed its proprietary process from 2007 through 2009 with the intention of constructing and operating a commercial factory. Cole raised at least \$3 million from private equity investors to fund the initial construction. Sometime in 2008 or 2009, MI purportedly entered into an agreement with the City of Wuyishan in the Fujian province of the People's Republic of China to construct a sucralose processing plant in that city. That agreement contemplated the operation of five 60-ton production lines, which would produce 300 metric tons annually. However, in or around October 2009, after construction of the first production line had commenced, the city and provincial government purportedly told MI that Wuyishan would not allow any new manufacturing in the city due to environmental concerns unrelated to Mamtek's operations.
- 12. As a result, the city would not issue a permit to MI to produce sucralose commercially, limiting operation of the line for testing purposes only. Because MI never obtained the license, the company could only operate the production line for no more than a few days at a time. Under these circumstances, it was not possible

- 13. At the time the purported 60-ton facility was being constructed, Cole contemplated forming another entity in Hong Kong, Ramwell Industrial Ltd. ("Ramwell"), which would be responsible for all of the engineering and construction required to construct future sucralose production lines. Cole claimed that Ramwell would help limit the dissemination of MI's intellectual property, minimizing the possibility that others would misappropriate Mamtek's proprietary technology.
- 14. Later, when Cole sought to build a facility in the United States, he told others, including Mamtek employees and representatives of the City of Moberly, that Ramwell would be responsible for the engineering and construction of the United States plant. Despite these purported plans, Cole never took any steps to form Ramwell a fact that Cole did not disclose to the city.

#### B. Cole Then Sought to Build a Sucralose Plant in the United States

- 15. At the end of 2009, having unsuccessfully attempted to commercialize MI's sucralose technology in China, Cole turned his attention to the United States. In or about December 2009, Cole hired a financial consultant to help Mamtek explore opportunities to finance and construct a sucralose facility in the United States.
- 16. Cole told Mamtek's employees, investors, and third parties, that MI's patent attorney had visited the Chinese production line and documented the technology, the intellectual property, and the manufacturing steps. The attorney, who was not an engineer, visited the Chinese production line in or about November 2009 for three days to watch the line in operation. During that time, he took over 200 pictures of the constructed line and the equipment, took notes about the processing steps that were purportedly occurring on the line, reviewed blueprints, interviewed the Chinese engineers about the operation of the line, and watched what he believed to be the production of sucralose. His goal was to create an operations manual for the production line and compile an equipment list that

could be retained by his firm for safekeeping. These materials were referred to as the "Cookbook."

- 17. In or about March 2010, Mamtek reached out to several state agencies to identify municipalities willing to partner with Mamtek on the sucralose project. Several Missouri municipalities, including the City of Moberly, expressed an interest in providing a site for Mamtek's proposed sucralose plant. In April 2010, Cole and other Mamtek representatives visited three municipalities in Missouri, including Moberly, to meet with local officials and to investigate proposed sites.
  - C. Cole Obtains Financing from the City of Moberly, Which Agreed to Back a Municipal Bond Offering
- 18. Shortly after leaving Moberly, counsel for the City of Moberly and the city's mayor called Cole to guarantee a bond offering that Mamtek could use to finance the construction of Mamtek's proposed factory. Cole was given a short deadline to accept the offer because of the procedural hurdles associated with the proposed bond offering. In or about May 2010, Cole and Mamtek accepted the offer because of Moberly's expressed willingness to support the proposed bond offering.
- appropriation backing for the bonds, a structure known as an appropriations credit bond. The Industrial Development Authority for the City of Moberly (the "IDA"), and not the city, actually issued the bonds. Through a financing agreement with the IDA (the "Financing Agreement"), however, the city made available, subject to annual appropriation, the unencumbered general revenues of the city for all payments of principal and interest due under the bond offering. Under this structure, as disclosed to investors, the city anticipated paying the principal and interest due on the bonds from general revenues, and agreed to include the payment amount in its annual budget proposals, but was not legally required to appropriate any money to pay back bondholders. This also meant that if the city

- 20. As part of the bond offering, Mamtek agreed to make periodic payments to the City of Moberly from the revenue generated from the plant, ensuring a stream of income to fund the city's repayment obligations. However, if Mamtek were ever to default on its payment obligations, the city, not Mamtek, was obligated to repay bondholders and would have to adjust its finances accordingly.
- 21. Mamtek also agreed to assign to the bond trustee all of its right and title to the intellectual property required to operate the plant. As a precondition to the issuance of the bonds, Mamtek was required to deliver the Cookbook prepared by the intellectual property attorney to the bond trustee who would hold the materials in escrow. If Mamtek were ever to default on its payment obligations, the city believed that it could then find a third party to take over operation of the plant or sell the intellectual property documented in the Cookbook.
- 22. Prior to the issuance of the bonds, the city retained an independent expert to place a value on Mamtek's intellectual property. Among other things, the expert reviewed four patent applications filed to protect Mamtek's technology, researched the sucralose market, and spoke with Mamtek's intellectual property attorney to discuss his Chinese site visit and efforts to document the manufacturing process. Evaluating this data, among other things, the expert concluded that Mamtek's intellectual property was worth at least \$52 million, a value that exceeded the \$39 million bond offering. This valuation seemingly confirmed the city's view that, in the event of Mamtek's default, the city could meet its repayment obligations by simply selling the intellectual property documented in the Cookbook.
- 23. Further, as another precondition to the issuance of the bonds, the city required Mamtek's patent attorney to provide a letter, which was included in the bond transcript, that summarized his actions to compile the Cookbook. The bond

transcript includes all legal and financial documents associated with the issuance of municipal securities.

#### D. The Bond Offering

- 24. Three distinct series of bonds closed on July 28, 2010, raising a total of \$39 million. Series 2010-A were taxable annual appropriation capital projects bonds that raised \$8,440,000. Series 2010-B were tax-exempt annual appropriation capital projects bonds that raised \$3,025,000. Series 2010-C were tax-exempt annual appropriation recovery zone facility bonds that raised \$27,535,000.
- 25. The Official Statement, which is the document that provides information regarding the terms of the bond offering to the public, was issued by the IDA on July 28, 2010. All three series shared the same Official Statement and were concurrently offered.
- 26. In addition to the \$39 million to be raised through the bond offering, Mamtek agreed to provide \$7 to \$8 million of company equity. Despite repeated assurances to other Mamtek employees about the imminent receipt of new investment funds, Cole did not successfully raise the promised equity.

#### E. Cole's Scheme to Defraud

- 27. Cole withheld key facts related to Mamtek and Ramwell from Mamtek employees and consultants and city officials in a scheme that allowed him to divert and misuse bond proceeds.
- 28. Cole knew that Ramwell had not been formed. He knowingly used the Ramwell fiction to obtain bond proceeds from the city and the bond trustee under false pretenses. He then diverted and used these proceeds for his personal benefit, a purpose not disclosed in the Official Statement, despite his knowledge that bond proceeds were to be used solely for project-related costs. He designated a Mamtek consultant, unaware of Cole's scheme, as responsible for submitting periodic draw requests to the city for the purpose of improperly obtaining funds.

- 29. Pursuant to the process instituted by the city and bond trustee, Mamtek submitted draw requests consisting of invoices and receipts documenting the expenditure of funds for construction-related expenses. Typically, a draw request would include, among other things, invoices from contractors and subcontractors employed by Mamtek and receipts or purchase orders for equipment.
- 30. The city finance manager reviewed the invoices and receipts in the request. If he concluded that an expenditure was not permitted under the Financing Agreement, e.g., travel expenses, he rejected that particular item and reduced Mamtek's request accordingly. The finance manager with guidance from bond counsel allocated the amounts requested to one of the three series of bonds to ensure that money was drawn from the appropriate taxable or tax-exempt bond series. The finance manager then prepared a requisition form, attaching the draw request, asking the bond trustee to disburse funds to the appropriate recipients, typically directly to the contractor or supplier. In the case of Ramwell invoices, those disbursements were wired to Mamtek directly.
- 31. For the initial draw request submitted on the date the bonds were issued, Cole used Ramwell as a means to obtain funds for his and his wife's personal use. About two weeks before the bond offering closed and before he signed the closing certificate, Cole asked a consultant to create an invoice for Ramwell to bill Mamtek for construction work, which would be submitted to the city and the bond trustee. Cole represented that Ramwell had performed engineering work on the Moberly project and the consultant believed these false representations.
- 32. At Cole's direction, the consultant created a Ramwell invoice dated July 21, 2010 in the amount of \$4,062,500, purportedly billing Mamtek for production line engineering, design and project supervision. Cole reviewed and approved the invoice. Cole knew that Ramwell did not exist at the time, or ever, and had not performed the services itemized in the invoice.

- 33. Cole sought to further document the nonexistent relationship between Mamtek and Ramwell for the city. On or about July 19, 2010 in San Mateo, California, Cole asked a Mamtek engineer to sign a document, known as an application for payment, between Mamtek and Ramwell. Although Ramwell did not exist, this document purportedly established that Mamtek would pay Ramwell a total of \$22,850,000 for engineering work on the Moberly project. The document was notarized and ultimately included in the initial draw request as a basis for compensating Ramwell for its purported work.
- 34. On July 29, 2010, the trustee wired \$4,278,648 to Mamtek's bank account. This amount included full reimbursement for the July 19, 2010 Ramwell invoice, as well as payment of additional invoices. Cole did not tell the city that Ramwell did not exist. The city, had it known the truth, would have refused to pay the Ramwell invoice.
- 35. Cole directed how these funds were used. He prepared a list of payments to be made from the wired funds and gave it to a Mamtek employee a few days before the bond closed. None of the wired funds were remitted to Ramwell because Ramwell did not exist. Rather, at least \$904,167 of the funds were sent directly to Bruce Cole's wife, Nanette Cole.
- 36. First, Cole directed \$700,000 be wired to his wife. When a Mamtek employee questioned this payment, Cole stated that his wife was an agent for Ramwell, the nonexistent company. Cole later claimed that this money was a termination fee to compensate Ramwell for Mamtek's cancellation of a written agreement in which Ramwell purportedly agreed to construct the Moberly factory. But the written agreement that Cole relied on purportedly documenting the relationship between Ramwell and Mamtek contains no provision for payment of a termination fee. Cole also falsely claimed that he discussed this payment with members of the MI board in advance.
  - 37. The \$700,000 was wired into an account held in Relief Defendant

Nanette Cole's name. The money was then used for the Coles' personal expenses, including, among other things, payments for credit card debt, a mortgage, homeowners and auto insurance, and household employees, as well as the issuance of a \$271,046.30 cashier's check.

38. Second, Cole directed a second wire of \$204,167 to his wife's bank account purportedly for deferred compensation that he was owed from earlier in the year. However, Cole has not offered any documentation supporting his claim that he was allegedly owed deferred compensation of any amount. That money was also used to pay the Coles' personal expenses.

## F. <u>Cole Makes Material Misrepresentations and Omissions at the</u> Bond Closing

- 39. The Official Statement contained disclosures about the intended use of the bond proceeds. In the section captioned "INTRODUCTION The Project," the Official Statement disclosed that the "proceeds of the Bonds will be used to provide funds to pay a portion of the costs of a project including the acquisition of and making of improvements to real property and the construction and equipping of a sucralose manufacturing and processing facility within the City of Moberly, Missouri."
- 40. The section captioned "THE PROJECT" similarly disclosed: "The City is issuing the Bonds for the purpose of financing a project which includes the acquisition of land and making of improvements to an approximately 33 acre parcel of land, and the construction and equipping of a sucralose manufacturing and processing facility."
- 41. On July 22, 2010, Cole signed a closing certificate on behalf of Mamtek. The city required this closing certificate as a precondition to the issuance of the bonds. Among other things, this closing certificate stated:

The description and information contained in the Official Statement with respect to the Company and related

matters including with particularity, the information contained in Official Statement contained under the captions "INTRODUCTION – The Project," . . . "THE PROJECT," . . . are, as of the date hereof, and will be, at the Closing, true and correct and do not, as of the date hereof, and will not, at the Closing, contain any untrue statement of any material fact and do not, as of the date hereof, and will not, at the Closing, omit to state any material fact necessary to make any statement made therein, in the light of the circumstances under which it was made, not misleading.

- 42. At the time he signed the closing certificate, Cole's representations in the certificate, set forth above, were false and omitted material facts about the fraudulent scheme he had set into motion. The statements in the sections entitled "INTRODUCTION The Project" and "THE PROJECT" were false because some of the bond proceeds were not used to finance or pay the costs of the sucralose plant project, but instead were misappropriated to the bank account of Cole's wife. When he signed this certificate, he had already directed the creation of a false Ramwell invoice and the false Ramwell application for payment, all in preparation for diverting and misusing over \$900,000 of bond proceeds from the first draw request.
- 43. Cole omitted to disclose any of this information in connection with his execution of the closing certificate. When he signed the certificate, Cole knew, or was reckless in not knowing, that the closing certificate was false and misleading.
- 44. As the signatory, Cole possessed ultimate authority over the statements in the closing certificate. The misrepresentations and omissions in the Official Statement are attributable to Cole as the maker of those statements because he certified to their accuracy. Without the certification, the statements

would not have been made, and the Official Statement would not have been issued.

- 45. Cole was also responsible for omitting to disclose the diversion and misuse of bond proceeds because he knew that the invoice documentation was false and that he intended to use bond proceeds for improper purposes.
- 46. Cole's misrepresentations and omissions were material. The closing certificate was required as a precondition to the issuance the bonds. Cole's misrepresentations and omissions in the closing certificate deceived the city and the underwriter of the \$39 million bond offering about the accuracy of the Official Statement. Had the city or the underwriter known the truth about Cole's misrepresentations and omissions, the bond offering would not have closed.
- 47. Moreover, the false closing certificate rendered the Official Statement misleading to investors. The city and the underwriter relied on this closing certificate in making and issuing the statements in the Official Statement, including the statements regarding the use of bond proceeds. As a result of Cole's misrepresentations and omissions, investors were unaware that (1) Cole had directed the preparation of false documentation to divert bond proceeds to him and his wife; and (2) Cole intended to divert and misuse bond proceeds for personal expenses.
- 48. Relief Defendant Nanette Cole received bond proceeds as a result of Bruce Cole's fraudulent conduct. She has no legitimate claim to these proceeds because, as described above, she obtained them under circumstances in which it is not just, equitable, or conscionable for her to retain the funds. As a result, Relief Defendant Nanette Cole has been unjustly enriched and must disgorge the amount of her ill-gotten gains.

### FRAUD I

#### FIRST CLAIM FOR RELIEF

#### FRAUD IN THE OFFER OR SALE OF SECURITIES

## Violations of Section 17(a) of the Securities Act (Against Bruce Cole)

49. The Commission realleges and incorporates by reference paragraphs 1

- through 48 above.
- 50. Cole made material misrepresentations and omissions regarding the use of bond proceeds raised in the offer and sale of the municipal bond offering backed by the City of Moberly and orchestrated a scheme to defraud the city and bondholders.
- 51. Cole, by engaging in the conduct described above, directly or indirectly, in the offer or sale of securities by the use of means or instruments of transportation or communication in interstate commerce or by use of the mails:
  - with scienter, employed devices, schemes, or artifices to defraud;
  - b. obtained money or property by means of untrue statements of a material fact or by omitting to state a material fact necessary in order to make the statements made, in light of the circumstances under which they were made, not misleading; or
  - c. engaged in transactions, practices, or courses of business which operated or would operate as a fraud or deceit upon the purchaser.
- 52. By engaging in the conduct described above, Cole violated, and unless restrained and enjoined will continue to violate, Section 17(a) of the Securities Act, 15 U.S.C. § 77q(a).

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#### SECOND CLAIM FOR RELIEF

## FRAUD IN CONNECTION WITH THE PURCHASE OR SALE OF SECURITIES

# Violations of Section 10(b) of the Exchange Act and Rule 10b-5 Thereunder (Against Bruce Cole)

- 53. The Commission realleges and incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 48 above.
- 54. Cole made material misrepresentations and omissions regarding the use of bond proceeds raised in the purchase or sale of the municipal bond offering backed by the City of Moberly and orchestrated a scheme to defraud the city and bondholders.
- 55. Cole, by engaging in the conduct described above, directly or indirectly, in connection with the purchase or sale of a security, by the use of means or instrumentalities of interstate commerce, of the mails, or of the facilities of a national securities exchange, with scienter:
  - a. employed devices, schemes, or artifices to defraud;
  - made untrue statements of a material fact or omitted to state a
    material fact necessary in order to make the statements made,
    in the light of the circumstances under which they were made,
    not misleading; or
  - engaged in acts, practices, or courses of business which
    operated or would operate as a fraud or deceit upon other
    persons.
- By engaging in the conduct described above, Cole violated, and unless restrained and enjoined will continue to violate, Section 10(b) of the Exchange Act, 15 U.S.C. § 78j(b), and Rule 10b-5 thereunder, 17 C.F.R. § 240.10b-5.

#### PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, the Commission respectfully requests that the Court:

Issue findings of fact and conclusions of law that Cole committed the

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alleged violations.

II.

Issue judgments, in forms consistent with Fed. R. Civ. P. 65(d), permanently enjoining Cole and his officers, agents, servants, employees, and attorneys, and those persons in active concert or participation with him, who receive actual notice of the judgment by personal service or otherwise, and each of them, from violating Section 17(a) of the Securities Act, 15 U.S.C. §§ 77e(a), 77e(c), and 77q(a), and Section 10(b) of the Exchange Act, 15 U.S.C. § 78j(b), and Rule 10b-5 thereunder, 17 C.F.R. § 240.10b-5.

III.

Order Defendant Bruce Cole to disgorge all ill-gotten gains that he received as a result of the conduct alleged in the Complaint, together with prejudgment interest thereon.

IV.

Order Cole to pay civil penalties under Section 20(d) of the Securities Act, 15 U.S.C. § 77t(d), and Section 21(d)(3) of the Exchange Act, 15 U.S.C. § 78u(d)(3).

VI.

Order Relief Defendant Nanette Cole to disgorge all ill-gotten gains to which she has no legitimate claim that she received as a result of the conduct alleged in the Complaint, together with prejudgment interest thereon.

VII.

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.

#### VIII.

Grant such other and further relief as this Court may determine to be just and

necessary.

DATED: September 18, 2012

Sam S. Puathasnanon Attorneys for Plaintiff Securities and Exchange Commission