	Case 3:12-cv-02164-GPC-JMA Document 1	.170 Filed 01/21/16 Page 1 of 13
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	0 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1	DISTRICT COURT
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10	SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION,	CASE NO. 3:12-cv-2164-GPC-JMA
11 12	Plaintiff,	JUDGMENT AND ORDER GRANTING MOTION FOR
13 14	V.	INJUNCTIVE RELIEF, MONETARY REMEDIES, AND FINAL JUDGMENT AGAINST DEFENDARY LOUIS V.
15 16 17	LOUIS V. SCHOOLER and FIRST FINANCIAL PLANNING CORPORATION, dba Western Financial Planning Corporation,	SCHOOLER [ECF No. 1137]
18	Defendants.	
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20	Before the Court is Plaintiff Securities and Exchange Commission's ("SEC")	
21	motion for final judgment against Defendant Louis V. Schooler ("Schooler"). Pl. Mot.,	
22	ECF No. 1137. The motion has been fully briefed. Def. Resp., ECF No. 1151; Pl	
23	Reply, ECF No. 1152. Upon consideration of the moving papers and the applicable	
2425	law, the Court GRANTS Plaintiff's motion for final judgment.	
26	BACKGROUND The facts of the case having been recited in the Court's previous orders, the	
27	The facts of the case having been recited in the Court's previous orders, the Court will not reiterate them here. <i>See, e.g.</i> , ECF No. 583. In short, this is an action by	
28		nooler and Western Financial Planning

Corporation ("Western") for violations of federal securities laws in connection with 1 2 Defendants' defrauding of investors in the sale of general partnership ("GP") units 3 which were, as a matter of law, unregistered securities. See 2nd Summ. J. Order 2, ECF No. 1081. On May 19, 2015, the Court granted in part and denied in part the SEC's 4 5 motion for summary judgment on its fourth claim for relief, finding that Defendant had 6 engaged in the sale of unregistered securities and that the appropriate amount of disgorgement was \$136,654,250, plus prejudgment interest calculated to May 19, 2015. 7 1st Summ. J. Order 25, ECF No. 1074. On June 3, 2015, the Court granted in part and 8 9 denied in part the SEC's motion for summary judgments on its first and second claims for relief, granting both causes of action as to all elements with regards to the fair 10 11 market value representation of the Stead property in Western's sales brochure. 2nd 12 Summ. J. Order 20.

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DISCUSSION

The SEC now moves for final judgment, seeking: (1) a permanent injunction restraining the Defendant from violating federal securities laws; (2) disgorgement of \$136,654,250 with prejudgment interest of \$10,956,030 (for a total of \$147,610,280); and (3) imposition of a civil penalty of \$1,050,000. Pl. Mot. 1. Defendant does not contest the entry of final judgment, the imposition of the injunction, and the disgorgement with prejudgment interest, challenging only the imposition of the civil penalty of \$1,050,000. Def. Resp. 1.

I. Permanent Injunction

Section 20(b) of the Securities Act of 1933 and Section 21(d) of the Securities Exchange Act 1934 provide that "upon a proper showing," a court may enjoin "any acts or practices which constitute or will constitute a violation of the provisions" of the statutes. 15 U.S.C. § 77t(b), 15 U.S.C. §78u(d)(1). In order to obtain a permanent injunction, the SEC must show that there is "a reasonable likelihood of future violations of the securities laws." *See SEC v. Murphy*, 626 F.2d 633, 655 (9th Cir. 1980) (citing cases); *see also SEC v. Fehn*, 97 F.3d 1276, 1295–96 (9th Cir. 1996);

SEC v. Olins, 762 F. Supp. 2d 1193, 1196 (N.D. Cal. 2011); SEC v. Gowrish, Case No. C 09-05883 SI, 2011 WL 2790482, at *4 (N.D. Cal. July 14, 2011), aff'd, 510 Fed. Appx. 588, 2013 WL 681053 (9th Cir. 2013). Permanent injunctions may be granted on summary judgment. Murphy, 626 F.2d at 655 (citations omitted).

In *Murphy*, the Ninth Circuit described the criteria for meeting this "reasonable likelihood" standard:

The existence of past violations may give rise to an inference that there will be future violations; and the fact that the defendant is currently complying with the securities laws does not preclude an injunction. In predicting the likelihood of future violations, a court must assess the totality of the circumstances surrounding the defendant and his violations, and it considers factors such as the degree of scienter involved; the isolated or recurrent nature of the infraction; the defendant's recognition of the wrongful nature of his conduct; the likelihood, because of defendant's professional occupation, that future violations might occur; and the sincerity of his assurances against future violations.

Id. (citations omitted).

The SEC argues that the totality of the circumstances supports the proposition that there is a reasonable likelihood Defendant will violate securities laws in the future. *See* Pl. Mot. 3–5. Defendant does not contest this proposition. Def. Mot. 1. The Court agrees with the SEC. The Court has already previously found that Defendant was involved in the offering and/or sale of unregistered securities, 1st Summ. J. Order 25, and that Defendant materially misrepresented the value of the Stead property in sales brochures, 2nd Summ. J. Order 14, giving rise to the inference that there will be future violations. Pl. Mot. 4.

Moreover, considering the *Murphy* factors, first, the Court already found scienter with respect to the material misrepresentation of the value of the Stead property. 2nd Summ. J. Order 18. Second, the Court has found that the sale of unregistered securities spanned more than 30 years, 1st Summ. J. Order 8, demonstrating the "recurrent nature of the infraction." Third, the Defendant's lack of recognition of the wrongful nature of his conduct is reflected in his "continued insistence on the validity" of his conduct, *Fehn*, 97 F.3d at 1296, as well as his conduct in "misinform[ing]" investors during the course of the litigation, ECF No. 455, Ex. A. at 1–2. Finally, as to the last factor,

Defendant has not provided any assurances against future violations.

Thus, Defendant's past violations and the totality of the circumstances supports the proposition that there is a reasonable likelihood of future violations and, consequently, that a permanent injunction is warranted. *See Fehn*, 97 F.3d 1276, 1296 (9th Cir.1996) (upholding injunction where defendant engaged in single securities act violation, did not intend to violate securities laws, and gave "sincere assurances of an intent to refrain" from future violations, but, inter alia, whose professional occupation "tend[ed] to suggest a risk of future violations"); *Murphy*, 626 F.2d at 656 (upholding injunction where defendant's violation was unintentional and "even if the court believed he was sincere in his protestations" that he would not violate law in future).

II. Disgorgement and Prejudgment Interest

The Court has already found that the appropriate amount of disgorgement for Defendant's Section 5 cause of action is \$136,654,250 plus prejudgment interest calculated to May 19, 2015. 1st Summ. J. Order 25. The SEC seeks prejudgment interest of \$10,956,030, calculated using the rate provided in 26 U.S.C. § 6621 for tax underpayment. Defendant does not contest this method of calculation. Def. Resp. 1.

Courts have approved the use of the rate provided in 26 U.S.C. § 6621 for tax underpayment for calculating prejudgment interest. *See S.E.C. v. Platforms Wireless Int'l Corp.*, 617 F.3d 1072, 1099 (9th Cir. 2010); *S.E.C. v. Olins*, 762 F. Supp. 2d 1193, 1199 (N.D. Cal. 2011), *as amended* (Feb. 25, 2011). Accordingly, the Court finds that the SEC has sufficiently established its claim against Defendant for disgorgement in the amount of \$147,610,280, representing disgorgement of \$136,654,250, plus prejudgment interest of \$10,956,030.

III. Civil Penalty

The Securities Act and Exchange Act provide for three tiers of penalties, and the amount of any penalty is to be "determined by the court in light of the facts and circumstances." 15 U.S.C. § 78u(d)(3)(B), 15 U.S.C. § 77t(d)(2)(A). First tier penalties may be imposed for any violation of either Act. *See id.* §§ 77t(d)(2)(A),

78u(d)(3)(B)(i). Second tier penalties apply to violations that "involved fraud, 1 2 deceit, manipulation or deliberate or reckless disregard of a regulatory requirement." Id. §§ 77t(d)(2)(B), 78u(d)(3)(B)(ii). Third tier penalties apply to 3 violations that (i) involve "fraud, deceit, manipulation, or reckless disregard of a 4 5 regulatory requirement" and (ii) "directly or indirectly resulted in substantial losses or created a significant risk of substantial losses to other persons." Id. §§ 6 77t(d)(2)(C), 78u(d)(3)(B)(iii). Each tier provides that a penalty cannot exceed the 7 greater of either a specific statutory amount, or "the gross amount of pecuniary 8 9 gain to such defendant as the result of the violation." *Id.* §§ 77t(d)(2), 10 78u(d)(3)(B). The statutory third-tier penalty for natural persons and violations that occurred after 2009 is \$150,000. See 17 C.F.R. § 201.1004 (SEC rule setting 11 forth the inflation adjustments). The specific amount of the civil penalty imposed 12 13 within each tier is discretionary. See Olins, 762 F. Supp. 2d at 1199 (citing SEC v. Moran, 944 F.Supp. 286, 296–97 (S.D.N.Y. 1996) (noting "discretionary nature of the 14 civil penalty framework")). 15 16 In assessing an appropriate civil penalty, courts frequently apply the factors used for determining the appropriateness of injunctive relief set forth in *Murphy*, discussed 17 18

In assessing an appropriate civil penalty, courts frequently apply the factors used for determining the appropriateness of injunctive relief set forth in *Murphy*, discussed above in Part I. *See, e.g., SEC v. Abacus International Holding Corp.*, 2001 WL 940913, at *5 (N.D. Cal. Aug. 16, 2001); *see also SEC v. Gowrish*, 2011 WL 2790482, at *9 (N.D. Cal. July 14, 2011); *SEC v. CMKM Diamonds, Inc.*, 635 F. Supp. 2d 1185, 1192 (D. Nev. 2009).

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The SEC requests that the Court order Schooler to pay third-tier civil penalties of \$1,050,000, arguing that third-tier penalties are merited by Defendant's fraud and deceit related to the Stead property, which resulted in substantial losses to investors. Pl. Mot. 8–9. The SEC arrives at this total by multiplying the seven potential investors that have been identified as having been shown the Stead brochure with the material misrepresentation with the \$150,000 statutory penalty for third-tier violations occurring after 2009. *Id.* at 10.

Defendant responds that this amount is inappropriate. First, Defendant argues that there is an absence of evidence of substantial losses or risk of substantial losses. Def. Resp. 2. Defendant argues that there is no evidence of risk of substantial losses because "[a]ny losses would not materialize unless and until properties are sold." *Id.* Second, Defendant argues that there is an absence of scienter due to Defendant's reliance on counsel before and during the Stead GP offerings. *Id.* at 3. Third, Defendant argues that the SEC cannot use the seven investors shown the Stead brochure to calculate the appropriate amount of civil penalties because there is no evidence they actually invested in the Stead GPs and thus bear "sufficient risk of any loss." *Id.* at 4. Fourth, Defendant argues that because this is his first violation of a securities law, the injunction and disgorgement serve as sufficient deterrents, and an additional civil penalty would be excessive.

The Court finds Defendant's arguments unconvincing. First, the Court has already previously rejected Defendant's argument that the GP's investors' losses or gains cannot be calculated until the property is sold, finding that "[c]ontrary to Defendants' assertion, the value of the land need not be 'fixed through its sale to third parties[,' but] can be determined through other methods such as appraisals." 1st Summ. J. Order 17. Western purchased the Stead property for \$1.85 million in 2010, Def. Answer 9, ECF No. 255, and sold GP units to investors at prices valuing the land at approximately \$9.3 million, Compl. 3, ECF No. 1. Subsequent appraisals have estimated the value of the land to range from \$244,500 to \$430,000, with an estimated value of \$355,000 at the time the land was being offered to investors. *See* ECF No. 203, Ex. B at 73–76; ECF No. 1015-2 at 11. Thus, it seems incontrovertible that investors suffered a significant and substantial risk of loss the instant they purchased the property.

Second, the Court has already previously rejected Defendant's argument that his reliance on counsel meant that he lacked scienter, finding that the Defendant failed to show that he "made a complete disclosure to counsel" regarding the representation of

a property's alleged fair market value to investors. 1st Summ. J. Order 17.

Third, Defendant argues that because three of the seven identified prospective investors did not necessarily invest in the Stead offering and the Defendant was not allowed to cross-examine them, the SEC cannot base their penalties calculation on these seven investors. Def. Resp. 4–5. However, in each case, the violation that occurred was the material misrepresentation of the fair market value of the property in the brochure, regardless of whether or not each person invested. *See* 1st Summ. J. Order 14; *see also* 15 U.S.C. § 77q (forbidding the "offer or sale" of securities by means of any "untrue statement").

Arguably, by showing them the brochure containing the material misrepresentation, Defendant already created a "significant risk of substantial loss" on behalf of each person. Four investors attested that they did invest in the Stead property after viewing the brochure. Pl. Mot., Exs. 1–4. But moreover, an estimated 258 investors invested in the Stead offerings. ECF No. 4, at 4. Hence, the seven violations the SEC based their request for civil penalties on constitute a small fraction of the total number of violations for which the SEC could have sought a civil penalty. While the SEC could have chosen another metric by which to seek civil penalties, the metric the SEC chose is supportable under the Securities Act and the Exchange Act.

Finally, Defendant argues that the civil penalty is "excessive" because the injunction and disgorgement already serve a sufficient deterrent function, and this is Defendant's first violation. Def. Resp. 5–8. However, the Court has already found that the disgorgement is "clearly not punitive because it does not request more than the amount that Western gained through violating Section 5." 1st Summ. J. Order 22. Defendant's argument that this case represents Defendant's "first violation" ignores the fact that the Court found that Defendant committed "31 years of violations" of federal securities laws, and that the evidence indicated that Defendant was on notice since at least 1994 that they might be in violation of California's securities laws. *Id.* at 22–23. Moreover, the SEC's requested civil penalty is far lower than that they could have

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conceivably requested. Both the Securities Act and the Exchange Act cap penalties for each tier at "the gross amount of pecuniary gain to such defendant as the result of the violation." 15 U.S.C. §§ 77t(d)(2), 78u(d)(3)(B). As mentioned above, an estimated 258 investors invested in the Stead property, and it is undisputed that the Stead offerings raised \$5,681,477 for Western, an amount many times above the appraised value of the property. Therefore, \$1,050,00 represents a fraction of the total amount the SEC could have requested. Accordingly, the Court finds the SEC's requested civil penalties of \$1,050,000 to be appropriate.

CONCLUSION AND ORDER

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the SEC's Motion for Injunctive Relief, Monetary Remedies, and Final Judgment against Defendant Louis V. Schooler, ECF No. 1137, is **GRANTED**.

I.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, ADJUDGED, AND DECREED that Defendant is permanently restrained and enjoined from violating, directly or indirectly, Section 10(b) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (the "Exchange Act") [15 U.S.C. § 78j(b)] and Rule 10b-5 promulgated thereunder [17 C.F.R. § 240.10b-5], by using any means or instrumentality of interstate commerce, or of the mails, or of any facility of any national securities exchange, in connection with the purchase or sale of any security:

- (a) to employ any device, scheme, or artifice to defraud;
- (b) to make any untrue statement of a material fact or to omit to state a

¹Defendant also argues that the Court may not impose more than one civil penalty even if a defendant has committed multiple violations, relying on *SEC v. Aqua Vie Beverage Corp.*, No. CV 04-414-S-SJL, 2008 WL 1914723 (D. Idaho April 29, 2008), and *SEC v. Poirier*, 140 F. Supp. 2d. 1033 (D. Ariz. 2001). However, Defendant's reliance on these two cases is misplaced. In *Aqua Vie*, the district court did not explain its rationale for rejecting the SEC's requested amount, stating only that the court "believes it sufficient to impose the statutory suggested penalty amount of \$120,000 only for one violation of Claim Two, Fraudulent Offer and Sale, for a total third tier civil penalty of \$120,000." *Aqua Vie Beverage Corp.*, 2008 WL 1914723, at *3. And in *Poirier*, the district court imposed the civil penalty requested by the SEC, which was one civil penalty per defendant, but did not make any statement as to the propriety of imposing more than one civil penalty on a single defendant. *Poirier*, 140 F. Supp. 2d at 1049.

material fact necessary in order to make the statements made, in the light of the circumstances under which they were made, not misleading; or

(c) to engage in any act, practice, or course of business which operates or would operate as a fraud or deceit upon any person.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, ADJUDGED, AND DECREED that, as provided in Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 65(d)(2), the foregoing paragraph also binds the following who receive actual notice of this Final Judgment by personal service or otherwise: (a) Defendant's officers, agents, servants, employees, and attorneys; and (b) other persons in active concert or participation with Defendant or with anyone described in (a).

II.

IT IS HEREBY FURTHER ORDERED, ADJUDGED, AND DECREED that Defendant is permanently restrained and enjoined from violating Section 17(a) of the Securities Act of 1933 (the "Securities Act") [15 U.S.C. § 77q(a)] in the offer or sale of any security by the use of any means or instruments of transportation or communication in interstate commerce or by use of the mails, directly or indirectly:

- (a) to employ any device, scheme, or artifice to defraud;
- (b) to obtain money or property by means of any untrue statement of a material fact or any omission of 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) to engage in any transaction, practice, or course of business which operates or would operate as a fraud or deceit upon the purchaser.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, ADJUDGED, AND DECREED that, as provided in Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 65(d)(2), the foregoing paragraph also binds the following who receive actual notice of this Final Judgment by personal service or otherwise: (a) Defendant's officers, agents, servants, employees, and attorneys; and (b) other persons in active concert or participation with Defendant or

with anyone described in (a).

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III.

IT IS HEREBY FURTHER ORDERED, ADJUDGED, AND DECREED that Defendant is permanently restrained and enjoined from violating Section 5 of the Securities Act [15 U.S.C. § 77e] by, directly or indirectly, in the absence of any applicable exemption:

- (a) Unless a registration statement is in effect as to a security, making use of any means or instruments of transportation or communication in interstate commerce or of the mails to sell such security through the use or medium of any prospectus or otherwise;
- (b) Unless a registration statement is in effect as to a security, carrying or causing to be carried through the mails or in interstate commerce, by any means or instruments of transportation, any such security for the purpose of sale or for delivery after sale; or
- (c) Making use of any means or instruments of transportation or communication in interstate commerce or of the mails to offer to sell or offer to buy through the use or medium of any prospectus or otherwise any security, unless a registration statement has been filed with the Commission as to such security, or while the registration statement is the subject of a refusal order or stop order or (prior to the effective date of the registration statement) any public proceeding or examination under Section 8 of the Securities Act [15 U.S.C. § 77h].

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, ADJUDGED, AND DECREED that, as provided in Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 65(d)(2), the foregoing paragraph also binds the following who receive actual notice of this Final Judgment by personal service or otherwise: (a) Defendant's officers, agents, servants, employees, and attorneys; and (b) other persons in active concert or participation with Defendant or with anyone described in (a).

IV.

IT IS HEREBY FURTHER ORDERED, ADJUDGED, AND DECREED that Defendant is liable for disgorgement of \$136,654,250, representing profits gained as a result of the conduct alleged in the Complaint, together with prejudgment interest thereon in the amount of \$10,956,030, for a total of \$147,610,280. Defendant shall satisfy this obligation by paying \$147,610,280 to the Securities and Exchange Commission on or before 14 days after entry of this Final Judgment.

Defendant may transmit payment electronically to the Commission, which will provide detailed ACH transfer/Fedwire instructions upon request. Payment may also be made directly from a bank account via Pay.gov through the SEC website at http://www.sec.gov/about/offices/ofm.htm. Defendant may also pay by certified check, bank cashier's check, or United States postal money order payable to the Securities and Exchange Commission, which shall be delivered or mailed to

Enterprise Services Center

Accounts Receivable Branch

6500 South MacArthur Boulevard

Oklahoma City, OK 73169

and shall be accompanied by a letter identifying the case title, civil action number, and name of this Court; Louis V. Schooler as a defendant in this action; and specifying that payment is made pursuant to this Final Judgment.

Defendant shall simultaneously transmit photocopies of evidence of payment and case identifying information to the Commission's counsel in this action. By making this payment, Defendant relinquishes all legal and equitable right, title, and interest in such funds and no part of the funds shall be returned to Defendant.

The Commission shall hold the funds (collectively, the "Fund") and may propose a plan to distribute the Fund subject to the Court's approval. The Court shall retain jurisdiction over the administration of any distribution of the Fund. If the Commission staff determines that the Fund will not be distributed, the

Commission shall send the funds paid pursuant to this Final Judgment to the United States Treasury.

The Commission may enforce the Court's judgment for disgorgement and prejudgment interest by moving for civil contempt (and/or through other collection procedures authorized by law) at any time after 14 days following entry of this Final Judgment. Defendant shall pay post judgment interest on any delinquent amounts pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1961.

V.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, ADJUDGED, AND DECREED that Defendant shall pay a civil penalty in the amount of \$1,050,000 to the Securities and Exchange Commission pursuant to 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).

Defendant shall make this payment on or before 14 days after entry of this Final Judgment. Defendant may transmit payment electronically to the Commission, which will provide detailed ACH transfer/Fedwire instructions upon request. Payment may also be made directly from a bank account via Pay.gov through the SEC website at http://www.sec.gov/about/offices/ofm.htm. Defendant may also pay by certified check, bank cashier's check, or United States postal money order payable to the Securities and Exchange Commission, which shall be delivered or mailed to

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1	and case identifying information to the Commission's counsel in this action. By	
2	making this payment, Defendant relinquishes all legal and equitable right, title, and	
3	interest in such funds and no part of the funds shall be returned to Defendant. The	
4	Commission shall send the funds paid pursuant to this Final Judgment to the United	
5	States Treasury. Defendant shall pay post-judgment interest on any delinquent	
6	amounts pursuant to 28 USC § 1961.	
7	VI.	
8	IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, ADJUDGED, AND DECREED that this Court	
9	shall retain jurisdiction of this matter for the purposes of enforcing the terms of this	
10	Final Judgment.	
11	VII.	
12	There being no just reason for delay, pursuant to Rule 54(b) of the Federal	
13	Rules of Civil Procedure, the Clerk is ordered to enter this Final Judgment forthwith	
14	and without further notice.	
15	IT IS SO ORDERED.	
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17	DATED: January 21, 2016	
18	Consalo C. J.	
19	United States District Judge	
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