U.S. Department of Justice

Terrence Berg
United States Attorney
Eastern District of Michigan

Suite 2001
211 West Fort Street
Detroit, Michigan 48226-3277

For Immediate Release:
Contact: Gina Balaya (313) 226-9758

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EVENT: Guilty Plea

Defendant: Frank Tribble

SECOND GUILTY PLEA ENTERED IN RALSKY SPAM CONSPIRACY

A Los Angeles, California resident pleaded guilty today in federal court in Detroit for his role in a wide-ranging international fraud scheme involving the illegal use of bulk commercial emailing, or "spamming," and stock market manipulation, announced Acting United States Attorney Terrence Berg.

Mr. Berg was joined in an announcement by Special Agent in Charge Andrew G. Arena, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Special Agent in Charge Maurice M. Aouate, Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation and Inspector in Charge Joseph Pirone, U.S. Postal Inspection Service.

Frank Tribble, 41, of Los Angeles, California, pleaded guilty to Conspiracy, Fraud in Connection with Electronic Mail ("CAN-SPAM"), Mail and Wire Fraud, along with Wire Fraud and Money Laundering.

Acting U.S. Attorney Terrence Berg said, "Using the Internet to manipulate the stock market through spam e-mail campaigns is a serious crime. This defendant was an expert in

stock market manipulation, and offered his services to the Alan Ralsky spamming conspiracy, which is charged with sending e-mail through proxy computers, using false e-mail headers, and touting Chinese penny stocks."

Andrew G. Arena, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation said, "Cyber crime investigations are a top priority of the FBI and we will continue to aggressively investigate those individuals who use and hide behind computers to commit various crimes." Maurice M. Aouate, Special Agent in Charge, Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation said, "In today's competitive international business world, there will always be a select few who illegally manipulate the system for their own profit," said Aouate. "IRS CI will continue to diligently follow the money and assist in the seizure and forfeiture of any ill-gotten gains from their illegal business practices."

According to court records and information provided to the Court at the time of the plea, from January 2004 through September 2005, Tribble conspired with Alan Ralsky and others to send tens of millions of unsolicited bulk commercial electronic mail ("spam") promoting thinly traded stocks for Chinese companies. The emails contained false header information and were sent through proxy computers. Tribble admitted that he provided advice on when to sell the stock after the spam e-mail advertisements had been sent, in order to maximize their profits. Tribble stated that he made $2.2 million in proceeds from the stock manipulation scheme between July through September 2005.

In July 2005, Tribble communicated via e-mail with coconspirator Scott Bradley, and discussed payments related to spam that was sent for the purpose of promoting the stock of several Chinese companies. In a single transaction in July 2005, Tribble transferred or caused others to transfer over $200,000.00 in proceeds from the stock manipulation scheme from a bank in Hong Kong to Standard Federal Bank in Michigan.

The charges arose after a three-year investigation which revealed a sophisticated and extensive spamming operation. As alleged in the indictment, this conspiracy promoted a stock "pump and dump" scheme, in which the defendants sent spam touting thinly traded Chinese

penny stocks, drove up their stock price, and reaped profits by selling the stock at artificially inflated prices. According to the indictment, the defendants used various illegal methods in order to maximize the amount of span that evaded spam-blocking devices and tricked recipients into opening, and acting on, the advertisements in the spam. These included using falsified “headers” in the email messages, using proxy computers to relay the spam, using falsely registered domain names to send the spam, as well as making misrepresentations in the advertising content of some of the underlying email messages.

This is the second guilty plea this week in the *U.S. v. Alan Ralsky, et.al*. investigation, with Judy Devenow, of Lansing, Michigan pleading guilty to Conspiracy, Fraud in Connection with Electronic Mail (“CAN SPAM”), Mail and Wire Fraud, along with Aiding and Abetting Electronic mail Fraud.

The case is being prosecuted by Acting United States Attorney Terrence Berg and Trial Attorneys Tomas Dukes and Mona Spivack of the Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section of the Criminal Division of the Department of Justice in Washington, D.C.