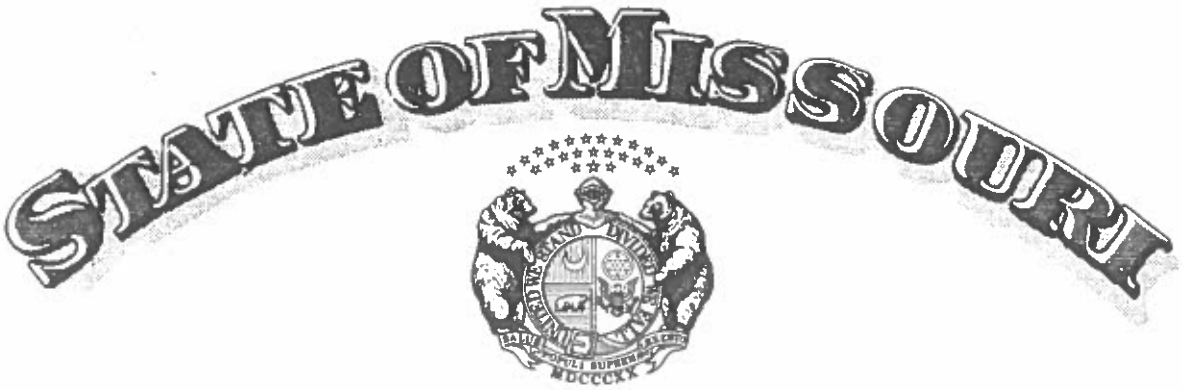

DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE, FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATION

P.O. Box 690, Jefferson City, Mo. 65102-0690

In re:	)	
	)	
ROBERT M. PALMER,	)	**Case No. 140815605C**
	)	
Respondent.	)	

CONSENT ORDER

John M. Huff, Director of the Department of Insurance, Financial Institutions and Professional Registration takes up the above matter for consideration and disposition. The Consumer Affairs Division, through legal counsel John M. A. Conrace, and Respondent Robert M. Palmer, have reached a settlement in this matter and Respondent has consented to the issuance of this Consent Order.

1. John M. Huff is the duly appointed Director of the Missouri Department of Insurance, Financial Institutions and Professional Registration ("Department") whose duties, pursuant to Chapters 374 and 375 RSMo,[1] include supervision, regulation, and discipline of insurance producers.

[1] All statutory references are to the 2013 Supplement to the Revised Statutes of Missouri unless otherwise noted.

2. The Consumer Affairs Division ("Division") of the Department has the duty, charged by the insurance laws of this state, to investigate unfair or unlawful acts committed by insurance producers or companies and has been authorized by the Director to initiate this action in order to enforce the insurance laws of this state.

3. The Department issued Respondent Robert M. Palmer ("Palmer") an insurance producer license (No. 0188035) on October 9, 1992, which was continuously renewed until it expired on June 1, 2014.

4. Together with another insurance producer, Mark L. Driver ("Driver"), Palmer owned and operated Princeton Partnership, LLC ("Princeton"), an insurance brokerage business involved in the sale of insurance and investment products.

5. From approximately 2004 to 2010, Palmer and Driver operated a Ponzi scheme through Princeton, soliciting investors and misappropriating funds provided by new clients to repay old clients, pay their own personal expenses, and pay the expenses of Princeton.

6. On August 21, 2013, a grand jury indicted Palmer on two (2) counts of Mail Fraud, a Class C Felony, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1341 (2008), and two (2) counts of Wire Fraud, a Class C Felony, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1343 (2008). *United States v. Robert M. Palmer, et al.*, Case No. 4:13-CR-00338-RWS-001 (E.D. Mo. 2013).

7. On June 5, 2014, Palmer and the United States Attorney filed a Guilty Plea Agreement, in which he pled guilty to all four (4) counts of the indictment. The court adopted and approved the Guilty Plea Agreement. *Id.*

8. On June 5, 2014, Palmer appeared before the United States District Court, Eastern District of Missouri, and pled guilty to each of the four (4) counts of the indictment. *Id.*

9. On October 14, 2014, the court sentenced Palmer to seventy (70) months' incarceration in federal prison and ordered Palmer to pay restitution in the amount of $2,981,710.56 jointly and severally with Driver. *Id.*

10. The Guilty Plea Agreement, as signed by Palmer, states verbatim in part "that the facts in this case are as follows and that the government would prove these facts beyond a reasonable doubt if the case were to go to trial":

a. "Princeton Partnership, LLC ... was an insurance brokerage business purportedly involved in the sale of various insurance and investment products ...."

b. "Defendant **ROBERT PALMER** ... and defendant **MARK DRIVER** ... were the owners and operators of Princeton. **PALMER** and **DRIVER** ran the day to day operations of Princeton, solicited customers, marketed the company's services, and had financial oversight of the company with authorization over the company's two operating bank accounts located at Private Bank and Bank of America."

c. "Beginning during in or about 2004, and continuing through in or about 2010, defendants, **PALMER** and **DRIVER** acting together and aiding and abetting one another, devised, intended to devise, and knowingly participated in a scheme to defraud and obtain money from several Princeton clients by means of materially false and fraudulent pretenses, representations, and promises."

d. "Both defendants **PALMER** and **DRIVER** solicited some clients for Princeton, while other clients were referred to them by other individuals. As part of

their scheme, defendants made false promises and false representations that Princeton would invest clients' funds in suitable investments including but not limited to real estate, stocks, and life insurance annuities ...."

e. "During the period of defendant **PALMER's** and **DRIVER's** scheme, Princeton Partnership clients relied upon and believed defendants' false representations and false promises, and the clients transferred their money and stock holdings to defendants and Princeton Partnership for the promised investments. Instead of placing the clients' funds in the promised investments for the benefit of the clients, defendants **PALMER** and **DRIVER** used some or all of those funds for their own personal expenses and the general operating expenses of Princeton Partnership. In furtherance of their scheme, and in order to conceal their scheme, defendants **PALMER** and **DRIVER** also engaged in a series of *Ponzi* type transactions whereby they used funds provided to Princeton Partnership by new clients to repay old clients without knowledge of the new Princeton clients and with the false belief and understanding of the old clients that the funds paid to them were the return on their purported investments."

f. "As a result of their scheme, defendants **PALMER** and **DRIVER** obtained funds and moneys from Princeton Partnership clients based upon their false representations and false promises, and defendants used some or all of those funds for their own personal expenses and for the expenses of their company Princeton Partnership."

Id (emphasis in original).

11. In light of these facts, Palmer's insurance producer license is subject to discipline pursuant to:

a. Section 375.141.1(6) because Palmer has been convicted of four (4) federal felonies: two (2) counts of Mail Fraud, both Class C Felonies, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1341 and two (2) counts of Wire Fraud, both Class C Felonies, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1343. *Id.*

b. Section 375.141.1(4) because Palmer improperly misappropriated or converted moneys or properties received in the course of doing insurance business when, instead of using clients' money and stock holdings for investments, Palmer used the money for personal expenses, the expenses of Princeton, and to repay old clients.

c. Section 375.141.1(8) because Palmer used fraudulent or dishonest practices, or demonstrated incompetence, untrustworthiness or financial irresponsibility in the conduct of business in Missouri or elsewhere when he engaged in a series of Ponzi type transactions, obtaining funds from new clients for Princeton based upon false representations and false promises, then using that money to repay old clients, for his own personal expenses, and for the expenses of Princeton, rather than for the promised investments.

12. Palmer agrees that the facts contained in this Consent Order constitute grounds to discipline his resident insurance producer license pursuant to § 375.141.1(4), (6), and (8).

13. Palmer and the Division desire to settle the allegations raised by the Division.

14. On or about October 14, 2015, counsel for the Division, in accordance with § 621.045.4(1), provided a written description of the specific conduct for which discipline is

sought; citations to the laws and rules allegedly violated; copies of documents supporting its allegations; and the Division's settlement offer, namely, this Consent Order. Counsel for the Division, in accordance with § 621.045.4(2), further advised Palmer that he had sixty (60) days to review the relevant documents and consider the proposed settlement offer.

15. Palmer acknowledges that he has been advised that he may, either at the time this Consent Order is signed by all parties or within fifteen (15) days thereafter, submit this Consent Order to the Administrative Hearing Commission for determination of whether the facts stated herein constitute grounds for the discipline of Palmer's insurance producer license.

16. Except as provided in paragraph 15 above, Palmer stipulates and agrees to waive any rights that he may have to a hearing before the Administrative Hearing Commission or the Director and any rights to seek judicial review or other challenge or contest of the terms and conditions of this Consent Order and forever release and hold harmless the Department, the Director, his agents, and the Consumer Affairs Division from all liability and claims arising out of, pertaining to, or relating to this matter.

17. Palmer acknowledges that he understands he has the right to consult an attorney at his own expense.

18. Palmer acknowledges and understands that this Consent Order is an administrative action and will be reported by the Department to other states. Palmer further acknowledges and understands that this administrative action should be disclosed on future applications and renewal applications and that it is his responsibility to comply with the reporting requirements of each state in which he is licensed.

19. Each signatory to this Consent Order certifies by signing that he or she is fully authorized, in his or her own capacity, or by the named party he or she represents, to accept the terms and provisions of this Consent Order in their entirety, and agrees, in his or her personal or representational capacity, to be bound by the terms of this Consent Order.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

20. Section 375.141 provides, in relevant part:

> 1. The director may suspend, revoke, refuse to issue or refuse to renew an insurance producer license for any one or more of the following causes:
>
> * * *
>
> (4) Improperly withholding, misappropriating or converting any moneys or properties received in the course of doing insurance business;
>
> * * *
>
> (6) Having been convicted of a felony or crime involving moral turpitude; [or]
>
> * * *
>
> (8) Using fraudulent, coercive, or dishonest practices, or demonstrating incompetence, untrustworthiness or financial irresponsibility in the conduct of business in this state or elsewhere[.]
>
> * * *
>
> 4. The director may also revoke or suspend pursuant to subsection 1 of this section any license issued by the director where the licensee has failed to renew or has surrendered such license.

21. The allegations raised by the Consumer Affairs Division, and admitted to herein by Palmer, are grounds to discipline Palmer's insurance producer license pursuant to § 375.141.1 (4), (6), and (8).

22. The Director is authorized to settle this matter and issue this Consent Order in the public interest pursuant to §§ 374.046, 621.045, and 536.060.

23. The terms set forth in this Consent Order are an appropriate disposition of this matter and entry of this Consent Order is in the public interest.

ORDER

IT IS ORDERED THAT Respondent Robert M. Palmer's insurance producer license (No. 0188035) is hereby **REVOKED**.

SO ORDERED, SIGNED AND OFFICIAL SEAL AFFIXED THIS 25th **DAY OF** NOVEMBER**, 2015.**

JOHN M. HUFF, ~~Director~~
Missouri Department of Insurance,
Financial Institutions and Professional
Registration

CONSENT AND WAIVER OF HEARING

The undersigned persons understand and acknowledge that Respondent Robert M. Palmer has a right to a hearing, but that Respondent waived the hearing and consented to the issuance of this Consent Order.

Robert M. Palmer, BOP # 40821-044
FCI Memphis
1101 John A. Denie Road
Memphis, TN 38134

NOV. 14. 2015
Date

N/A
Counsel for Respondent
Name: _____
Missouri Bar No.: _____
Address: _____
_____
_____
Phone: _____
Fax: _____

Date

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11/24/2015
Date