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**STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS
SECURITIES DIVISION**

IN THE MATTER OF DETERMINING
Whether there has been a violation of the
Securities Act of Washington by:

Gregory Lone;
Paramount Financial Advisors LLC;

Respondents.

Order No. S-19-2639-20-FO01

ENTRY OF FINDINGS OF FACT AND
CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND FINAL ORDER
TO CEASE AND DESIST, DENY FUTURE
REGISTRATIONS, IMPOSE FINES, AND
CHARGE COSTS

THE STATE OF WASHINGTON TO:

Gregory Lone
Paramount Financial Advisors LLC

On June 1, 2020, the Securities Administrator of the State of Washington issued Statement of Charges and Notice of Intent to Order Cease and Desist, Deny Future Registrations, Impose Fines, and Charge Costs, Order No. S-19-2639-20-SC01 (“Statement of Charges”) against Respondents Gregory Lone and Paramount Financial Advisors LLC (collectively, “the Respondents”). The Statement of Charges, together with a Notice of Opportunity for Hearing (“Notice”) and an Application for Adjudicative Hearing (“Application”), were served on the Respondents, on June 8, 2020. The Notice advised the Respondents that the Application must be received within twenty days from the date of service. The Respondents failed to request an administrative hearing within twenty days of service.

The Securities Administrator therefore adopts as final the following Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law as set forth in the Statement of Charges and enters a final order against the Respondents to cease and desist from violations of the Securities Act, to deny any future applications for registration with the Securities Division by the Respondents, and to impose the fines and costs sought in the Statement of Charges.

1 **FINDINGS OF FACT**

2 1. Gregory Lone (“Lone”) is a resident of East Wenatchee, Washington. Lone is a licensed
3 insurance agent and former registered securities salesperson in Washington; his registration number with the
4 Office of the Insurance Commissioner is 227770 and his Central Registration Depository number is 2347566.
5 Lone worked as a registered securities salesperson for American General Securities Inc. from April 1993
6 through December 2002, and for Edward Jones from April 2004 to June 2006, when he was discharged for
7 failing to meet his performance goals. Lone has not been registered in the securities industry since his
8 discharge from Edward Jones. The Office of the Insurance Commissioner brought two actions against Lone
9 in 2018 for (in part) false representations to a client in the sale of an insurance policy.

10 2. Paramount Financial Advisors LLC (“Paramount”) is a Washington limited liability company
11 formed on October 20, 2014, with its principal place of business in East Wenatchee, Washington.¹ Lone
12 conducted his insurance and financial business, including the scheme described further below, through
13 Paramount, and paid for most of his expenses using Paramount’s bank accounts.

14 **Nature of the Conduct**

15 **Overview and Background**

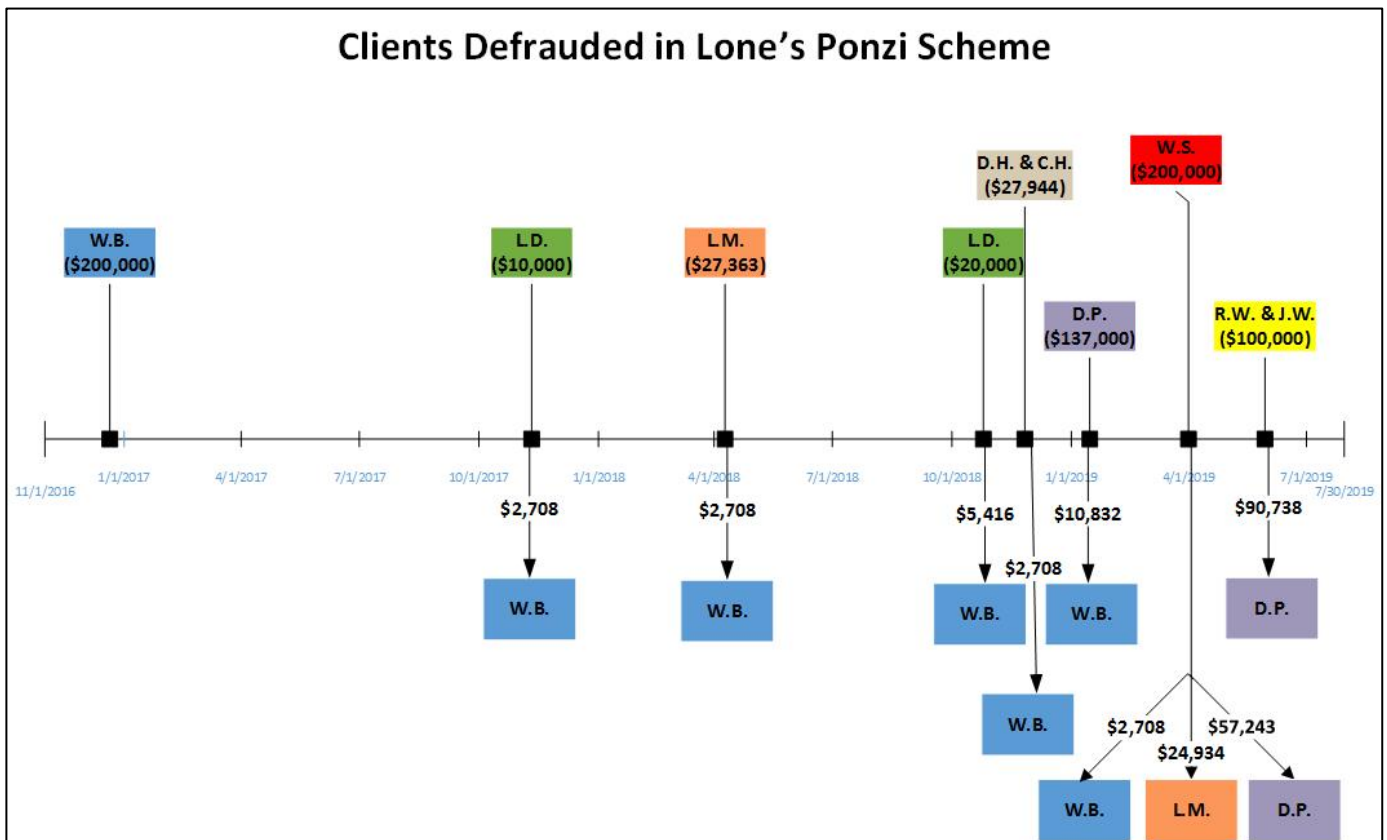
16 3. From December 2016 to at least May 2019, Lone, through Paramount, engaged in a scheme to
17 defraud at least seven clients of nearly a half-million dollars. Lone falsely told these clients that their money
18 would be spent on financial products, then used the money for personal and business expenses or to pay
19 promised returns to other clients. Six of Lone’s defrauded clients were in their eighties or nineties.

20 4. Lone obtained most of his clients by buying out the insurance agency of W.N., a longtime
21 insurance agent and securities salesperson in the Wenatchee area; each of the victims described below are
22

23

¹ Despite its name, Paramount is not a registered investment adviser in Washington or any other jurisdiction.

1 former clients of W.N. Although Lone’s methods differed somewhat from client to client, he most commonly
 2 was approached by former W.N. clients who had recently received five-figure or six-figure sums of money
 3 and needed assistance determining how to use the money. Lone then convinced the client to write a check to
 4 Paramount for some form of investment, and subsequently used the money largely for personal expenses or
 5 (in the later stages of the Ponzi scheme) to repay other defrauded clients. The below timeline illustrates how
 6 Lone used funds from one client to repay other clients—commonly known as a Ponzi scheme.²



Defrauded Clients: W.B.

5. W.B. is a 96-year-old resident of East Wenatchee, Washington. W.B. sold her home in late 2016, and wanted to invest the proceeds of \$200,000 in an annuity with a return of approximately \$2,700 per

² The upper portion of the timeline shows the client’s initials and the amount of their investment in parentheses, with the line corresponding to the date Lone deposited their check into Paramount’s bank account. The bottom portion of the chart shows the portion of the proceeds, if any, which Lone used to repay other victims of his Ponzi scheme.

1 automobile. When L.D. asked Lone to return his money in late 2019 to early 2020, Lone wrote him a check
2 which was returned for insufficient funds.

3 **L.M.**

4 8. L.M. is a resident of Wenatchee, Washington. In approximately April 2018, Lone solicited
5 L.M. to invest \$27,563 in what she believed was a variable annuity which would be added onto an existing
6 annuity. At the time Lone deposited L.M.'s check, Paramount's account was overdrawn by \$1796.64. As with
7 W.B., Lone did not invest L.M.'s funds, but used them on a variety of business and personal expenses,
8 including the settlement of an action against him by the Office of the Insurance Commissioner and a purported
9 annuity payment to W.B. Lone did not disclose this unauthorized use of funds to L.M. L.M. requested her
10 money back in approximately late 2018 to make a down payment on a home. As described further below,
11 several months after L.M. requested the withdrawal, Lone used another investor's money to repay her. Lone
12 did not tell L.M. that the repayment was being made with money from another client.

13 **D.H. and C.H.**

14 9. D.H. and C.H. are a married couple residing in East Wenatchee, Washington; they are
15 respectively 90 and 78 years old. In approximately November 2018, D.H. and C.H. were having issues with
16 a life insurance policy which they had purchased from W.N., and contacted Lone to assist them. Because they
17 were upset with W.N.'s handling of the policy, D.H. and C.H. told Lone that they wanted to transfer or sell
18 all of the investments which W.N. had sold them, including a securities account held at Putnam Investments.
19 On Lone's instructions, D.H. and C.H. wrote a check to Paramount for \$27,944.30; C.H. was under the
20 impression that this was part of the process for rolling over the funds. Lone did not invest D.H. and C.H.'s
21 money, but used it for business and personal expenses, including a purported annuity payment of \$2,708 to
22 W.B., and a \$3,000 payment to an attorney who had represented him in the above-mentioned actions by the
23 Office of the Insurance Commissioner.

1 **D.P.**

2 10. D.P. is an 89-year-old resident of Cashmere, Washington. D.P. is legally blind and
3 substantially relies on a friend for assistance in her everyday life. In late 2018 to early 2019, D.P. wanted to
4 withdraw \$35,000 from her investment accounts to pay for renovations to her home. D.P. contacted Lone,
5 who had previously helped her with an insurance matter after taking over W.N.'s agency. At the time, D.P.
6 had substantial holdings in Microsoft stock inherited from her son, who predeceased her. Lone convinced
7 D.P. to withdraw \$137,000 of Microsoft stock and give it to him to invest.⁴ After withdrawing the money,
8 D.P. became concerned about the amount, and instructed Lone to put \$80,000 back into Microsoft stock and
9 the remaining \$57,000 in a mix of other stocks. Lone did neither, and provided D.P. with falsified account
10 statements and trade confirmations to deceive her into thinking he had purchased the Microsoft stock.

11 11. At the time Lone deposited D.P.'s check into Paramount's checking account, the checking
12 account balance was under \$500. On the day he deposited the check and the following day (January 15 and
13 16, 2019, Lone spent or transferred \$32,958.53 to various sources, including \$5,416 for two months of
14 purported annuity payments to W.B. and \$7,000 to his personal account at another financial institution. Lone
15 spent essentially all of D.P.'s \$137,000 between mid-January 2019 and early April 2019, and had a total of
16 only \$3979.64 in deposits into the Paramount account during that time, meaning that he was living almost
17 entirely from her stolen funds.

18 **W.S.**

19 12. W.S. is a 95-year-old resident of East Wenatchee, Washington. In February 2019, W.S.
20 received \$200,000 as the beneficiary of a life insurance policy from a deceased relative. W.S. and her son
21

22 ⁴ Lone also contacted D.P.'s broker-dealer during this process and represented himself as her financial advisor. Although Lone is
23 not licensed to provide advice on securities, D.P.'s account representative at the broker-dealer searched for Lone and found that he
was associated with "Paramount Financial Advisors," which the account representative believed meant that he was appropriately
licensed.

1 T.S., who assists her with financial affairs, contacted Lone after finding W.N.'s name on the insurance
2 paperwork and subsequently learning that Lone had taken over his business. Lone suggested putting the funds
3 into a money market account with Paramount while he developed a plan for the use of the funds, along with
4 additional money from the deceased relative's investment accounts which she had left to W.S., but which
5 W.S. had not received at that point.

6 13. In late March 2019, W.S. provided Lone with a \$200,000 check made out to Paramount, which
7 Lone deposited into a newly-opened savings account in Paramount's name several days later. Over the next
8 two months, Lone spent approximately three-quarters of W.S.'s money on various business and personal
9 expenses, including \$57,000 to pay back D.P. for the portion of her funds which was supposed to be invested
10 in stock other than Microsoft (Lone falsely told D.P. that he had left her funds in savings rather than spending
11 them, and did not tell her that the money to pay her back was coming from another client). Lone's expenditures
12 during this time also included \$16,750 in cash, \$17,160 on retail and services, and \$7,500 to a debt collection
13 company. Lone did not tell W.S. about how her funds were being used, instead repeatedly telling her and T.S.
14 that the funds were safe in a money market account. T.S. eventually confronted Lone about the funds, and
15 Lone admitted that he had used the money to repay other clients and agreed to repay W.S. As of the date of
16 this Statement of Charges, Lone has not made any repayments to W.S.

17 **R.W. and J.W.**

18 14. R.W. and J.W. are a married couple residing in East Wenatchee, Washington; they are
19 respectively 83 and 82 years old. In approximately April 2019, R.W. and J.W. sold their home and wanted to
20 invest \$200,000 of the proceeds. Lone suggested that they should invest half of that amount in an annuity and
21 half in a "stock fund" through Paramount. Lone told R.W. and J.W. that the Paramount "stock fund" was safe
22 and liquid, but did not provide him with any written disclosure materials or contracts. R.W. and J.W. invested
23 \$100,000 in the "stock fund" via a check written to Paramount.

1 IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Respondents Gregory Lone and Paramount Financial Advisors
2 LLC shall be jointly and severally liable for and pay a fine in the amount of \$70,000.

3 IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Respondents Gregory Lone and Paramount Financial Advisors
4 LLC shall be liable for and pay costs in the amount of \$10,000.

5 **AUTHORITY AND PROCEDURE**

6 This FINAL ORDER is entered pursuant to the provisions of RCW 21.20.390 and RCW 21.20.110,
7 and is subject to the provisions of RCW 21.20.440 and Chapter 34.05 RCW. Respondents have the right to
8 petition the superior court for judicial review of this agency action under the provisions of Chapter 34.05
9 RCW. For the requirements for judicial review, see RCW 34.05.510 and sections following. Pursuant to
10 RCW 21.20.395, a certified copy of this Order may be filed in Superior Court. If so filed, the clerk shall
11 treat the Order in the same manner as a Superior Court judgment as to the fine, and the fine may be recorded,
12 enforced, or satisfied in like manner.

13 **WILLFUL VIOLATION OF THIS ORDER IS A CRIMINAL OFFENSE.**

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15 SIGNED and ENTERED this 5th day of August, 2020.

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19 _____
20 William M. Beatty
21 Securities Administrator

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Approved by:



Suzanne Sarason
Chief of Enforcement

Presented by:



Adam N. Yeaton
Financial Legal Examiner

Reviewed by:



Jack McClellan
Financial Legal Examiner Supervisor