

TWO SENTENCED ON INTERNET AND SECURITIES FRAUD CASE

January 29, 2007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

R. Alexander Acosta, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, Betty N. Stewart, Acting Special Agent in Charge, Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation, Miami Field Office, and Jonathan I. Solomon, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Miami Field Office, announced that defendants **Bernard Roemmele** and **Steve Hein** were sentenced to by the Honorable James I. Cohn in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. Roemmele was sentenced to 144 months in jail, to be followed by three years of supervised release; Hein was sentenced to 48 months in jail, to be followed by three years of supervised release. Judge Cohn also ordered Roemmele and Hein to pay restitution in the amount of \$14,804,785.00.

In one of the largest internet fraud cases to be prosecuted in the Southern District of Florida, and after a six-month trial, Roemmele and Hein were convicted in August 2006 of RICO conspiracy and conspiracy to commit money laundering as well as conspiracy to commit mail and wire fraud. Roemmele was also convicted of one count of securities violation.

At trial, the evidence established that Roemmele led the criminal enterprise in committing wide- spread fraud against more than 46,000 victims. These victims were defrauded through the internet and a corporation known as CITX.

CITX was formerly an internet service provider and alleged computer technology company, which joined with a Boca Raton-based marketing company, PRSI, Inc., to perpetrate the fraud. Through these companies, the defendants used the internet to offer the public a non-existent e-commerce opportunity for a fee of \$295 per person. Specifically, the offering promised customers an electronic website "store" that allegedly would provide customers with an opportunity to engage in e-commerce by electronically retailing goods and services on a pornography-free "internet mall." Customers were promised that they would earn commissions not only from their personal sales, but also from the sales generated by the website purchasers. In addition, the defendants used the internet, false press releases, and other communications media to disseminate false and fraudulent information to induce individuals to purchase stock in CITX. Throughout the course of the fraudulent schemes, the defendants generated more than \$15 million in criminal proceeds.

Mr. Acosta commended the investigative efforts of the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. This case was prosecuted by Department of Justice/Organized Crime and Racketeering Section Trial Attorney Patrice M. Mulkern and Assistant United States Attorney William T. Shockley.

A copy of this press release may be found on the website of the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Florida at <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/fls>. Related court documents and information may be found on the website of the District Court for the Southern District of Florida at <http://www.flsd.uscourts.gov> or on <http://pacer.flsd.uscourts.gov>.