# STATE OF WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS SECURITIES DIVISION

Respondents

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

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Little Loan Shoppe Ltd.; Little Loan Shoppe America, LLC; 639504 BC, Ltd.; Little Loan Shoppe Canada, LLC; 0738106 BC, Ltd.; 0738116 BC, Ltd.; 0738126 BC, Ltd.; LLS America, LLC; LLS-A, LLC (WA); Pacific LLS, LLC; Atlantic LLS, LLC; Eastern LLS, LLC; Central LLS, LLC; LLS-A, LLC (NV); LLS-NW, LLC; LLS-US, LLC;

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Doris Nelson; Paul Cooper;

Order Number S-09-216-09-SC01

STATEMENT OF CHARGES AND NOTICE OF INTENT TO ENTER ORDER TO CEASE AND DESIST, IMPOSE FINES, AND CHARGE COSTS

THE STATE OF WASHINGTON TO:

Little Loan Shoppe America, LLC 639504 BC, Ltd. Little Loan Shoppe Canada, LLC 0738106 BC, Ltd. 0738116 BC, Ltd. 0738126 BC, Ltd. LLS America, LLC LLS-A, LLC (WA) Pacific LLS, LLC Atlantic LLS, LLC Eastern LLS, LLC Central LLS, LLC LLS-A, LLC (NV) LLS-NW, LLC LLS-US, LLC Doris Nelson Paul Cooper

Little Loan Shoppe Ltd.

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STATEMENT OF CHARGES AND NOTICE OF INTENT TO ENTER ORDER TO CEASE AND DESIST, IMPOSE FINES. AND CHARGE COSTS

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS Securities Division PO Box 9033 Olympia, WA 98507-9033 360-902-8760

#### STATEMENT OF CHARGES

Please take notice that the Securities Administrator of the State of Washington has reason to believe that Respondents, Little Loan Shoppe Ltd.; Little Loan Shoppe America, LLC; 639504 BC Ltd.; Little Loan Shoppe Canada, LLC; 0738106 BC Ltd.; 0738116 BC Ltd.; 0738126 BC Ltd.; LLS America, LLC; LLS-A, LLC (WA); Pacific LLS, LLC; Atlantic LLS, LLC; Eastern LLS, LLC; Central LLS, LLC; LLS-A, LLC (NV); LLS-NW, LLC; LLS-US, LLC; Doris Nelson; and Paul Cooper have each violated the Securities Act of Washington and that their violations justify the entry of an order of the Securities Administrator under RCW 21.20.390 against each to cease and desist from such violations. The Securities Administrator finds as follows: TENTATIVE FINDINGS OF FACT

## Respondents

- 1. Little Loan Shoppe Ltd. is a British Columbia company established on August 27, 1997 with its principal place of business originally located in British Columbia. Little Loan Shoppe Ltd. dissolved on or about January 2, 2006.
- 2. Little Loan Shoppe America, LLC is a Washington limited liability company established on May 18, 2001 with its principal place of business believed to be located in Spokane, Washington. Little Loan Shoppe America, LLC dissolved on September 5, 2007.
- 3. 639504 BC, Ltd. is a British Columbia company established on December 24, 2001 with its principal place of business believed to be located in Spokane, Washington. 639504 BC, Ltd. dissolved on or about August 6, 2007.

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	4.	Little Loan Shoppe Canada, LLC is a Nevada limited liability company
establi	ished on	January 15, 2005 with its principal place of business believed to be located in
Spoka	ne, Was	hington.

- 5. 0738106 BC, Ltd. is a British Columbia company established on October 19, 2005 with its principal place of business believed to be located in Spokane, Washington.
- 6. 0738116 BC, Ltd. is a British Columbia company established on October 19, 2005 with its principal place of business believed to be located in Spokane, Washington.
- 7. 0738126 BC, Ltd. is a British Columbia company established on October 19, 2005 with its principal place of business believed to be located in Spokane, Washington.
- 8. LLS America, LLC is a Nevada limited liability company established on November 3, 2005 with its principal place of business believed to be located in Spokane, Washington. LLS America, LLC petitioned for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in July 2009.
- 9. LLS-A, LLC is a Washington limited liability company established on February 15, 2007 with its principal place of business believed to be located in Spokane, Washington ["LLS-A, LLC (WA)"]. An involuntary petition for Chapter 11 bankruptcy was filed against LLS-A, LLC (WA) in July 2009.
- 10. Pacific LLS, LLC is a Nevada limited liability company established on May 7,2008 with its principal place of business believed to be located in Spokane, Washington. Pacific LLS, LLC is currently in default status with the Nevada Secretary of State.
- Atlantic LLS, LLC is a Nevada limited liability company established on May 7,2008 with its principal place of business believed to be located in Spokane, Washington.Atlantic LLS, LLC is currently in default status with the Nevada Secretary of State.

2008 with its principal place of business believed to be located in Spokane, Washington. LLS-LLS-US, LLC is a Nevada limited liability company established on August 15, 2008 with its principal place of business believed to be located in Spokane, Washington. LLS-Doris Nelson ("Nelson") is believed to reside in Colbert, Washington. Nelson acted as managing member for Little Loan Shoppe Ltd.; Little Loan Shoppe America, LLC; 0738126 BC Ltd.; LLS America, LLC; LLS-A, LLC (WA); Pacific LLS, LLC; Atlantic LLS, LLC; Eastern LLS, LLC; Central LLS, LLC; LLS-A, LLC (NV); LLS-NW, LLC; and LLS-US, DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS **Securities Division** PO Box 9033 Olympia, WA 98507-9033 360-902-8760

18. Paul Cooper ("Cooper") is believed to reside in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. Paul Cooper facilitated securities transactions for Little Loan Shoppe.

## Nature of the Offerings

"Little Loan Shoppe" and Little Loan Shoppe Entities

- 19. Nelson started Little Loan Shoppe Ltd. in British Columbia in 1997. The business purportedly offered short term payday/installment loans through storefront offices in British Columbia. In 2001 Nelson expanded her payday/installment loan operations to Spokane, Washington under the name Little Loan Shoppe America, LLC.
- 20. In approximately 2004, Nelson began offering payday loans over the internet, supposedly only to Canadian customers, through <a href="https://www.littleloanshoppe.com">www.littleloanshoppe.com</a>.
- 21. In 2005 and 2006 Nelson established two companies in Nevada called LLS America, LLC and LLS Canada, LLC. Those two companies registered as foreign corporations in the state of Utah and also registered with Utah to become a consumer lender. LLS America, LLC and LLS Canada, LLC have no physical offices in Nevada or Utah. Nelson claimed in bankruptcy proceedings for LLS America, LLC that LLS America, LLC has no employees and instead contracts with another company created and managed by Nelson called Team Spirit America, LLC ("Team Spirit America") to conduct its operations. Nelson incorporated Team Spirit America in Washington State in May of 2006 and operates the company out of a building located in Spokane, Washington.
- America, LLC; and LLS, Canada, LLC she began shifting her payday/installment loan business toward online operations and away from storefronts. By at least 2006 <a href="https://www.littleloanshoppe.com">www.littleloanshoppe.com</a> offered payday/installment loans to U.S. customers as well as Canadian customers. Little Loan STATEMENT OF CHARGES AND NOTICE OF 5 DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS INTENT TO ENTER ORDER TO CEASE AND DESIST, PO Box 9033 Olympia, WA 98507-9033 360-902-8760 1

1 Shoppe Ltd. dissolved in January of 2006. Nelson closed the storefront offices of Little Loan 2 Shoppe America, LLC and ceased its registration to provide consumer loans in Washington by 3 the end of that same year. As of the date of this Statement of Charges, the website 4 www.littleloanshoppe.com continues to operate. 5 Offer and Sale of Securities 6 23. Beginning no later than 2000, Little Loan Shoppe Ltd. began issuing promissory 7 notes to individuals who loaned the company money. Nelson told these individuals that Little 8 Loan Shoppe Ltd. was expanding and needed capital. Little Loan Shoppe Ltd. issued 1-2 year 9 term promissory notes to investors which paid interest rates ranging from 33-60%. These notes 10 originated primarily from Little Loan Shoppe's offices in British Columbia. 11 12 24. By 2001, Little Loan Shoppe America, LLC began issuing promissory notes to 13 investors similar to those offered by Little Loan Shoppe Ltd. Little Loan Shoppe America, 14 LLC's notes originated out of Washington State. Nelson told those investors that their funds 15 would be used to fund her payday loan business. 16 25. From 2001 through 2008, Nelson formed and managed the following business 17 entities which issued promissory notes similar to those of Little Loan Shoppe Ltd. and Little 18 Loan Shoppe America, LLC: 639504 BC, Ltd.; Little Loan Shoppe Canada, LLC; 0738106 BC, 19 Ltd.; 0738116 BC, Ltd.; 0738126 BC, Ltd.; LLS Canada, LLC (NV); LLS America, LLC; LLS-20 A, LLC (WA); Pacific LLS, LLC; Atlantic LLS, LLC; Eastern LLS, LLC; Central LLS, LLC; 21 LLS-A, LLC (NV); LLS-AM, LLC; LLS-CAN, LLC; LLS-CAN-US, LLC; LLS-NW, LLC; 22 LLS-US, LLC; and LLS-US-CAN, LLC. (Hereinafter "LLS affiliated entities"). 23 Regardless of which LLS affiliated entity appeared on the promissory note, 26. 24 25 investors were told their investment would be used to expand the business or fund the operations DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS STATEMENT OF CHARGES AND NOTICE OF **Securities Division** INTENT TO ENTER ORDER TO CEASE AND DESIST. PO Box 9033

Olympia, WA 98507-9033

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IMPOSE FINES, AND CHARGE COSTS

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LLS-A, LLC (WA); Atlantic LLS, LLC; and LLS-A, LLC (NV). At least two Washington residents entered into notes in which Nelson agreed to pay the note "solely and collectively," along with three LLS affiliated entities.

- 33. In addition to those entities that Washington residents invested with, non-Washington residents sent funds to Spokane, Washington via wire transfer or check and received notes from at least the following LLS affiliated entities: 0738106 BC, Ltd.; 0738116 BC, Ltd.; Pacific LLS, LLC; Eastern LLS, LLC; Central LLS, LLC; LLS-NW, LLC; and LLS-US, LLC.
- 34. Most investors with LLS affiliated entities learned about the investment opportunity from friends or family members that had previously invested. A number of investors were Jehovah's Witnesses that heard about the investment from fellow Jehovah's Witnesses.

  Interested individuals were typically referred to Cooper or Nelson for details on the investment.
- 35. Nelson consistently told investors that LLS continued to grow and was financially sound. Nelson told some investors that she had a secure bank account for investor funds and told one investor that an investment with her company was more secure than a bank. Other investors stated that Nelson claimed she had millions to back investor loans and that she only loaned out approximately 30% of the funds provided by investors.
- 36. Nelson directed potential investors to <a href="www.littleloanshoppe.com">www.littleloanshoppe.com</a> to review the fees collected on payday loans. Nelson said that the payday loans were capped at \$500 for any one customer and the loan terms lasted only a couple of weeks. Therefore, investor funds could be used to fund multiple short term payday loans. Nelson explained that she made so much interest off of the short term loans that it was easy to pay investors 40 or 60% interest on their funds. Nelson also told investors that she had stringent loan guidelines for her payday loans and had access to debit bank accounts to recover funds.

- 37. Nelson often promised to provide financial statements for LLS to potential investors, but never delivered on those promises. Nelson told some investors that because the business was booming she was too busy to provide financial statements. Some investors requested a prospectus for their investment and Nelson told those individuals that only investors with over one million dollars received a prospectus.
- 38. Nelson told several investors that if they needed their principal back before maturity of their investment, they could get it back immediately or with one or two months notice.
- 39. In 2008 Nelson sent out messages to existing investors that encouraged them to contact her if they or their friends had interest in investing more funds. In those messages Nelson stated that LLS "defied financial gravity" and "experienced substantial growth" in 2007. Nelson claimed that since American economy began slowing LLS had seen an "increase in highly qualified consumers with higher income levels as well as higher payday loan credit scores." As a result Nelson claimed that LLS had a decrease in payday loan clients that defaulted on payments.
- 40. Nelson also said that she created a commercial lead company to generate payday loan leads for LLS instead of paying other companies as she had done in the past. Nelson claimed that this enabled LLS to save money, "significantly increase" the loans funded each day, and sell off any surplus leads to other companies.
- 41. As late as September 2008 Nelson continued to tell investors that LLS was doing well. Nelson assured one investor that his funds would be safe, explaining that LLS had outstanding demand for short term loans due to the company's internet expansion.

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	42.	In October 200	08, LLS and the LL	S affiliated e	ntities stopped	paying inv	vestors
accord	ing to tl	ne terms of their	r promissory notes.	Initially Ne	lson offered so	ome investo	ors a
reduced interest rate payment of 10%. Over time LLS and the LLS affiliated entities failed to							
make even the 10% payments and all payments ceased by March 2009.							

- 43. After a few months without payment some of the investors with LLS affiliated entities filed an involuntary petition for Chapter 11 bankruptcy against LLS-A, LLC (WA) in July 2009. LLS America, LLC also petitioned for its own Chapter 11 bankruptcy in July 2009.
- 44. At an August 27, 2009 creditor's meeting for the bankruptcy of LLS America, LLC, the Chief Executive Officer for LLS America, LLC at that time, Ralph Gamble ("Gamble"), testified that LLS America did not generate its own leads and still purchased leads from other companies. Gamble also testified that LLS had no underwriting guidelines for payday loans when he started with the company in November of 2007. Gamble stated that in 2009 LLS America, LLC wrote off \$27 million dollars in loan losses on non-performing loans that accrued from the years 2007-09.

### Paul Cooper

45. Existing investors often referred friends or family that expressed interest in investing with LLS to Cooper. At least 49 investors with LLS affiliated entities gathered information about investing with LLS from Cooper, including at least 3 Washington investors. Cooper told potential investors that he had successfully invested with the LLS for years as one of Nelson's earliest investors. Cooper typically provided a brief history of the company and Nelson. Cooper instructed investors on where to send their funds. Cooper also notified existing members when LLS had open windows for new investment funds and kept a list of interested investors at times when LLS was not currently accepting new investments. DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS STATEMENT OF CHARGES AND NOTICE OF 10 INTENT TO ENTER ORDER TO CEASE AND DESIST.

46. Cooper provided at least two investors with documents which provided a history of a payday loan company seeking investors. One document claimed that Cooper, through a British Columbia company, 0720789 BC Ltd., had reached an agreement to manage investors for LLS. The other document did not specifically mention LLS, but rather claimed that Cooper had an agreement to manage investors for a "payday loan company." Both documents said that Nelson's default rate for payday loans ran lower than the industry average and that Nelson recovered most defaulted payments through follow up contact with the debtor. One document stated that even if only 31% of the outstanding payday loans got paid off all investors would be covered, while the other document claimed to need only 37% to cover investors. One of the documents also stated that Little Loan Shoppe's risk of bankruptcy was very low as Nelson's debt to investors was "covered abundantly by her returns."

## Misrepresentations and Omissions

- 47. Respondents failed to provide material information regarding investing with LLS and LLS affiliated entities, including but not limited to: financial statements, financial condition of the entities and their ability to repay debts, and the business background and experience of Doris Nelson.
- 48. Respondents failed to disclose the nature of the relationships between Little Loan Shoppe Ltd.; Little Loan Shoppe America, LLC; LLS America, LLC; LLS Canada LLC; and the various other LLS affiliated entities which entered into promissory notes with investors.
- 49. Respondents misrepresented the risk of investment with LLS and LLS affiliated entities by telling investors that LLS continued to grow, that LLS was financially sound, and by assuring investors that their funds were secure and could be withdrawn with little or no notice.

Based upon the Tentative Findings of Fact, the following Conclusions of Law are made:

#### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

- 1. The offer and/or sale of the promissory notes described above constitute the offer and/or sale of a security as defined in RCW 21.20.005(10) and (12).
- 2. The offer and/or sale of said securities were in violation of RCW 21.20.140 because no registration for such offer or sale was on file with the Securities Administrator.
- 3. Paul Cooper violated RCW 21.20.040 by offering or selling said securities while not registered as a securities salesperson or broker-dealer in the state of Washington.
- 4. Doris Nelson violated RCW 21.20.040 by offering or selling said securities while not registered as a securities salesperson in the state of Washington.
- 5. The offer and/or sale of said securities violated of RCW 21.20.010 because, as set forth in the Tentative Findings of Fact, Respondents made misstatements of material facts or omitted to state material facts necessary in order to make the statements made, in light of circumstances under which they were made, note misleading.

#### NOTICE OF INTENT TO ORDER THE RESPONDENT TO CEASE AND DESIST

Based on the above Tentative Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, the Securities Administrator intends to order, pursuant to RCW 21.20.390(1), that Little Loan Shoppe Ltd.; Little Loan Shoppe America, LLC; 639504 BC Ltd.; Little Loan Shoppe Canada, LLC; 0738106 BC Ltd.; 0738116 BC Ltd.; 0738126 BC Ltd.; LLS America, LLC; LLS-A, LLC (WA); Pacific LLS, LLC; Atlantic LLS, LLC; Eastern LLS, LLC; Central LLS, LLC; LLS-A, LLC (NV); LLS-NW, LLC; LLS-US, LLC; Doris Nelson; and Paul Cooper, and their agents and employees, shall each cease and desist from violations of RCW 21.20.010, RCW 21.20.040, and RCW 21.20.140.

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#### NOTICE OF INTENT TO IMPOSE FINES

Pursuant to RCW 21.20.395, and based upon the Tentative Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, the Securities Administrator intends to order that Respondent Doris Nelson shall be liable for and pay a fine of \$150,000.

Pursuant to RCW 21.20.395, and based upon the Tentative Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, the Securities Administrator intends to order that Respondent Paul Cooper shall be liable for and pay a fine of \$30,000.

#### NOTICE OF INTENT TO CHARGE COSTS

Pursuant to RCW 21.20.390(5), and based upon the Tentative Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, the Securities Administrator intends to order that Respondents Doris Nelson and Paul Cooper shall be liable jointly and severally for and pay the Securities Division the costs, fees, and other expenses incurred in the conduct of the administrative investigation and hearing of this matter of not less than \$60,000.

#### **AUTHORITY AND PROCEDURE**

This Statement of Charges is entered pursuant to the provisions of RCW 21.20.390 and RCW 21.20.395 and is subject to the provisions of RCW 34.05. The respondents may each make a written request for a hearing as set forth in the NOTICE OF OPPORTUNITY TO DEFEND AND OPPORTUNITY FOR HEARING accompanying this Statement of Charges.

If a Respondent does not request a hearing, the Securities Administrator intends to adopt the above Tentative Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law as final, enter a permanent cease and desist order as to that Respondent, and impose the fines and costs sought.

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6		MICHAEL E. STEVENSON Securities Administrator			
7	Approved by:	Presented by:			
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	Suzanne Sarason	Jack McClellan			
10	Chief of Enforcement	Enforcement Attorney			
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