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9 BEFORE THE DEPARTMENT OF CORPORATIONS  
10 OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

11  
12 In the Matter of the Accusation THE ) OAH No.: L-2207010310  
CALIFORNIA CORPORATIONS )  
13 COMMISSIONER, ) File No.: 963-1934  
14 )  
Complainant, ) ORDER BARRING TESSA M.A. SIMS FROM  
15 ) ANY POSITION OF EMPLOYMENT,  
16 vs. ) MANAGEMENT OR CONTROL  
17 )  
ASSET ESCROW SERVICES, INC., TESSA )  
18 M.A. SIMS and RAYNA HILL, )  
19 Respondents. )

20 Pursuant to the Settlement Agreement entered into between Asset Escrow Services, Inc.  
21 (“Asset”), Tessa M.A. Sims (“Sims”), Rayna Hill (“Hill”)(collectively “Respondents”) and the  
22 California Corporations Commissioner ("Commissioner") on April 12, 2007, Sims is hereby barred  
23 from any position of employment, management or control of any escrow agent. This Order shall  
24 become effective August 20, 2007.

25 Pursuant to the terms of the Settlement Agreement, Sims admits the following for purposes  
26 of this action and any future proceedings initiated by or brought before the California Corporations  
27 Commissioner only:  
28

1           1.       Asset is an escrow agent licensed by the Commissioner pursuant to the Escrow Law  
2 of the State of California (California Financial Code Section 17000 et seq.). Asset has its principal  
3 place of business located at 707 Escondido Avenue, Suite 206, Vista, California 92084. Asset also  
4 has two branch locations situated at 2725 Jefferson Street, Suite 12, Carlsbad, California 92008 and  
5 41593 Winchester Road, Suite 202, Temecula, California 92590.

6           2.       Sims is, and was at all times relevant herein, the president and sole shareholder of  
7 Asset.

8           3.       Hill is, and was at all times relevant herein, the administrative assistant for Asset at its  
9 Vista location.

10          4.       On May 12, 2006, the Commissioner commenced a regulatory examination of the  
11 books and records of Asset. The regulatory examination revealed among other violations, that trust  
12 funds in the amount of \$278,707.17 had been wrongfully transferred from the trust account of Asset  
13 into the general account of Asset in violation of California Financial Code section 17409. At least  
14 \$248,707.17 of the Asset trust funds wrongfully transferred to the Asset general account (“general  
15 account”) were allowed to remain in the general account for anywhere from 1 to 54 days. During this  
16 time, certain of these trust funds were used for the general operations of Asset, and at least  
17 \$60,000.00 of these trust funds were transferred to the personal account of Sims during the time  
18 period in which she was purchasing the commercial building where the main office of Asset is  
19 located. The commingling of trust funds is prohibited because of the serious risk of misuse and loss.  
20 The commingling of trust funds by Asset resulted in a trust account shortage and numerous ongoing  
21 debit balances in violation of California Code of Regulations, title 10, section 1738.1. Asset has  
22 corrected the trust account shortage caused by the unlawful transfers of trust funds.

23          5.       The unlawful transfers discovered during the regulatory examination of Asset are  
24 described as follows:

25               A.       On January 19, 2006, Respondents issued, and/or caused to be issued, wire  
26 number 934 to transfer earned escrow fees from the Carlsbad trust account to the general account.  
27 The amount transferred from the Carlsbad trust fund to the general account was \$41,784.78, when  
28 earned escrow fees only totaled \$1,784.78. This transfer was in violation of California Financial

1 Code section 17409, which prohibits commingling of trust funds with non-trust funds. The trust  
2 funds were not returned to the Carlsbad trust account or any other Asset trust fund until February 21,  
3 2006, causing a \$40,000.00 shortage (debit balance) in the Carlsbad trust account from January 19,  
4 2006 until February 21, 2006.

5 B. On January 31, 2006, Respondents issued, and/or caused to be issued, wire  
6 number 952 to transfer earned escrow fees from the Carlsbad trust account to the general account.  
7 The amount transferred from the Carlsbad trust fund to the general account was \$9,673.38, however  
8 these escrow fees had already been paid. This transfer was in violation of California Financial Code  
9 section 17409, which prohibits commingling of trust funds with non-trust funds. The trust funds  
10 were not returned to the Carlsbad trust account or any other Asset trust fund until  
11 February 1, 2006, causing a further shortage of \$9,673.38 in the Carlsbad trust account from January  
12 31, 2006 until February 1, 2006.

13 C. On February 2, 2006, Respondents issued, and/or caused to be issued, wire  
14 number 582 to transfer earned escrow fees from the Temecula trust account to the general account.  
15 The amount transferred from the Temecula trust fund to the general account was \$2,995.00, however  
16 these earned escrow fees had already been paid. This transfer was in violation of California  
17 Financial Code section 17409, which prohibits commingling of trust funds with non-trust funds. The  
18 trust funds were not returned to the Temecula trust account or any other Asset trust fund until March  
19 29, 2006, causing a shortage of \$2,995.00 in the Temecula trust account from February 2, 2006 until  
20 March 29, 2006.

21 D. On February 21, 2006, Respondents issued, and/or caused to be issued, wire  
22 number 989 transferring \$2,277.00 from the Carlsbad trust account to the general account. There  
23 were no earned escrow fees involved with this transfer. This transfer was in violation of California  
24 Financial Code section 17409, which prohibits commingling of trust funds with non-trust funds. The  
25 trust funds were not returned to the Carlsbad trust account or any other Asset trust fund until March  
26 28, 2006, causing a shortage of \$2,277.00 in the Carlsbad trust account from February 21, 2006 until  
27 March 28, 2006.

1           E.       On February 28, 2006, Respondents issued, and/or caused to be issued, wire  
2 number 1009 transferring \$6,040.00 from the Carlsbad trust account to the general account. There  
3 were no earned escrow fees involved with this transfer. This transfer was in violation of California  
4 Financial Code section 17409, which prohibits commingling of trust funds with non-trust funds. The  
5 trust funds were not returned to the Carlsbad trust account or any other Asset trust fund until March  
6 10, 2006, causing a further shortage of \$6,040.00 in the Carlsbad trust account from February 28,  
7 2006 until March 10, 2006.

8           F.       On March 15, 2006, Respondents issued, and/or caused to be issued, wire  
9 number 1147 to transfer earned escrow fees from the Vista trust account to the general account. The  
10 amount transferred from the Vista trust fund to the general account was \$37,721.79, when earned  
11 escrow fees only totaled \$3,721.79. This transfer was in violation of California Financial Code  
12 section 17409, which prohibits commingling of trust funds with non-trust funds. The trust funds  
13 were not returned to the Vista trust account or any other Asset trust fund until March 21, 2006,  
14 causing a shortage of \$34,000.00 in the Vista trust account from March 15, 2006 until March 21,  
15 2006.

16           G.       On March 15, 2006, Respondents issued, and/or caused to be issued, wire  
17 number 1029 to transfer earned escrow fees from the Carlsbad trust account to the general account.  
18 The amount transferred from the Carlsbad trust fund to the general account was \$44,410.00, when  
19 earned escrow fees only totaled \$4,410.00. This transfer was in violation of California Financial  
20 Code section 17409, which prohibits commingling of trust funds with non-trust funds. The trust  
21 funds were not returned to the Carlsbad trust account or any other Asset trust fund until March 22,  
22 2006, causing a further shortage of \$40,000.00 in the Carlsbad trust account from March 15, 2006  
23 until March 22, 2006.

24           H.       On March 15, 2006, Respondents issued, and/or caused to be issued, wire  
25 number 653 to transfer earned escrow fees from the Temecula trust account to the general account.  
26 The amount transferred from the Temecula trust fund to the general account was \$33,710.00, when  
27 earned escrow fees only totaled \$3,710.00. This transfer was in violation of California Financial  
28 Code section 17409, which prohibits commingling of trust funds with non-trust funds. The trust

1 funds were not returned to the Temecula trust account or any other Asset trust fund until March 21,  
2 2006, causing a further shortage of \$30,000.00 in the Temecula trust account from March 15, 2006  
3 until March 21, 2006.

4 I. On March 20, 2006, Respondents, in what appears to be an attempt to return  
5 the trust funds wrongfully transferred via wire number 653 described in paragraph H above,  
6 transferred \$33,710.00 from the general account to the Vista trust account. However, the unlawful  
7 transfer of trust funds had occurred between the Temecula trust account and the general account.  
8 This transfer was in violation of California Financial Code section 17409, which prohibits  
9 commingling of trust funds with non-trust funds. The general funds were returned to the general  
10 account from the Vista trust account on March 21, 2006 at the same time the unlawful transfer of  
11 trust funds from the Temecula trust account to the general account was corrected. See paragraph H  
12 above.

13 J. On March 21, 2006, Respondents transferred, and/or caused to be transferred,  
14 \$3,721.79 in earned escrow fees from the Vista trust account to the general account, however, these  
15 earned escrow fees had already been paid. This transfer was in violation of California Financial  
16 Code section 17409, which prohibits commingling of trust funds with non-trust funds. The trust  
17 funds were not returned to the Vista trust account or any other Asset trust fund until April 24, 2006,  
18 causing a further shortage of \$3,721.79 in the Vista trust account from March 21, 2006 until April  
19 24, 2006.

20 K. On April 14, 2006, Respondents issued, and/or caused to be issued, wire  
21 number 1199 to transfer earned escrow fees from the Vista trust account to the general account. The  
22 amount transferred from the Vista trust fund to the general account was \$82,100.00, when earned  
23 escrow fees only totaled \$2,100.00. This transfer was in violation of California Financial Code  
24 section 17409, which prohibits commingling of trust funds with non-trust funds. The trust funds  
25 were not returned to the Vista trust account or any other Asset trust fund until May 26, 2006, causing  
26 a shortage of \$80,000.00 in the Vista trust account from April 14, 2006 until May 26, 2006.

27 6. A review of the bank account records of Asset Escrow for the period of January 1,  
28 2006 through May 31, 2006 disclosed that a significant portion of the Asset trust funds unlawfully

1 transferred to the general account were used for the general operations of Asset and the personal use  
2 of Sims in violation of California Financial Code section 17414(a)(1) as follows:

3           A.       During January 2006, the amount of trust funds on deposit in the general  
4 account was \$40,000.00 beginning on January 19, 2006 and increased to \$49,673.38 on January 31,  
5 2006. The balance in the general account was a negative \$30,135.72 just prior to the transfer of  
6 \$40,000.00 in trust funds and a negative \$15,593.89 just prior to the transfer of a further \$9,673.38  
7 in trust funds. The balance in the general account was only \$6,879.58 on January 31, 2006 when  
8 trust funds on deposit in the general account totaled \$49,673.38 indicating that Asset was using at  
9 least \$42,793.80 in trust funds for general operations in January 2006.

10           B.       During February 2006, the amount of trust funds on deposit in the general  
11 account fluctuated from \$49,673.38 on February 1, 2006, when the general account balance was only  
12 \$10,159.63 and ended with \$11,312.00 on February 28, 2006, when the general account balance was  
13 \$12,282.20. On February 15, 2006, the balance in the general account fell to a negative \$21,115.23  
14 when \$42,995.00 in trust funds were on deposit in the general account indicating that Asset used at  
15 least \$21,879.77 in trust funds for general operations in February 2006.

16           C.       As of March 1, 2006, the amount of trust funds on deposit in the general  
17 account was \$11,312.00 until March 10, 2006 when \$6,040.00 was returned to the Carlsbad trust  
18 account. The amount of trust funds on deposit in the general account increased to \$109,272.00 on  
19 March 15, 2006 when a further \$104,000.00 was wrongfully transferred into the general account.  
20 The balance in the general account was only \$16,677.89 after the transfer of the \$104,000.00 in trust  
21 funds indicating that Asset was using trust funds of at least \$92,594.11 for general and other  
22 operations in March 2006.

23           Additionally, on March 8, 2006 and March 15, 2006, the sum of \$26,000.00 and  
24 \$34,000.00, respectively, were transferred from the general account to the personal account of Sims.  
25 Thereafter, on March 15, 2006, the sum of \$68,148.45 was transferred from Sims personal account  
26 to an escrow for deposit on behalf of Sims for her purchase of the office building where Asset was  
27 located indicating that trust funds were at least temporarily used to help Sims purchase the office  
28 building.

1 Respondents contend however that with respect to the March 8, 2006 and March 15,  
2 2006, transfers of \$26,000.00 and \$34,000.00, respectively, from the general account to Sims'  
3 personal account, Sims had transferred funds from her personal account in the amount of the  
4 \$120,000.00 into the general account during the months of January and February 2006 to be used in  
5 the purchase of the Vista office building, and believed that the transfer of \$60,000.00 from the  
6 general account to the personal account of Sims during the month of March 2006 was against these  
7 personal funds.

8 D. As of April 1, 2006, the amount of trust funds on deposit in the general  
9 account was \$3,721.79 until April 14, 2006 when a further \$80,000.00 in trust funds was wrongfully  
10 transferred to the general account. The balance in the general account was negative \$370.93 after  
11 the April 14, 2006 transfer of trust funds indicating that Asset was using trust funds of at least  
12 \$83,721.79 for general operations in April 2006.

13 E. The sum of \$80,000.00 in trust funds remained on deposit in the general  
14 account until May 26, 2006. During May 2006, the general account balance fell to \$12,238.29  
15 indicating that Asset used as much as \$67,761.71 in trust funds for general operations during May  
16 2006.

17 7. The regulatory examination also disclosed that Asset had failed to maintain books and  
18 records in violation of California Financial Code section 17404 and California Code of Regulations,  
19 title 10, sections 1732.2 and 1732.3 in that Asset had no trust account reconciliation for the period  
20 ended April 30, 2006 and no general account ledger for January through April 2006. Asset did not  
21 provide the trust account reconciliations until June 21, 2006. As of September 28, 2006, Asset was  
22 still unable to provide the April 2006 general ledger. The bank statements for the general account  
23 disclosed that it continued to be overdrawn in May, June, July and August 2006.

24 8. The most current balance sheet available as of the start of the regulatory examination  
25 was for March 31, 2006 and disclosed a liquid asset deficiency of \$136,230.24 and a tangible net  
26 worth deficiency of \$44,764.24. A draft of the balance sheet for April 30, 2006 provided on  
27 September 28, 2006 discloses a liquid asset deficiency of \$284,315.40 and a tangible net worth  
28 deficiency of \$198,115.49. California Financial Code section 17210 requires all escrow agent

1 licensees to maintain liquid assets of at least \$25,000.00 in excess of current liabilities and a tangible  
2 net worth of at least \$50,000.00.

3 Dated: August 16, 2007  
4 Los Angeles, CA

PRESTON DuFAUCHARD  
California Corporations Commissioner

5 By \_\_\_\_\_  
6 Alan S. Weinger  
7 Lead Corporations Counsel

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