

ALABAMA SECURITIES COMMISSION
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Tuscaloosa County Man Indicted for Alleged Violations of Alabama Securities Law

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA (April 8, 2008) The Honorable Thomas M. Smith, District Attorney for the 6th Judicial Circuit, Tuscaloosa County, Alabama; and, the Honorable Joseph Borg, Director of the Alabama Securities Commission (ASC), announce the indictment of Howard Jackson Cleveland, Jr., also known as Tiny Cleveland, 74, a resident of Tuscaloosa, Alabama for alleged violations of the Alabama Securities Act. Charges against Cleveland were handed down in an indictment from a March 2008 session of the Tuscaloosa County Grand Jury. The indictment resulted from a cooperative investigation conducted by the ASC and the Tuscaloosa Police Department. Cleveland remains free after posting a \$20,000 bond.

The ten-count indictment alleges that Cleveland, doing business as Compass Trading Enterprises, offered and sold promissory notes valued at approximately \$63,500 to three Alabama investors with the assurance of investing their money in an overseas oil venture he purportedly owned. The indictment further alleges that Cleveland misled the investors, telling them that a substantial return had previously been realized on the venture and that additional sizable returns on their investments could be expected. The indictment also alleges that none of the Alabama investors have received any returns from their investments. Cleveland also apparently owned and/or operated other previous businesses, in the Tuscaloosa area, including Petro Energy, Inc., and Miracle Industries.

Cleveland is not registered by the ASC to conduct securities business in Alabama and has been charged with three counts each of Sale of Unregistered Securities, Sale of Securities by an Unregistered Agent, Omission or Misrepresentation During the Sale of a Security, as well as one count of Prohibited Acts During the Sale of a Security. All charges are Class C felonies under Alabama law.

The ASC cautions potential investors to thoroughly scrutinize and research any investment opportunity or offer. Contact the ASC with inquiries concerning securities broker-dealers, agents, investment advisors, investment advisor representatives, financial planners, registration status of securities, to report suspected fraud or to obtain consumer information.

(NOTE: An indictment itself is not evidence that the defendant committed the crime(s) charged. The defendant is presumed innocent until the government meets its burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt in court).

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For additional information, contact Dan Lord, Education and Public Affairs, (334) 353-4858.

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