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8 IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
9 EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
10

11 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

12 Plaintiff,

13 v.

14 APPROXIMATELY \$27,231.00 IN U.S.
CURRENCY,

15 Defendant.
16

VERIFIED COMPLAINT FOR
FORFEITURE *IN REM*

17 The United States of America, by and through its undersigned attorney, brings this complaint
18 and alleges as follows in accordance with Supplemental Rule G(2) of the Supplemental Rules for
19 Admiralty or Maritime Claims and Asset Forfeiture Action:

20 **NATURE OF ACTION**

21 1. This is a civil action *in rem* to forfeit to the United States Approximately \$27,231.00 in
22 U.S. Currency (hereafter “defendant currency”) involved in violations of federal drug laws.

23 2. The defendant currency was seized from Ming Guang Chen (“Chen”) on June 9, 2020,
24 during the execution of a federal search warrant at 7279 Long River Drive in Sacramento, California.
25 The defendant currency is in the custody of the U.S. Marshals Service, Eastern District of California.

26 **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

27 3. This Court has jurisdiction over an action commenced by the United States under 28
28 U.S.C. § 1345, over an action for forfeiture under 28 U.S.C. § 1355(a), and over this particular action

1 under 21 U.S.C. § 881.

2 4. This district is a proper venue pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1355 because the acts giving rise
3 to this *in rem* forfeiture action occurred in this district, and pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1395 because the
4 defendant currency was seized in this district.

5 **FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS**

6 5. Since 2017, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (“FBI”) has been actively investigating
7 certain groups and individuals responsible for large indoor marijuana grows throughout the Eastern
8 District of California. In February of 2020, FBI received information regarding an illegal indoor
9 marijuana grow at 5608 Glen Oaks Drive in Rocklin, California. The FBI then investigated the property
10 and, through electrical records and other evidence, confirmed the likely presence of illegal marijuana
11 being grown at the home. The FBI also connected the illegal grow in Rocklin to multiple individuals
12 living in Sacramento, including Ming Guang Chen (“Chen”).

13 6. On May 13, 2020, Rocklin Fire Department received an emergency call regarding an
14 active fire at 5608 Glen Oaks Drive, Rocklin, California. Rocklin Fire Department and Rocklin Police
15 Department responded to the call and entered the home to ensure the safety of any occupants of the
16 residence. While inside the home conducting the safety sweep, Rocklin Police Department found no
17 occupants but observed marijuana growing in multiple rooms throughout the residence. Rocklin Police
18 Department and Fire Department further observed the house’s electrical system had been illegally
19 bypassed, a common indicator of an illegal marijuana grow.

20 7. On May 14, 2020, FBI agents executed a federal search warrant at 5608 Glen Oaks
21 Drive. During the search of the residence, agents found approximately 828 marijuana plants, marijuana
22 ballasts, and evidence connecting the marijuana grow to certain individuals living in Sacramento,
23 including Chen. Based on the items seized during the search and physical surveillance, the FBI learned
24 that the individuals growing marijuana at 5608 Glen Oaks traveled to/from 7279 Long River Drive
25 (Chen’s residence) and 7817 Renton Way, both in Sacramento.

26 9. On June 9, 2020, FBI agents executed a federal search warrant at 7279 Long River
27 Drive, the residence of Chen and his wife. During the search, agents found the \$27,231.00 in cash (the
28 “defendant currency”) in a suitcase in Chen’s bedroom and another room, four postal money orders

1 totaling thousands of dollars, documents connected to, and associated with, the residence located at
2 5608 Glen Oaks Drive in Rocklin, and processed marijuana.

3 10. The FBI has investigated Chen's employment history and learned that the California
4 Employment Development Department, the state agency responsible for reporting wages, had no
5 reportable income for Chen.

6 **FIRST CLAIM FOR RELIEF**
7 **21 U.S.C. § 881 (a)(6)**

8 11. Paragraphs one to ten above are incorporated by reference as though fully set forth
9 herein.

10 12. The defendant currency is subject to forfeiture to the United States pursuant to 21 U.S.C.
11 § 881(a)(6) because it was money furnished and intended to be furnished in exchange for a controlled
12 substance or listed chemical, constituted proceeds traceable to such an exchange, and was used and
13 intended to be used to commit or facilitate a violation of 21 U.S.C. §§ 841, *et seq.*, an offense
14 punishable by more than one year's imprisonment.

15 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

16 WHEREFORE, the United States prays that:

- 17 1. Process issue according to the procedures of this Court in cases of actions *in rem*;
- 18 2. Any person having an interest in said defendant currency be given notice to file a claim
19 and to answer the complaint;
- 20 3. This Court enter a judgment of forfeiture of the defendant currency to the United States;
21 and,
- 22 4. The Court grant such other relief as may be proper.

23 DATED: 11/9/2020

McGREGOR W. SCOTT
United States Attorney

24
25 By: /s/ Kevin C. Khasigian
26 KEVIN C. KHASIGIAN
Assistant U.S. Attorney

VERIFICATION

I, Laura E. Giouzelis, hereby verify and declare under penalty of perjury that I am a Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, that I have read the foregoing Verified Complaint for Forfeiture *In Rem* and know the contents thereof, and that the matters contained in the Verified Complaint are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

The sources of my knowledge and information and the grounds of my belief are the official files and records of the United States, information supplied to me by other law enforcement officers, as well as my investigation of this case, together with others, as a Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

I hereby verify and declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Dated: 11/9/2020

/s/ Laura E. Giouzelis
Laura E. Giouzelis
Special Agent
Federal Bureau of Investigation

(Signature retained by attorney)

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