

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

In The Matter of

MARTIN ADVERTISING, INC., a corporation.

FILE NO. 972 3267

**AGREEMENT CONTAINING
CONSENT ORDER**

The Federal Trade Commission ("Commission") has conducted an investigation of certain acts and practices of Martin Advertising, Inc., a corporation ("proposed respondent"). Proposed respondent, having been represented by counsel, is willing to enter into an agreement containing a consent order resolving the allegations contained in the attached draft complaint. Therefore,

IT IS HEREBY AGREED by and between Martin Advertising, Inc., by its duly authorized officers, and counsel for the Federal Trade Commission that:

1. Respondent Martin Advertising, Inc. is a Delaware corporation with its principal office or place of business at 2801 University Boulevard, Suite 200, Birmingham, Alabama 35233.
2. Proposed respondent admits all the jurisdictional facts set forth in the draft complaint.
3. Proposed respondent waives:
 - a. Any further procedural steps;
 - b. The requirement that the Commission's decision contain a statement of findings of fact and conclusions of law; and
 - c. All rights to seek judicial review or otherwise to challenge or contest the validity of the order entered pursuant to this agreement.
4. This agreement shall not become part of the public record of the proceeding unless and until it is accepted by the Commission. If this agreement is accepted by the Commission, it, together with the draft complaint, will be placed on the public record for a period of sixty (60) days and information about it publicly released. The Commission thereafter may either withdraw its acceptance of this agreement and so notify proposed respondent, in which event it will take such action as it may consider appropriate, or issue and serve its complaint (in such form as the circumstances may require) and decision in disposition of the proceeding.

5. This agreement is for settlement purposes only and does not constitute an admission by proposed respondent that the law has been violated as alleged in the draft complaint, or that the facts as alleged in the draft complaint, other than the jurisdictional facts, are true.

6. This agreement contemplates that, if it is accepted by the Commission, and if such acceptance is not subsequently withdrawn by the Commission pursuant to the provisions of Section 2.34 of the Commission's Rules, the Commission may, without further notice to proposed respondent, (1) issue its complaint corresponding in form and substance with the attached draft complaint and its decision containing the following order in disposition of the proceeding, and (2) make information about it public. When so entered, the order shall have the same force and effect and may be altered, modified, or set aside in the same manner and within the same time provided by statute for other orders. The order shall become final upon service. Delivery of the complaint and the decision and order to proposed respondent by any means specified in Section 4.4 of the Commission's Rules shall constitute service. Proposed respondent waives any right it may have to any other manner of service. The complaint may be used in construing the terms of the order. No agreement, understanding, representation, or interpretation not contained in the order or in the agreement may be used to vary or contradict the terms of the order.

7. Proposed respondent has read the draft complaint and consent order. It understands that it may be liable for civil penalties in the amount provided by law and other appropriate relief for each violation of the order after it becomes final.

ORDER

DEFINITIONS

1. "Clearly and conspicuously" as used herein shall mean:

1) video or written disclosures must be made in a manner that is readable and understandable to a reasonable consumer and 2) audio or oral disclosures must be made in a manner that is audible and understandable to a reasonable consumer.

2. "Total amount due at lease signing or delivery" as used herein shall mean the total amount of any initial payments required to be paid by the lessee on or before consummation of the lease or delivery of the vehicle, whichever is later, as required by Regulation M, 12 C.F.R. § 213, as amended. The total amount due at lease signing or delivery may: 1) exclude third- party fees, such as taxes, licenses, and registration fees, and disclose that fact, or 2) provide a total that includes third- party fees based on a particular state or locality as long as that fact and the fact that such fees may vary by state or locality are disclosed. (Sections 213.2 and 213.7 of Regulation M, 12 C.F.R. §§ 213.2 and 213.7, as amended.)

3. "Balloon payment" as used herein shall mean any scheduled payment with respect to a consumer credit transaction that is at least twice as large as the average of earlier scheduled payments.

4. Unless otherwise specified, "respondent" as used herein shall mean Martin Advertising, Inc., its successors and assigns, and its officers, agents, representatives, and employees.

5. "Commerce" as used herein shall mean as defined in Section 4 of the Federal Trade Commission Act ("FTC Act"), 15 U.S.C. § 44.

I.

IT IS ORDERED that respondent, directly or through any corporation, subsidiary, division, or any other device, in connection with any advertisement to aid, promote, or assist, directly or indirectly, any consumer lease involving motor vehicles in or affecting commerce, as "advertisement" and "consumer lease" are defined in Section 213.2 of Regulation M, 12 C.F.R. § 213.2, as amended, shall not, in any manner, expressly or by implication:

- A. Misrepresent that any advertised lease terms, including but not limited to a monthly payment amount or downpayment, pertain to a cash or credit offer;
- B. Misrepresent the total amount due at lease signing or delivery, the amount down, and/or the downpayment, capitalized cost reduction, or other amount that reduces the capitalized cost of the vehicle (or that no such amount is required);
- C. Make any reference to any charge that is part of the total amount due at lease signing or delivery or that no such charge is required, not including a statement of the periodic payment, more prominently than the disclosure of the total amount due at lease signing or delivery;
- D. State the amount of any payment or any capitalized cost reduction or other payment required prior to or at consummation or delivery, if delivery occurs after consummation, without disclosing clearly and conspicuously all of the terms required by Regulation M, as follows:
 - 1. that the transaction advertised is a lease;
 - 2. the total amount due at lease signing or delivery;
 - 3. whether or not a security deposit is required;
 - 4. the number, amount, and timing of scheduled payments; and
 - 5. that an extra charge may be imposed at the end of the lease term in a lease in which the liability of the consumer at the end of the lease term is based on the anticipated residual value of the vehicle.

(Section 184(a) of the Consumer Leasing Act ("CLA"), 15 U.S.C. § 1667c(a), as amended, and Section 213.7 of Regulation M, 12 C.F.R. § 213.7, as amended.)

For radio advertisements, respondent may also comply with the requirements of this subparagraph by utilizing Section 184(c) of the CLA, 15 U.S.C. § 1667c(C), and Section

213.7(f) of Regulation M, 12 C.F.R. §213.7(f), as amended. For television advertisements, respondent may also comply with the requirements of this subparagraph by utilizing Section 213.7(f) of Regulation M, as amended; and

E. Fail to comply in any other respect with Section 184 of the CLA and Section 213.7 of Regulation M.

(CLA, 15 U.S.C. §§ 1667-1667e, as amended, and Regulation M, 12 C.F.R. § 213, as amended).

II.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that respondent, directly or through any corporation, subsidiary, division, or any other device, in connection with any advertisement to aid, promote, or assist, directly or indirectly, any extension of closed-end credit involving motor vehicles in or affecting commerce, as "advertisement" and "closed-end credit" are defined in Section 226.2 of Regulation Z, 12 C.F.R. § 226.2, as amended, shall not, in any manner, expressly or by implication:

A. Misrepresent the existence and amount of any balloon payment or the annual percentage rate;

B. State the amount of any payment, including but not limited to any monthly payment, in any advertisement unless the amount of any balloon payment is disclosed prominently and in close proximity to the most prominent of the above statements;

C. State a rate of finance charge without stating the rate as an "annual percentage rate" or the abbreviation "APR," using that term;

D. State the amount or percentage of any downpayment, the number of payments or period of repayment, the amount of any payment, or the amount of any finance charge, without disclosing clearly and conspicuously all of the terms required by Regulation Z, as follows:

1. the amount or percentage of the downpayment;
2. the terms of repayment, including but not limited to the amount of any balloon payment; and
3. the correct annual percentage rate, using that term or the abbreviation "APR." If the annual percentage rate may be increased after consummation of the credit transaction, that fact must also be disclosed.

(Sections 107 and 144(d) of the TILA, 15 U.S.C. §§ 1606 and 1664(d), as amended, and Sections 226.22 and 226.24(c) of Regulation Z, 12 C.F.R. §§ 226.22 and 226.24(c), as amended.); and

E. Fail to comply in any other respect with Section 144 of the TILA and Section 226.24 of Regulation Z.

(TILA, 15 U.S.C. §§ 1601-1667, as amended, and Regulation Z, 12 C.F.R. § 226, as amended).

III.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that respondent Martin Advertising, Inc., and its successors and assigns, shall, for five (5) years after the date of service of this order, maintain and upon request make available to the Commission for inspection and copying all records that will demonstrate compliance with the requirements of this order.

IV.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that respondent Martin Advertising, Inc., and its successors and assigns, shall:

A. Within thirty (30) days after the date of service of this order, distribute a copy of this order to all current principals, officers, directors, managers, employees, agents, and representatives having responsibilities involving motor vehicle lease and/or motor vehicle closed-end credit advertising; and

B. For a period of ten (10) years from the date of service of this order, distribute a copy of this order to all future principals, officers, directors, managers, employees, agents, and representatives having responsibilities involving motor vehicle lease and/or motor vehicle closed-end credit advertising, within thirty (30) days after the person or entity assumes such position or responsibilities.

V.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that respondent Martin Advertising, Inc., and its successors and assigns, shall notify the Commission at least thirty (30) days prior to any change in the corporation that may affect compliance obligations arising under this order, including but not necessarily limited to dissolution, assignment, sale, merger, or other action that would result in the emergence of a successor corporation; the creation or dissolution of a subsidiary, parent, or affiliate that engages in any acts or practices subject to this order; the proposed filing of a bankruptcy petition; or a change in the corporate name or address. Provided, however, that, with respect to any proposed change in the corporation about which respondent learns less than thirty (30) days prior to the date such action is to take place, respondent shall notify the Commission as soon as is practicable after obtaining such knowledge. All notices required by this Part shall be sent by certified mail to the Associate Director, Division of Enforcement, Bureau of Consumer Protection, Federal Trade Commission, Washington, D.C. 20580.

VI.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that respondent Martin Advertising, Inc., and its successors and assigns, shall within one hundred and twenty (120) days after the date of service of this order, and at such other times as the Federal Trade Commission may require, file with the Commission a report, in writing, setting forth in detail the manner and form in which they have complied with this order.

VII.

This order will terminate twenty (20) years from the date of its issuance, or twenty (20) years from the most recent date that the United States or the Federal Trade Commission files a complaint (with or without an accompanying consent decree) in federal court alleging any violation of the order, whichever comes later; provided, however, that the filing of such a complaint will not affect the duration of:

- A. Any Part in this order that terminates in less than twenty (20) years;
- B. This order's application to any respondent that is not named as a defendant in such complaint; and
- C. This order if such complaint is filed after the order has terminated pursuant to this Part.

Provided further, that if such complaint is dismissed or a federal court rules that the respondent did not violate any provision of the order, and the dismissal or ruling is either not appealed or upheld on appeal, then the order will terminate according to this Part as though the complaint had never been filed, except that the order will not terminate between the date such complaint is filed and the later deadline for appealing such dismissal or ruling and the date such dismissal or ruling is upheld on appeal.

Signed this day of , 1998.

FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

MARTIN ADVERTISING, INC.

ROLANDO BERRELEZ

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