

BLACKROCK PREFERRED INCOME STRATEGIES FUND, INC.  
 Form 3  
 January 12, 2009

**FORM 3 UNITED STATES SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION**  
**Washington, D.C. 20549**

OMB APPROVAL

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**INITIAL STATEMENT OF BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP OF SECURITIES**

Filed pursuant to Section 16(a) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934,  
 Section 17(a) of the Public Utility Holding Company Act of 1935 or Section  
 30(h) of the Investment Company Act of 1940

(Print or Type Responses)

|   |         |          |   |  |   |
|---|---------|----------|---|--|---|
| 1. Name and Address of Reporting Person * |         |          | 2. Date of Event Requiring Statement  | 3. Issuer Name and Ticker or Trading Symbol            |   |
| Â MERRILL LYNCH & CO., INC.               |         |          | (Month/Day/Year)  | BLACKROCK PREFERRED INCOME STRATEGIES FUND, INC. [PSY] |   |
| (Last)                                    | (First) | (Middle) | 12/31/2008  |  |   |
| 4 WORLD FINANCIAL CENTER                  |         |          | 4. Relationship of Reporting Person(s) to Issuer  |  | 5. If Amendment, Date Original Filed(Month/Day/Year)  |
| (Street)                                  |         |          | (Check all applicable)  |  |   |
| NEW YORK,,Â NYÂ 10080                     |         |          | <input type="checkbox"/> Director <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 10% Owner<br><input type="checkbox"/> Officer <input type="checkbox"/> Other<br>(give title below)    (specify below) |  | 6. Individual or Joint/Group Filing(Check Applicable Line)<br><input type="checkbox"/> Form filed by One Reporting Person<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Form filed by More than One Reporting Person |
| (City)                                    | (State) | (Zip)    |   |  |   |

**Table I - Non-Derivative Securities Beneficially Owned**

| 1. Title of Security<br>(Instr. 4)    | 2. Amount of Securities Beneficially Owned<br>(Instr. 4) | 3. Ownership Form:<br>Direct (D)<br>or Indirect (I)<br>(Instr. 5) | 4. Nature of Indirect Beneficial Ownership<br>(Instr. 5) |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Auction Rate Preferred <sup>(1)</sup> | 1,599 <sup>(1)</sup> <sup>(2)</sup>                      | I   | See footnote <sup>(3)</sup>                              |

Reminder: Report on a separate line for each class of securities beneficially owned directly or indirectly.

SEC 1473 (7-02)

**Persons who respond to the collection of information contained in this form are not required to respond unless the form displays a currently valid OMB control number.**

**Table II - Derivative Securities Beneficially Owned (e.g., puts, calls, warrants, options, convertible securities)**

| 1. Title of Derivative Security<br>(Instr. 4) | 2. Date Exercisable and Expiration Date<br>(Month/Day/Year) | 3. Title and Amount of Securities Underlying Derivative Security<br>(Instr. 4) | 4. Conversion or Exercise Price of Derivative | 5. Ownership Form of Derivative Security: | 6. Nature of Indirect Beneficial Ownership<br>(Instr. 5) |
|---|---|--|---|---|--|
|---|---|--|---|---|--|

| Date<br>Exercisable | Expiration<br>Date | Title | Amount or<br>Number of<br>Shares | Security | Direct (D)<br>or Indirect<br>(I)<br>(Instr. 5) |
|---------------------|--------------------|-------|----------------------------------|----------|--|
|---------------------|--------------------|-------|----------------------------------|----------|--|

## Reporting Owners

| Reporting Owner Name / Address   | Relationships |           |         |       |
|--|---------------|-----------|---------|-------|
|  | Director      | 10% Owner | Officer | Other |
| MERRILL LYNCH & CO., INC.<br>4 WORLD FINANCIAL CENTER<br>NEW YORK, NY 10080                  | ^             | ^ X       | ^       | ^     |
| MERRILL LYNCH, PIERCE, FENNER & SMITH INC.<br>4 WORLD FINANCIAL CENTER<br>NEW YORK, NY 10080 | ^             | ^ X       | ^       | ^     |

## Signatures

Merrill Lynch & Co, Inc., By: /s/ Pia Thompson, Assistant Secretary 01/09/2009  
\*\*Signature of Reporting Person Date

Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith, Inc., By: /s/ Pia Thompson, Assistant Secretary 01/09/2009  
\*\*Signature of Reporting Person Date

## Explanation of Responses:

- \* If the form is filed by more than one reporting person, *see* Instruction 5(b)(v).
  - \*\* Intentional misstatements or omissions of facts constitute Federal Criminal Violations. *See* 18 U.S.C. 1001 and 15 U.S.C. 78ff(a).
- (1) The securities reported on this Form 3 are subject to repurchase under the terms of Merrill Lynch & Co.'s ("MLCO") settlement with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "Commission"), et alia, with respect to certain auction rate securities ("Subject Securities") sold by MLCO and/or held by customers in accounts at MLCO. The repurchases of the Subject Securities by MLCO, and the reporting of its holdings of such Subject Securities by MLCO, are being made in reliance on the Auction Rate Securities-Global Relief Letter issued by the Commission on September 22, 2008 (the "Relief Letter"). In reliance on the Relief Letter, we are reporting our holdings of each series of preferred stock of the issuer on a consolidated basis as a single class of securities.
- (2) In further reliance on the Relief Letter, we will not file Forms 4 to report changes in our beneficial ownership of the issuer's preferred stock. However, in compliance with the terms of the Relief Letter, we hereby undertake to provide upon request by the Commission, the issuer or a security holder of the issuer, complete information regarding the number of equity securities of the issuer purchased or sold at each different price and date of all transactions in such securities that occurred after we became a 10% owner but prior to the date of this filing.
- (3) Merrill Lynch & Co., Inc. indirectly through its wholly-owned subsidiary Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated owns 1,599 shares of the issuer's preferred stock.

Note: File three copies of this Form, one of which must be manually signed. If space is insufficient, *See* Instruction 6 for procedure. Potential persons who are to respond to the collection of information contained in this form are not required to respond unless the form displays a currently valid OMB number.