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Our File No.: 114625

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK**

George Castro, individually and on behalf of all those
similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

vs.

Grassy Sprain Group, Inc.,

Defendant.

Docket No:

CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

BARSHAY | SANDERS PLLC
100 GARDEN CITY PLAZA, SUITE 500
GARDEN CITY, NEW YORK 11530

George Castro, individually and on behalf of all those similarly situated (hereinafter referred to as “*Plaintiff*”), by and through the undersigned counsel, complains, states and alleges against Grassy Sprain Group, Inc. (hereinafter referred to as “*Defendant*”), as follows:

INTRODUCTION

1. This action seeks to recover for violations of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1692, *et seq.* (“FDCPA”).

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

2. This Court has federal subject matter jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331 and 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(d).

3. Venue is proper under 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b) because a substantial part of the events or omissions giving rise to the claim occurred in this Judicial District.

4. At all relevant times, Defendant conducted business within the State of New York.

PARTIES

5. Plaintiff George Castro is an individual who is a citizen of the State of New York residing in Suffolk County, New York.

6. Plaintiff is a “consumer” as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(3).

7. On information and belief, Defendant Grassy Sprain Group, Inc., is a Florida Corporation with a principal place of business in Palm Beach County, Florida.

8. Defendant is regularly engaged, for profit, in the collection of debts allegedly owed by consumers.

9. Defendant is a “debt collector” as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(6).

ALLEGATIONS

10. Defendant alleges Plaintiff owes a debt (“the Debt”).

11. The Debt was primarily for personal, family or household purposes and is therefore a “debt” as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(5).

12. Sometime after the incurrence of the Debt, Plaintiff fell behind on payments owed.

13. Thereafter, at an exact time known only to Defendant, the Debt was assigned or otherwise transferred to Defendant for collection.

14. In its efforts to collect the debt, Defendant contacted Plaintiff by letter (“the Letter”) dated September 25, 2017. (“**Exhibit 1.**”)

15. The Letter was the initial communication Plaintiff received from Defendant.

16. The Letter is a “communication” as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(2).

17. The Letter indicates Plaintiff’s debt was accruing interest.

18. The Letter indicates Plaintiff’s debt was accruing fees.

19. 23 N.Y.C.R.R. § 1.2(b) requires debt collectors to provide an itemized account of the debt, including: (i) the total amount of the debt due as of charge-off; (ii) the total amount of interest accrued since charge-off; (iii) the total amount of non-interest charges or fees accrued since charge-off; and (iv) the total amount of payments made on the debt since the charge-off.

20. The Letter fails to provide the required 23 N.Y.C.R.R. § 1.2(b) disclosures.

21. 15 U.S.C. § 1692g provides that within five days after the initial communication with a consumer in connection with the collection of any debt, a debt collector shall, unless the

information is contained in the initial communication or the consumer has paid the debt, send the consumer a written notice containing certain enumerated information.

22. 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(1) requires the written notice provide “the amount of the debt.”

23. The written notice, to comply with 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(1), must convey the amount of the debt clearly from the perspective of the least sophisticated consumer.

24. The written notice, to comply with 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(1), must convey the amount of the debt accurately from the perspective of the least sophisticated consumer.

25. The written notice, to comply with 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(1), must convey the amount of the debt without ambiguity from the perspective of the least sophisticated consumer.

26. The written notice, to comply with 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(1), must state whether interest, late fees and/or other fees are accruing.

27. The written notice, to comply with 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(1), must allow the least sophisticated consumer to determine the minimum amount he or she owes at the time of the notice.

28. The written notice, to comply with 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(1), must allow the least sophisticated consumer to determine what he or she will need to pay to resolve the debt at any given moment in the future.

29. The written notice, to comply with 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(1), must contain an explanation, understandable by the least sophisticated consumer, of any fees or interest that may cause the balance to increase at any time in the future.

30. The failure to include the foregoing information renders an otherwise accurate statement of the “amount of the debt” violative of 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(1).

31. 15 U.S.C. § 1692e prohibits a debt collector from using any false, deceptive, or misleading representation or means in connection with the collection of any debt.

32. Section 1692e requires debt collectors, when they notify consumers of their account balance, to disclose whether the balance may increase due to interest and fees.

33. The Letter fails to include any “safe harbor” language concerning the accrual of interest and/or fees. *Carlin v. Davidson Fink*, 852 F.3d 207, 216 (2d Cir. 2017); *Avila v. Riexinger & Associates, LLC*, 817 F.3d 72, 76 (2d Cir. 2016).

34. The Letter fails to indicate the minimum amount Plaintiff owed at the time of

receipt of the Letter.

35. The Letter fails to provide information that would allow the least sophisticated consumer to determine the minimum amount he or she owes at the time of receipt of the Letter.

36. The Letter fails to provide information that would allow Plaintiff to determine what Plaintiff will need to pay to resolve the debt at any given moment in the future.

37. The Letter fails to provide information that would allow the least sophisticated consumer to determine what he or she will need to pay to resolve the debt at any given moment in the future.

38. The Letter fails to provide information that would allow the least sophisticated consumer to determine the amount of interest owed.

39. For instance, the Letter fails to indicate whether additional interest will be added.

40. For instance, the Letter fails to indicate the applicable interest rate.

41. For instance, the Letter fails to indicate the date of accrual of interest.

42. For instance, the Letter fails to indicate the amount of interest during any measurable period.

43. The Letter fails to provide information that would allow the least sophisticated consumer to determine the amount of late fees owed.

44. For instance, the Letter fails to indicate the amount of late fees.

45. For instance, the Letter fails to indicate the date such fees will be added.

46. For instance, the Letter fails to indicate the amount of late fees during any measurable period.

47. The Letter fails to contain an explanation, understandable by the least sophisticated consumer, of any fees and interest that may cause the amount stated to increase.

48. The Letter fails to state whether interest, late fees and/or other fees are accruing.

49. The Letter fails to state what part of the amount stated is attributable to principal.

50. The Letter fails to state what part of the amount stated is attributable to interest.

51. The Letter fails to state what part of the amount stated is attributable to late fees.

52. The Letter fails to state what part of the amount stated is attributable to other fees.

53. The Letter, because of the aforementioned failures, would render the least sophisticated consumer unable to determine the minimum amount owed at the time of the Letter.

54. The Letter fails to contain an explanation, understandable by the least

sophisticated consumer, of any interest that may cause the amount stated to increase.

55. The Letter, because of the aforementioned failures, would render the least sophisticated consumer unable to determine the minimum amount owed at the time of the Letter.

56. The Letter, because of the aforementioned failures, would render the least sophisticated consumer unable to determine what she will need to pay to resolve the debt at any given moment in the future.

57. The Letter, because of the aforementioned failures, would render the least sophisticated consumer unable to determine the amount of his or her debt.

58. The Letter, because of the aforementioned failures, would render the least sophisticated consumer unable to determine the amount of her debt because the consumer would not know whether interest and fees would continue to accrue, or whether the amount of the debt was static.

59. The Letter, because of the aforementioned failures, did not convey “the amount of the debt” clearly from the perspective of the least sophisticated consumer.

60. The Letter, because of the aforementioned failures, did not convey “the amount of the debt” accurately from the perspective of the least sophisticated consumer.

61. The Letter, because of the aforementioned failures, did not convey “the amount of the debt” without ambiguity from the perspective of the least sophisticated consumer.

62. Because of the aforementioned failures, the least sophisticated consumer would likely be confused as to the amount of the debt.

63. Because of the aforementioned failures, the least sophisticated consumer would likely be uncertain as to the amount of the debt.

64. The Letter, because of the aforementioned failures, violates 15 U.S.C. § 1692e and 15 U.S.C. § 1692g.

CLASS ALLEGATIONS

65. Plaintiff brings this action individually and as a class action on behalf of all persons similarly situated in the State of New York from whom Defendant attempted to collect a consumer debt using a collection letter that fails to provide a “safe harbor” concerning the accrual of interest and/or late fees, from one year before the date of this Complaint to the present.

66. This action seeks a finding that Defendant’s conduct violates the FDCPA, and

asks that the Court award damages as authorized by 15 U.S.C. § 1692k.

67. Defendant regularly engages in debt collection.

68. The Class consists of more than 35 persons from whom Defendant attempted to collect delinquent consumer debts using a collection letter that fails to provide a “safe harbor” concerning the accrual of interest and/or late fees.

69. Plaintiff’s claims are typical of the claims of the Class. Common questions of law or fact raised by this class action complaint affect all members of the Class and predominate over any individual issues. Common relief is therefore sought on behalf of all members of the Class. This class action is superior to other available methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of this controversy.

70. The prosecution of separate actions by individual members of the Class would create a risk of inconsistent or varying adjudications with respect to the individual members of the Class, and a risk that any adjudications with respect to individual members of the Class would, as a practical matter, either be dispositive of the interests of other members of the Class not party to the adjudication, or substantially impair or impede their ability to protect their interests. Defendant has acted in a manner applicable to the Class as a whole such that declaratory relief is warranted.

71. Plaintiff will fairly and adequately protect and represent the interests of the Class. The management of the class action proposed is not extraordinarily difficult, and the factual and legal issues raised by this class action complaint will not require extended contact with the members of the Class, because Defendant’s conduct was perpetrated on all members of the Class and will be established by common proof. Moreover, Plaintiff has retained counsel experienced in actions brought under consumer protection laws.

JURY DEMAND

72. Plaintiff hereby demands a trial of this action by jury.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff respectfully requests judgment as follows:

- a. Certify this action as a class action; and
- b. Appoint Plaintiff as Class Representative of the Class, and

Plaintiff's attorneys as Class Counsel; and

- c. Find that Defendant's actions violate the FDCPA; and
- d. Grant damages against Defendant pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k; and
- e. Grant Plaintiff's attorneys' fees pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k; and
- f. Grant Plaintiff's costs; together with
- g. Such other relief that the Court determines is just and proper.

DATED: May 1, 2018

BARSHAY SANDERS, PLLC

By: /s/ Craig B. Sanders

Craig B. Sanders, Esq.
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Garden City, New York 11530
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csanders@barshaysanders.com
Attorneys for Plaintiff
Our File No.: 114625

BARSHAY | SANDERS PLLC
100 GARDEN CITY PLAZA, SUITE 500
GARDEN CITY, NEW YORK 11530

35 E. Grassy Sprain Rd. Suite 210
Yonkers NY 10710-4613

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

GRASSY SPRAIN GROUP INC.

35 E Grassy Sprain Rd., Suite 210
Yonkers, NY 10710-4613
914-337-7300 ♦ Toll Free 800-937-8068
Fax: 914-337-7373

September 25, 2017

532114404



GEORGE CASTRO
99 Central Ave
Deer Park NY 11729-5109

004633
1001

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Borrower: | GEORGE CASTRO |
| Originator: | CIRCLEBACK LENDING |
| Original Account #: | ██████████2348 |
| Prior Owner: | MarketPlace Loan Grantor Trust Series 2015-CB1 |
| Prior Account #: | ██████████2348 |
| New Account #: | ██████████7438 |
| Total Amount Due: | \$9,580.06 |
| Principal Balance Due: | \$8,580.45 |
| Interest Due: | \$ 878.51 |
| Fees Due: | \$ 121.10 |

Dear GEORGE CASTRO:

On August 29 2017, GRASSY SPRAIN GROUP INC. purchased the above referenced account from CIRCLEBACK LENDING. This transfer does not change the terms and conditions of the prior agreement or any subsequent modifications.

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the change in owner. Please make your payment to the servicer below:

MALEN & ASSOCIATES
123 FROST STREET
WESTBURY NY 11590
516-334-3500

If you are represented by an attorney, filed bankruptcy or have been discharged in bankruptcy, kindly have your attorney contact our office. If you have any questions please call our customer service department at the phone number listed above.

Sincerely,

Barbara Giugliano
Office Manager

Unless you notify this office within 30 days after receiving this notice that you dispute the validity of this debt or any portion thereof, this office will assume this debt is valid. If you notify this office in writing within 30 days from receiving this notice, this office will obtain verification of the debt or obtain a copy of a judgment and mail you a copy of such judgement or verification. If you request of this office in writing within 30 days after receiving this notice this office will provide you with the name and address of the original creditor, if different from the current creditor. This is an attempt to collect a debt. Any information obtained will be used for that purpose.

CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS: GEORGE CASTRO
(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff: SUFFOLK
(c) Attorneys: BARSHAY SANDERS, PLLC
DEFENDANTS: GRASSY SPRAIN GROUP, INC.
County of Residence of First Listed Defendant: PALM BEACH
NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED.

II. BASIS OF JURISDICTION (Place an "X" in One Box Only)
III. CITIZENSHIP OF PRINCIPAL PARTIES (Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintiff and One Box for Defendant)
O 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff
O 2 U.S. Government Defendant
O 3 Federal Question (U.S. Government Not a Party)
O 4 Diversity (Indicate Citizenship of Parties in Item III)
Citizen of This State
Citizen of Another State
Citizen or Subject of a Foreign Country

IV. NATURE OF SUIT (Place an "X" in One Box Only)
CONTRACT
REAL PROPERTY
PERSONAL INJURY
CIVIL RIGHTS
PRISONER PETITIONS
FORFEITURE/PENALTY
LABOR
IMMIGRATION
BANKRUPTCY
SOCIAL SECURITY
FEDERAL TAX SUITS
OTHER STATUTES

V. ORIGIN (Place an "X" in One Box Only)
O 1 Original Proceeding
O 2 Removed from State Court
O 3 Remanded from Appellate Court
O 4 Reinstated or Reopened
O 5 Transferred from Another District (specify)
O 6 Multidistrict Litigation - Transfer
O 8 Multidistrict Litigation - Direct File

VI. CAUSE OF ACTION
Cite the U.S. Civil Statute under which you are filing (Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity): 15 USC §1692
Brief description of cause: 15 USC §1692 Fair Debt Collection Practices Act Violation

VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:
CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION UNDER RULE 23, F.R.Cv.P. DEMAND \$
CHECK YES only if demanded in complaint: JURY DEMAND: Yes No

VIII. RELATED CASE(S) IF ANY
(See Instructions)
JUDGE
DOCKET NUMBER

DATE: May 2, 2018
SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY OF RECORD: /s Craig B. Sanders

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY
RECEIPT # AMOUNT APPLYING IFP JUDGE MAG. JUDGE

CERTIFICATION OF ARBITRATION ELIGIBILITY

Local Arbitration Rule 83.10 provides that with certain exceptions, actions seeking money damages only in an amount not in excess of \$150,000, exclusive of interest and costs, are eligible for compulsory arbitration. The amount of damages is presumed to be below the threshold amount unless a certification to the contrary is filed.

I, Craig B. Sanders, counsel for Plaintiff, do hereby certify that the above captioned civil action is ineligible for compulsory arbitration for the following reason(s):

- monetary damages sought are in excess of \$150,000, exclusive of interest and costs,
the complaint seeks injunctive relief,
the matter is otherwise ineligible for the following reason

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT - FEDERAL RULES CIVIL PROCEDURE 7.1

Identify any parent corporation and any publicly held corporation that owns 10% or more of its stocks:

RELATED CASE STATEMENT (Section VIII on the Front of this Form)

Please list all cases that are arguably related pursuant to Division of Business Rule 50.3.1 in Section VIII on the front of this form. Rule 50.3.1 (a) provides that "A civil case is "related" to another civil case for purposes of this guideline when, because of the similarity of facts and legal issues or because the cases arise from the same transactions or events, a substantial saving of judicial resources is likely to result from assigning both cases to the same judge and magistrate judge." Rule 50.3.1 (b) provides that " A civil case shall not be deemed "related" to another civil case merely because the civil case: (A) involves identical legal issues, or (B) involves the same parties." Rule 50.3.1 (c) further provides that "Presumptively, and subject to the power of a judge to determine otherwise pursuant to paragraph (d), civil cases shall not be deemed to be "related" unless both cases are still pending before the court."

NY-E DIVISION OF BUSINESS RULE 50.1(d)(2)

- 1. Is the civil action being filed in the Eastern District removed from a New York State Court located in Nassau or Suffolk County: NO
2. If you answered "no" above:
a) Did the events or omissions giving rise to the claim or claims, or a substantial part thereof, occur in Nassau or Suffolk County? YES
b) Did the events or omissions giving rise to the claim or claims, or a substantial part thereof, occur in the Eastern District? YES
c) If this is a Fair Debt Collection Practice Act case, specific the County in which the offending communication was received: SUFFOLK

If your answer to question 2 (b) is "No," does the defendant (or a majority of the defendants, if there is more than one) reside in Nassau or Suffolk County, or, in an interpleader action, does the claimant (or a majority of the claimants, if there is more than one) reside in Nassau or Suffolk County? Yes No

(Note: A corporation shall be considered a resident of the County in which it has the most significant contacts).

BAR ADMISSION

I am currently admitted in the Eastern District of New York and currently a member in good standing of the bar of this court. Yes No

Are you currently the subject of any disciplinary action (s) in this or any other state or federal court? Yes (If yes, please explain) No

I certify the accuracy of all information provided above.

Signature: /s Craig B. Sanders

AO 440 (Rev. 06/12) Summons in a Civil Action

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
for the
EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

| | | |
|--|---|------------------|
| George Castro, individually and on behalf of all those similarly situated |) | |
| _____ |) | |
| <i>Plaintiff(s)</i> |) | |
| |) | Civil Action No. |
| v. |) | |
| |) | |
| Grassy Sprain Group, Inc. |) | |
| _____ |) | |
| <i>Defendant(s)</i> |) | |

SUMMONS IN A CIVIL ACTION

To: *(Defendant's name and address)*
Grassy Sprain Group, Inc.
1001 Yamato Road , Suite 308
Boca Raton, Florida 33431

A lawsuit has been filed against you.

Within 21 days after service of this summons on you (not counting the day you received it) – or 60 days if you are the United States, or a United States agency, or an officer or employee of the United States described in Fed. R. Civ. P. 12 (a)(2) or (3) – you must serve on the plaintiff an answer to the attached complaint or a motion under Rule 12 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. The answer or motion must be served on the plaintiff or plaintiff’s attorney, whose name and address are:

BARSHAY SANDERS PLLC
100 GARDEN CITY PLAZA, SUITE 500
GARDEN CITY, NY 11530

If you fail to respond, judgment by default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint. You also must file your answer or motion with the court.

CLERK OF COURT

Date: _____

Signature of Clerk or Deputy Clerk

ClassAction.org

This complaint is part of ClassAction.org's searchable class action lawsuit database and can be found in this post: [Grassy Sprain Group Tagged with Debt Collection Class Action in NY](#)
