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## UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

JORGE LUIS CHAVEZ, on behalf of himself, and others similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

Case No.: 19 CV 193

# COMPLAINT in an FLSA ACTION

-against-

NY GREAT STONE INC., and MICHAEL YE, *individually*,

Defendants.

Plaintiff, Jorge Luis Chavez ("Plaintiff"), on behalf of himself and other similarly situated employees, by and through his undersigned attorneys, Cilenti & Cooper, PLLC, files this Complaint against Defendants, NY Great Stone Inc., and Michael Ye individually (defendants, collectively, the "Defendants"), and states as follows:

#### INTRODUCTION

1. Plaintiff alleges that, pursuant to the Fair Labor Standards Act, as amended, 29 U.S.C. §§ 201, *et seq.* ("FLSA"), he is entitled to recover from the Defendants: (1) unpaid overtime compensation; (2) liquidated damages; (3) prejudgment and post-judgment interest; and (4) attorneys' fees and costs.

2. Plaintiff further alleges that, pursuant to the New York Labor Law, he is entitled to recover from the Defendants: (1) unpaid overtime compensation; (2) liquidated

ECF Case

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damages and statutory penalties, pursuant to the New York Wage Theft Prevention Act; (3) prejudgment and post-judgment interest; and (4) attorneys' fees and costs.

#### JURISDICTION AND VENUE

3. This Court has jurisdiction over this controversy pursuant to 29 U.S.C. §216(b), 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331, 1337 and 1343, and has supplemental jurisdiction over Plaintiffs' state law claims pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1367.

4. Venue is proper in the Eastern District pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391 because the conduct making up the basis of the complaint took place in this judicial district.

#### PARTIES

5. Plaintiff is an adult resident of Queens County, in the Eastern District of New York.

6. Upon information and belief, Defendant, NY Great Stone Inc., is a domestic business corporation organized under the laws of the State of New York, with a principal place of business at 132-29B 33<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Flushing, New York 11354.

7. Upon information and belief, Defendant, Michael Ye, is an owner, officer, director and/or managing agent of the corporate defendant, whose address is unknown at this time, and who participated in the day-to-day operations of the corporate defendant, and acted intentionally and maliciously and is an "employer" pursuant to the FLSA, 29 U.S.C. § 203(d) and Regulations promulgated thereunder, 29 C.F.R. § 791.2, as well as New York Labor Law § 2 and the Regulations thereunder, and is jointly and severally liable with the corporate defendant.

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8. The performance of Plaintiff's job responsibilities, as well as the responsibilities of other similarly situated employees, was and continues to be controlled by individual defendant, Michael Ye.

9. The corporate defendant NY Great Stone Inc. offers services to the public in the general contracting, countertop and stone fabrication and installation, and construction industry.

10. Plaintiff, Jorge Luis Chavez, was employed by Defendants, in New York City, to work as a fabricator and installer of stone countertops, among other tings, throughout New York City, from in or around 2012, through December 15, 2018.

12. At all relevant times, NY Great Stone Inc. was, and continues to be, an "enterprise engaged in commerce" within the meaning of the FLSA.

13. At all relevant times, the work performed by Plaintiff was directly essential to the business operated by NY Great Stone Inc.

14. At all relevant times, Defendants knowingly and willfully failed to pay Plaintiff lawfully earned overtime compensation, in contravention of the FLSA and New York Labor Law.

15. Plaintiff has fulfilled all conditions precedent to the institution of this action and/or such conditions have been waived.

### STATEMENT OF FACTS

16. In or around 2012, Plaintiff, Jorge Luis Chavez, was hired by Defendants to work as marble and stone fabricator and installer, at Defendants' general contracting company.

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17. Plaintiff worked for the Defendants continuously, through December 15,2018.

18. Plaintiff worked at Defendants' premises as well as at customer locations, performing installations.

19. During Plaintiff's employment by Defendants, he worked over forty (40) hours per week. Plaintiff generally worked 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., six (6) days per week, with an half hour break, for a total of approximately fifty-four (54) working hours per week.

20. Plaintiff punched a clock at the start and completion of his work each day, but was not paid according to his hours. He was paid a fixed daily rate.

21. Plaintiff was not paid overtime wages at any time during his employment. Plaintiff was paid "daily rate" ranging from \$120.00 to \$190.00. He was paid in cash; he normally worked six (6) days per week; he worked approximately nine and a half (9  $\frac{1}{2}$ ) hours per day.

22. Plaintiff was always paid at the same regular rate of pay, for all hours worked, each week.

23. Plaintiffs regularly worked in excess of forty (40) hours per week; but Plaintiff was not paid at time and one-half his regular rate of pay, as required by state and federal law.

24. Defendants knowingly and willfully operated their business with a policy of not paying Plaintiff and other similarly situated employees either the FLSA overtime rate (of time and one-half), or the New York State overtime rate (of time and one-half), in

violation of the FLSA and New York Labor Law and the supporting federal and New York State Department of Labor Regulations.

25. Defendant, Michael Ye, is an individual who, upon information and belief, owns the stock of NY Great Stone Inc., and manages and makes all business decisions, including but not limited to, the decisions of what salary the employees will receive and the number of hours the employees will work.

26. Defendant Michael Ye exercised control over the terms and conditions of Plaintiff's employment in that he has and had the power to: (i) hire and fire employees, (ii) determine rates and methods of pay, (iii) determine work schedules, (iv) supervise and control work of the employees, and (v) create and maintain wage and hour records.

27. Defendant Michael Ye actively supervised the work of the Plaintiff, and other similarly situated employees.

28. The corporate defendant, NY Great Stone Inc., has and had employees engaged in commerce or in the production of goods for commerce, that handle, sell, or otherwise work on goods or materials that have been moved in or produced for commerce.

29. During the past three (3) years, the corporate defendant, NY Great Stone Inc., had annual gross volume of sales of not less than \$500,000.

## STATEMENT OF CLAIM COUNT I [Violation of the Fair Labor Standards Act]

30. Plaintiff re-alleges and re-avers each and every allegation and statement contained in paragraphs "1" through "29" of this Complaint as if fully set forth herein.

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31. At all relevant times, upon information and belief, Defendants were and continue to be an employer engaged in interstate commerce and/or the production of goods for commerce within the meaning of the FLSA, 29 U.S.C. §§ 206(a) and 207(a). Further, Plaintiff is a covered individuals within the meaning of the FLSA, 29 U.S.C. §§ 206(a) and 207(a).

32. At all relevant times, Defendants employed Plaintiff within the meaning of the FLSA.

33. Upon information and belief, at all relevant times, Defendants had gross revenues in excess of \$500,000.

34. Plaintiff was entitled to be paid at the rate of time and one-half his regular rate of pay, for all hours worked in excess forty (40).

35. Defendants failed to pay Plaintiff overtime compensation in the lawful amount for all hours worked in excess of the maximum hours provided for in the FLSA.

36. At all relevant times, Defendants had, and continues to have a policy and practice of refusing to pay overtime compensation at the statutory rate of time and one-half to Plaintiff, for all hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours per work week, which violated and continues to violate the FLSA, 29 U.S.C. §§ 201, *et seq.*, including 29 U.S.C. §§ 207(a)(1) and 215(a).

37. Defendants knowingly and willfully disregarded the provisions of the FLSA as evidenced by their failure to compensate at statutory overtime rate of time and one-half, for all hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours per week, when they knew or should have known such was due and that non-payment of overtime pay would financially injure Plaintiff and other similarly situated employees.

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38. Defendants failed to properly disclose or apprise Plaintiff of his rights under the FLSA.

39. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' willful disregard of the FLSA, Plaintiff is entitled to liquidated damages pursuant to the FLSA.

40. Due to the intentional, willful and unlawful acts of the Defendants, Plaintiff suffered damages in an amount not presently ascertainable of unpaid overtime compensation, an equal amount as liquidated damages, and prejudgment interest thereon.

41. Plaintiff is entitled to an award of their reasonable attorneys' fees, costs and expenses, pursuant to 29 U.S.C. § 216(b).

## COUNT II [Violation of the New York Labor Law]

42. Plaintiffs re-alleges and re-avers each and every allegation and statement contained in paragraphs "1" through "41" of this Complaint as if fully set forth herein.

43. At all relevant times, Plaintiff was employed by Defendants within the meaning of New York Labor Law §§ 2 and 651.

44. Defendants knowingly and willfully violated Plaintiff's rights by failing to pay overtime compensation at rates of not less than one and one-half times his regular rate of pay for each hour worked in excess of forty (40) hours in a workweek.

45. Due to the Defendants' New York Labor Law violations, Plaintiff is entitled to recover from Defendants unpaid overtime wages, reasonable attorneys' fees, costs and disbursements of this action, pursuant to New York Labor Law § 663(1) *et al.* and § 198. Plaintiff also seeks liquidated damages pursuant to New York Labor Law § 663(1).

### COUNT III

## [Statutory Penalties Pursuant to the New York State Wage Theft Prevention Act]

46. Plaintiff re-alleges and re-avers each and every allegation and statement contained in paragraphs "1" through "45" of this Complaint as if fully set forth herein.

47. The New York State Wage Theft Prevention Act, New York Labor Law § 195(1), requires every employer to notify its employees, in writing, among other things, of the employee's rate of pay and regular pay day.

48. The New York State Wage Theft Prevention Act, New York Labor Law § 195(3), requires every employer to notify its employees, in writing, with every payment of wages, of the dates of work covered, the rate of pay and basis thereof, hours worked, gross wages, deductions, allowances, and net wages.

49. At all times relevant to this action Plaintiff was paid cash, and not provided with an accurate wage and comprehendible statement as required by law, New York Labor Law § 195(3).

50. As a result of Defendant's violations of New York Labor Law § 195(1), Plaintiff may recover statutory penalties, not to exceed a total of five thousand, together with costs and reasonable attorney's fees in accordance with New York Labor Law § 198 (1-b).

51. As a result of Defendant's violations of New York Labor Law § 195(3), Plaintiff may recover statutory penalties for each work week Defendants failed to provide Plaintiffs with wage notices, not to exceed a total of five thousand dollars, together with costs and reasonable attorney's fees in accordance with New York Labor Law § 198 (1d).

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52. Defendants failed to comply with the notice and record keeping requirements of the New York State Wage Theft Prevention Act and as such are liable for civil penalties, attorneys' fees, and costs.

### **PRAYER FOR RELEIF**

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff, Jorge Luis Chavez, on behalf of himself and all similarly situated employees, respectfully requests that this Court grant the following relief:

- (a) A declaratory judgment that the practices complained of herein are unlawful under the FLSA and New York Labor Law;
- (b) An award of unpaid overtime compensation due under the FLSA and New York Labor Law;
- (c) An award of liquidated damages as a result of Defendants' failure to pay overtime compensation pursuant to 29 U.S.C. § 216;
- (d) An award of liquidated damages and statutory penalties as a result of Defendants' failure to pay overtime compensation, and comply with notice requirements, pursuant to the New York Labor Law;
- (e) An award of prejudgment and post-judgment interest;
- (f) An award of costs and expenses associated with this action, together with reasonable attorneys' fees; and,
- (g) Such other and further relief as this Court determines to be just and proper.

Dated: New York, New York January 10, 2019

Respectfully submitted,

CILENTI & COOPER, PLLC Attorneys for Plaintiff 708 Third Avenue – 6<sup>th</sup> Floor New York, NY 10017 Telephone (212) 209-3933

By:

Peter Hans Cooper, Esq. (PHC 4714)

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**CONSENT TO SUE UNDER** FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT Luis Chavez, am an employee currently or NY Great Stone, and/or related 9070/ I, formerly employed by U

entities. I consent to be a plaintiff in the above-captioned action to collect unpaid wages.

Dated: New York, New York

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# Case 1:19-cv-00193 Document 1-1 Filed 01/10/19 Page 1 of 2 PageID #: 191 CV 193 JS 44 (Rev. 1/2013) 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 JORGE LUIS CHAVEZ, on behalf of himself, and others similarly situated,		DEFENDANTS NY GREAT STON	DEFENDANTS NY GREAT STONE INC., and MICHAEL YE, individually,	
<ul> <li>(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff QUEENS (EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)</li> <li>(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, Address, and Telephone Number)</li> </ul>		NOTE: IN LAND C	e of First Listed Defendant <u>QUEENS</u> (IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY) ONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF T OF LAND INVOLVED.	
Cilenti & Cooper, PLLC, 7 New York, New York 100	708 Third Avenue, 6th Floor 17 Tel. (212) 209-3933			
II. BASIS OF JURISDI	CTION (Place an "X" in One Box Only)		PRINCIPAL PARTIES (Place an "X" in One Box for Plaint	
I U.S. Government Plaintiff	3 Federal Question (U.S. Government Not a Party)	Value of the second sec	and One Box for Defendant) PTF DEF PTF DEF I I Incorporated or Principal Place I 4 I 4 of Business In This State	
2 U.S. Government Defendant	4 Diversity (Indicate Citizenship of Parties in Item III)		2       1	
		Foreign Country		
IV. NATURE OF SUIT	(Place an "X" in One Box Only) TORTS	FORFEITURE/PENALTY	BANKRUPTCY OTHER STATUTES	
CONTRACT         110 Insurance         120 Marine         130 Miller Act         140 Negotiable Instrument         150 Recovery of Overpayment & Enforcement of Judgment         151 Medicare Act         152 Recovery of Defaulted Student Loans (Excludes Veterans)         153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits         160 Stockholders' Suits         190 Other Contract         195 Contract Product Liability         196 Franchise         REAL PROPERTY         210 Land Condemnation         220 Foreclosure         230 Rent Lease & Ejectment         240 Torts to Land         245 Tort Product Liability         290 All Other Real Property	PERSONAL INJURY     PERSONAL INJU       310 Airplane     365 Personal Injury       315 Airplane Product     Product Liabilit       Liability     367 Health Care/       320 Assault, Libel &     Pharmaceutical	RY       □       625 Drug Related Seizure of Property 21 USC 881         y       □       690 Other         y       □       690 Other         y       □       710 Fair Labor Standards Act         g       □       720 Labor/Management Relations         g       □       720 Labor/Management Relations         y       □       790 Other Labor Litigation         ONS       □       791 Employee Retirement Income Security Act         ate       IMMIGRATION 462 Naturalization Application Actions	□       422 Appeal 28 USC 158       □       375 False Claims Act         □       423 Withdrawal       □       400 State Reapportionment         □       28 USC 157       □       430 Banks and Banking         □       820 Copyrights       □       450 Commerce         □       820 Copyrights       □       460 Deportation         □       840 Trademark       □       470 Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations         □       861 H1A (1395ff)       □       480 Cable/Sat TV         □       861 BIAK Lung (923)       □       890 Other Statutory Actions         □       863 DIWC/DIWW (405(g))       □       891 Agricultural Acts         □       863 RSI (405(g))       □       891 Environmental Matters         □       870 Taxes (U,S, Plaintiff or Defendant)       □       879 Administrative Procedure Act/Review or Appeal of Agency Decision         □       871 IRS—Third Party 26 USC 7609       □       950 Constitutionality of State Statutes	
			ter District Litigation	
VI. CAUSE OF ACTIO	N Cite the U.S. Civil Statute under which you 29 U.S.C. Sec. 201 et. seq. Brief description of cause: Failure to pay wages and overtime			
VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:	CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION UNDER RULE 23, F.R.Cy.P.	The second	CHECK YES only if demanded in complaint: JURY DEMAND:	
VIII. RELATED CASE IF ANY	(See instructions): JUDGE		DOCKET NUMBER	
DATE 01/10/2019 FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	SIGNATORE OF A	TTORNEN OF RECORD		
RECEIPT #AMOUNTAPPLYING IFPJUDGEMAG. JUDGE				

#### EDNY Rease 12:1910/200393 Document 1-1 Filed 01/10/19 Page 2 of 2 PageID #: 12 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, <u>Peter Hans Cooper</u>, counsel for <u>Plaintiff</u>, 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 or 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? No

b) Did the events of omissions giving rise to the claim or claims, or a substantial part thereof, occur in the Eastern District? Yes

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?

(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:

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

# **UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**

for the

Eastern District of New York

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JORGE LUIS CHAVEZ, on behalf of himself, and others similarly situated,

Plaintiff(s)

v.

Civil Action No. 19 CV 193

NY GREAT STONE INC., and MICHAEL YE, individually,

Defendant(s)

#### SUMMONS IN A CIVIL ACTION

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To: (Defendant's name and address) NY GREAT STONE INC. 132-29B 33RD AVENUE FLUSHING, NEW YORK 11354

> MICHAEL YE 132-29B 33RD AVENUE FLUSHING, NEW YORK 11354

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:

Cilenti & Cooper, PLLC 708 Third Avenue - 6th Floor New York, New York 10017

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: <u>Former Employee Files Unpaid Overtime Suit Against NY Great Stone</u>