UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

ARTEM DANYAROV, on behalf of himself and all others similarly situated,

Plaintiffs,

-against-

TRANSWORLD SYSTEMS INC.

Defendant.

CIVIL ACTION

CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT AND DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

Plaintiff ARTEM DANYAROV (hereinafter, "Plaintiff"), a New York resident, brings this class action complaint by and through his attorneys, Joseph H. Mizrahi Law, P.C., against Defendant TRANSWORLD SYSTEMS INC. (hereinafter "Defendant"), individually and on behalf of a class of all others similarly situated, pursuant to Rule 23 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, based upon information and belief of Plaintiff's counsel, except for allegations specifically pertaining to Plaintiff, which are based upon Plaintiff's personal knowledge.

INTRODUCTION/PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

- Congress enacted the FDCPA in 1977 in response to the "abundant evidence of the use of abusive, deceptive, and unfair debt collection practices by many debt collectors." 15 U.S.C. § 1692(a). At that time, Congress was concerned that "abusive debt collection practices contribute to the number of personal bankruptcies, to material instability, to the loss of jobs, and to invasions of individual privacy." *Id.* Congress concluded that "existing laws . . . [we]re inadequate to protect consumers," and that "the effective collection of debts" does not require "misrepresentation or other abusive debt collection practices." 15 U.S.C. §§ 1692(b) & (c).
- 2. Congress explained that the purpose of the Act was not only to eliminate abusive debt collection practices, but also to "insure that those debt collectors who refrain from using

abusive debt collection practices are not competitively disadvantaged." *Id.* § 1692(e). After determining that the existing consumer protection laws were inadequate, *id.* § 1692(b), Congress gave consumers a private cause of action against debt collectors who fail to comply with the Act. *Id.* § 1692k.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 3. The Court has jurisdiction over this class action under 28 U.S.C. § 1331, 15 U.S.C. § 1692 *et seq.* and 28 U.S.C. § 2201. If applicable, the Court also has pendent jurisdiction over the state law claims in this action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1367(a).
- 4. Venue is proper in this judicial district pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b)(2).

NATURE OF THE ACTION

- 5. Plaintiff brings this class action on behalf of a class of New York consumers seeking redress for Defendant's actions of using an unfair and unconscionable means to collect a debt.
- 6. Defendant's actions violated § 1692 et seq. of Title 15 of the United States Code, commonly referred to as the Fair Debt Collections Practices Act ("<u>FDCPA</u>") which prohibits debt collectors from engaging in abusive, deceptive and unfair practices.
- 7. Plaintiff is seeking damages, and declaratory and injunctive relief.

PARTIES

- Plaintiff is a natural person and a resident of the State of New York, and is a "Consumer" as defined by 15 U.S.C. §1692(a)(3).
- 9. Defendant is a collection agency with its principal office located in Washington, Pennsylvania.
- 10. Defendant is a company that uses the mail, telephone, and facsimile and regularly engages in business the principal purpose of which is to attempt to collect debts alleged to be due another.
- 11. Defendant is a "debt collector," as defined under the FDCPA under 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(6).

CLASS ALLEGATIONS

- 12. Plaintiff brings claims, pursuant to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure (hereinafter "FRCP") Rule 23, individually and on behalf of the following consumer class (the "Class"):
 - 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 the same unlawful form letter herein, from one year before the date of this Complaint to the present.
 - The Class period begins one year to the filing of this Action.
- 13. The Class satisfies all the requirements of Rule 23 of the FRCP for maintaining a class action:
 - Upon information and belief, the Class is so numerous that joinder of all members is impracticable because there are hundreds and/or thousands of persons who have received debt collection letters and/or notices from Defendant that violate specific provisions of the FDCPA. Plaintiff is complaining of a standard form letter and/or notice that is sent to hundreds of persons (*See* Exhibit A, except that the undersigned attorney has, in accordance with Fed. R. Civ. P. 5.2 partially redacted the financial account numbers in an effort to protect Plaintiff's privacy);
 - There are questions of law and fact which are common to the Class and which predominate over questions affecting any individual Class member. These common questions of law and fact include, without limitation:
 - a. Whether Defendant violated various provisions of the FDCPA;
 - b. Whether Plaintiff and the Class have been injured by Defendant's conduct;
 - c. Whether Plaintiff and the Class have sustained damages and are

entitled to restitution as a result of Defendant's wrongdoing and if so, what is the proper measure and appropriate statutory formula to be applied in determining such damages and restitution; and

- d. Whether Plaintiff and the Class are entitled to declaratory and/or injunctive relief.
- Plaintiff's claims are typical of the Class, which all arise from the same operative facts and are based on the same legal theories.
- Plaintiff has no interest adverse or antagonistic to the interest of the other members of the Class.
- Plaintiff will fairly and adequately protect the interest of the Class and has retained experienced and competent attorneys to represent the Class.
- A Class Action is superior to other methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of the claims herein asserted. Plaintiff anticipates that no unusual difficulties are likely to be encountered in the management of this class action.
- A Class Action will permit large numbers of similarly situated persons to prosecute their common claims in a single forum simultaneously and without the duplication of effort and expense that numerous individual actions would engender. Class treatment will also permit the adjudication of relatively small claims by many Class members who could not otherwise afford to seek legal redress for the wrongs complained of herein. Absent a Class Action, class members will continue to suffer losses of statutory protected rights as well as monetary damages. If Defendant's conduct is allowed to proceed without

remedy they will continue to reap and retain the proceeds of their ill-gotten gains.

• Defendant has acted on grounds generally applicable to the entire Class, thereby making appropriate final injunctive relief or corresponding declaratory relief with respect to the Class as a whole.

ALLEGATIONS PARTICULAR TO ARTEM DANYAROV

- 14. Plaintiff repeats, reiterates and incorporates the allegations contained in paragraphs numbered"1" through "13" herein with the same force and effect as if the same were set forth at length herein.
- 15. Defendant collects and attempts to collect debts incurred or alleged to have been incurred for personal, family or household purposes on behalf of creditors using the United States Postal Services, telephone and Internet.
- 16. Upon information and belief, within the last year Defendant commenced efforts to collect an alleged consumer "debt" as defined by 15 U.S.C. 1692a(5), when it mailed a Collection Letter to Plaintiff seeking to collect on an unpaid account allegedly owed to Arizona Public Service.
- 17. On or around November 15, 2017, Defendant sent Plaintiff a collection letter (hereinafter, the "Letter"). See Exhibit A.
- 18. The Letter was sent or caused to be sent by persons employed by Defendant as a "debt collector" as defined by 15 U.S.C. §1692a(6).
- 19. The Letter is a "communication" as defined by 15 U.S.C. §1692a(2).
- 20. The Letter was an initial communication between Plaintiff and Defendant.
- 21. As a result of the following Counts Defendant violated the FDCPA.

<u>First Count</u> 15 U.S.C. §1692e *et seq*. False or Misleading Representations as to Status of Debt

- 22. Plaintiff repeats, reiterates and incorporates the allegations contained in paragraphs numbered"1" through "21" herein with the same force and effect as if the same were set forth at length herein.
- 23. Defendant's debt collection efforts attempted and/or directed towards Plaintiff violated various provisions of the FDCPA, including but not limited to 15 U.S.C. § 1692e.
- 24. Pursuant to 15 U.S.C. §1692e, a debt collector is prohibited from using false, deceptive, or misleading representation in connection with the collection of a debt.
- 25. While § 1692e specifically prohibits certain practices, the list is non-exhaustive, and does not preclude a claim of falsity or deception based on non-enumerated practice.
- 26. Collection notices are deceptive if they can be reasonably read to have two or more different meanings, one of which is inaccurate.
- 27. The question of whether a collection letter is deceptive is determined from the perspective of the "least sophisticated consumer."
- 28. The Letter can reasonably be read by the least sophisticated consumer to have two or more meanings concerning the actual balance due, one of which must be inaccurate, in violation of 15 U.S.C. § 1692e.
- 29. By stating a "Current Balance" without further clarification, "Defendant did not meet the minimum standard set out by *Avila*, because the letter does not state when, if ever, the amount owed by the Plaintiff would increase."¹

¹ *Thomas v. Midland Credit Management, Inc.*, 217CV00523ADSARL, 2017 WL 5714722, at *4 (E.D.N.Y. Nov. 27, 2017), stating that "[h]ere, the Defendant argues that Avila is inapplicable because the letter is clear that interest is not accruing. The Court disagrees...while the letter states that interest and fees are zero at the time the letter was sent, it does not state whether interest would accrue at a later date. <u>This is further clouded by the fact that the letter classifies the amount owed as the "current balance," implying that interest may accrue.</u>

- 30. Plaintiff's account was not subject to the accrual of interest, but by stating a "Current Balance," Defendant falsely suggested that immediate payment of the balance would benefit Plaintiff by implying that the Balance would be subject to change, and could be subject to additional interest.
- 31. In the alternative, Plaintiff's account was accruing contractual interest, but Defendant's communication failed to adequately disclose same in light of *Avila*.
- 32. The Letter can reasonably be read by the least sophisticated consumer to have two or more meanings concerning the actual balance due, one of which must be inaccurate, in violation of 15 U.S.C. § 1692e.
- 33. Defendant's conduct constitutes a false, deceptive and misleading means and representation in connection with the collection of the debt, in violation of 15 U.S.C. § 1692e.
- 34. Defendant's debt collection efforts attempted and/or directed towards Plaintiff violated various provisions of the FDCPA, including but not limited to § 1692(e).
- 35. By reason thereof, Defendant is liable to Plaintiff for judgment that Defendant's conduct violated Section 1692e *et seq*. of the FDCPA, actual damages, statutory damages, costs and attorneys' fees.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff demands judgment against Defendants as follows:

- (a) Declaring that this action is properly maintainable as a Class Action and certifying Plaintiff as Class representative and Joseph H. Mizrahi Law, P.C., as Class Counsel;
- (b) Awarding Plaintiff and the Class statutory damages;
- (c) Awarding Plaintiff and the Class actual damages;
- (d) Awarding Plaintiff costs of this Action, including reasonable attorneys'

fees and expenses;

- (e) Awarding pre-judgment interest and post-judgment interest; and
- (f) Awarding Plaintiff and the Class such other and further relief as this Court may deem just and proper.

Respectfully submitted,

By: <u>/s/ Joseph H. Mizrahi</u> Joseph H. Mizrahi, Esq. Joseph H. Mizrahi Law, P.C. 300 Cadman Plaza West. 12th Floor Brooklyn, New York 11201 Phone: (917) 299-6612 Fax: (718) 425-8954 Email: Joseph@Jmizrahilaw.com *Attorneys for Plaintiff*

DEMAND FOR TRIAL BY JURY

Pursuant to Rule 38 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, Plaintiff hereby requests a

trial by jury on all issues so triable.

<u>/s/ Joseph H. Mizrahi</u> Joseph H. Mizrahi, Esq.

Dated: Brooklyn, New York December 27, 2017

JS 44 (Rev. 11/27/17

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			DEFENDAN	DEFENDANTS				
ARTEM DANYARO similarly situated	V, on behalf of hims	elf and all others	TRANSWORLD SYSTEMS INC.					
(b) County of Residence of	of First Listed Plaintiff	Queens	County of Residence of First Listed Defendant					
(E.	XCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF C	ASES)	NOTE: IN LAN THE TR	(IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY)				
(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, A	Address, and Telephone Numbe	er)	Attorneys (If Kno	own)				
JOSEPH H. MIZRAHI LA	-			,				
NY 11201, (917) 299-661		11 12 W, 12 H., BIO						
	CTION			E DDINCIDAT DADTIES				
II. BASIS OF JURISDI	CTION (Place an "X" in C	One Box Only)	(For Diversity Cases Of	F PRINCIPAL PARTIES	(Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintiff and One Box for Defendant)			
□ 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff	✗ 3 Federal Question (U.S. Government Not a Party)		Citizen of This State	PTF DEF PTF DEF				
2 U.S. Government Defendant	☐ 4 Diversity (Indicate Citizensh	ip of Parties in Item III)	Citizen of Another State	Citizen of Another State 2 2 Incorporated <i>and</i> Principal Place 5 5 of Business In Another State				
			Citizen or Subject of a Foreign Country	3 3 Foreign Nation				
IV. NATURE OF SUIT		nly) DRTS	FORFEITURE/PENAL		of Suit Code Descriptions. OTHER STATUTES			
 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 245 Tort Product Liability 290 All Other Real Property 	PERSONAL INJURY 310 Airplane 315 Airplane Product Liability 320 Assault, Libel & Slander 330 Federal Employers' Liability 340 Marine 345 Marine Product Liability 350 Motor Vehicle 355 Motor Vehicle 700uct Liability 360 Other Personal Injury 362 Personal Injury - Medical Malpractice CIVIL RIGHTS 440 Other Civil Rights 441 Voting 442 Employment 443 Housing/ Accommodations 445 Amer. w/Disabilities - Employment 448 Education	PERSONAL INJUR DESCRIPTION DES	 of Property 21 USC 8 of 90 Other 690 Other 710 Fair Labor Standards Act 720 Labor/Management Relations 740 Railway Labor Act 751 Family and Medical Leave Act 790 Other Labor Litigatio 791 Employee Retirement Income Security Act e IMMIGRATION 462 Naturalization Applic 	 423 Withdrawal 28 USC 157 PROPERTY RIGHTS \$20 Copyrights \$30 Patent \$35 Patent - Abbreviated New Drug Application \$40 Trademark SOCIAL SECURITY \$61 HIA (1395ff) \$62 Black Lung (923) \$63 DIWC/DIWW (405(g)) \$64 SSID Title XVI \$65 RSI (405(g)) 	 375 False Claims Act 376 Qui Tam (31 USC 3729(a)) 400 State Reapportionment 410 Antitrust 430 Banks and Banking 450 Commerce 460 Deportation 470 Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations 4480 Consumer Credit 490 Cable/Sat TV 850 Securities/Commodities/ Exchange 890 Other Statutory Actions 891 Agricultural Acts 895 Freedom of Information Act 896 Arbitration 899 Administrative Procedure Act/Review or Appeal of Agency Decision 950 Constitutionality of State Statutes 			
		Confinement						
	m One Box Only) moved from 1 3 te Court	Remanded from Appellate Court		nother District Litigation				
VI. CAUSE OF ACTIO	15 LISC 1692	ause:	re filing (<i>Do not cite jurisdictiona</i>					
VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:	UNDER RULE 2	S IS A CLASS ACTION 23, F.R.Cv.P.	N DEMAND \$	CHECK YES only JURY DEMAND	if demanded in complaint: X Yes □No			
VIII. RELATED CASI IF ANY	E(S) (See instructions):	JUDGE		DOCKET NUMBER				
DATE			TORNEY OF RECORD					
12/27/2017 FOR OFFICE USE ONLY		/s/ Joseph H. N	/iizrani					
	MOUNT	APPLYING IFP	JUDG	GE MAG. JUI	DGE			
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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.

monetary damages sought are in excess of \$150,000, exclusive of interest and costs,

I, JOSEPH H. MIZRAHI

_, counsel for PLAINTIFF is ineligible for compulsory arbitration for the following reason(s):

the complaint seeks injunctive relief,

the matter is otherwise ineligible for the following reason Question of law rather than question of fact predominates

_____, do hereby certify that the above captioned civil action

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT - FEDERAL RULES CIVIL PROCEDURE 7.1

NONE

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 County?	being	filed in th Yes	ne Easte	ern District rem No	oved from a	New \	York State Court located in Nassau or Suffolk
2.)	If you answered a) Did the events County?			jiving ris	se to the claim No	or claims, or	a sub	stantial part thereof, occur in Nassau or Suffolk
	b) Did the events District?	s or om	iissions g Yes	iving ris	se to the claim No	or claims, or	a sub	stantial part thereof, occur in the Eastern
	c) If this is a Fair l received: Queen				Act case, specify	the County in	n whicl	h the offending communication was
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? <u>Yes</u> <u>No</u> (Note: A corporation shall be considered a resident of the County in which it has the most significant contacts).							
					BA	R ADMISSIC	<u> NC</u>	
	I am currently adm	itted in	the Easte	rn Distrie	ct of New York a	nd currently a	memb	er in good standing of the bar of this court.
		~		Yes		I		No
	Are you currently the subject of any disciplinary action (s) in this or any other state or federal court?						ther state or federal court?	
				Yes	(If yes, please	explain		No
	I certify the accuracy of all information provided above.							
	Signature: /s/ Joseph H. Mizrahi							

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

Eastern District of New York

ARTEM DANYAROV, on behalf of himself and all others similarly situated				
))			
Plaintiff(s)	—)			
V.)			
TRANSWORLD SYSTEMS INC.)			
)			
Defendant(s))			

SUMMONS IN A CIVIL ACTION

Civil Action No.

To: (Defendant's name and address) To: (Defendant's name and address) TRANSWORLD SYSTEMS INC. C T CORPORATION SYSTEM 111 EIGHTH AVENUE 13TH FLOOR NEW YORK, NEW YORK, 10011

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:

JOSEPH H. MIZRAHI LAW, P.C. 300 CADMAN PLAZA WEST 12TH FLOOR BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11201

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.

> DOUGLAS C. PALMER CLERK OF COURT

Date:

Signature of Clerk or Deputy Clerk

Civil Action No.

PROOF OF SERVICE

(This section should not be filed with the court unless required by Fed. R. Civ. P. 4 (l))

	This summons for (nar	ne of individual and title, if ar	ıy)			
was re	ceived by me on (date)					
	□ I personally served	the summons on the ind	ividual at (place)			
			on	(date)	; or	
	□ I left the summons	at the individual's reside	ence or usual plac	e of abode with (name)		
			, a person of suital	ble age and discretion who res	sides there,	
	on (date)	, and mailed a	copy to the indivi	dual's last known address; or		
	\Box I served the summo	ons on (name of individual)			, wł	no is
	designated by law to	accept service of process	s on behalf of (nam	e of organization)		
			on	(date)	; or	
	\Box I returned the summ	nons unexecuted because	e			; or
	Other (<i>specify</i>):					
	My fees are \$	for travel and S	۶ 	for services, for a total of \$	0.00	
	I declare under penalt	y of perjury that this info	ormation is true.			
Date:		_		Come de sisterature		
				Server's signature		
		-		Printed name and title		

Server's address

Additional information regarding attempted service, etc:

PO Box 15618 Dept. 940 Wilmington, DE 19850-5618 940.1109.TSIM

Calls to or from this company may be monitored or recorded for quality assurance.

Transworld Systems Inc. 500 Virginia Dr. Suite 514 Ft Washington, PA 19034 888-899-6650

Date: November 15, 2017 Our Account 2416 Creditor: ARIZONA PUBLIC SERVICE Creditor's Account #: 8135230000 Current Balance Due: \$89.52

Notice: See Reverse Side for Important Information.

ARTEM DANYAROV

Your Account May Be Credit Reported

Our records indicate that your balance of \$89.52 is due in full. It is our intention to work with you to resolve this collection account. However, if you fail to resolve this collection account, the account may be reported to all national credit bureaus following the expiration of the validation period described below.

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 that you dispute the validity of this debt or any portion thereof, this office will obtain verification of the debt or obtain a copy of a judgment and mail you a copy of such judgment 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. This is a communication from a debt collector.

Office Hours: Monday through Wednesday 8:00am to 8:00pm EDT, Thursday 8:00am to 10:00pm EDT, Friday 8:00am to 7:30pm EDT, Saturday 8:00am to 12:00pm EDT

Contact Jamie Allen at Transworld Systems Inc. ("TSI"). This collection agency is licensed by the Department of Consumer Affairs of the City of New York, License# 2012429-DCA.

PLEASE RETURN THIS PORTION WITH YOUR PAYMENT (MAKE SURE ADDRESS SHOWS THROUGH WINDOW)

	Our Account #	Current Balance Due			
	2416 ARTEM DANYAROV	\$89.52			
	Payment Amount	l			
Check here if your address has changed and print your new address in the space provided below.	\$	•			
	Make Payment To:				
2 2 2	Transworld Systems Inc. P.O. Box 15095 Wilmington, DE 198505095				
	,1,1111,,1111,111,111,111,111,111,11				
		P1109 34			

ClassAction.org

This complaint is part of ClassAction.org's searchable class action lawsuit database and can be found in this post: <u>'Current Balance' Questions Come Up in Class Action Against Transworld Systems</u>