IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

DERICK DECKER, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated,

CLASS ACTION

Plaintiff,	JURY TRIAL DEMANDED
vs.	
NO COMPETITION MARKETING, LLC, An Ohio Limited Liability Company,	
Defendant.	

CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT

1. Plaintiff Derick Decker brings this action against Defendant No Competition Marketing, LLC, to secure redress for violations of the Telephone Consumer Protection Act ("TCPA"), 47 U.S.C. § 227.

NATURE OF THE ACTION

- 2. This is a putative class action under the Telephone Consumer Protection Act, 47 U.S.C. § 227 et seq., ("TCPA"), arising from Defendant's knowing and willfully violations.
- 3. To gain an advantage over its competitors and increase its revenue, Defendant engages in unsolicited telemarketing, with no regard for consumers' privacy rights.
- 4. This case arises from Defendant's transmission of prerecorded messages to the cellular telephones of Plaintiff and others, promoting Defendant's services and goods.
- 5. Through this action, Plaintiff seeks injunctive relief to halt Defendant's illegal conduct which has resulted in the invasion of privacy, harassment, aggravation, and disruption of the daily life of thousands of individuals. Plaintiff also seeks statutory damages on behalf of himself and members of the class, and any other available legal or equitable remedies.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 6. Jurisdiction is proper under 28 U.S.C. § 1331 as Plaintiff alleges violations of a federal statute. Jurisdiction is also proper under 28 U.S.C. § 1332(d)(2) because Plaintiff alleges a national class, which will result in at least one class member belonging to a different state than that of Defendant. Plaintiff seeks up to \$1,500.00 (one-thousand-five-hundred dollars) in damages for each call in violation of the TCPA, which, when aggregated among a proposed class numbering in the tens of thousands, or more, exceeds the \$5,000,000.00 (five-million dollars) threshold for federal court jurisdiction under the Class Action Fairness Act ("CAFA"). Therefore, both the elements of diversity jurisdiction and CAFA jurisdiction are present.
- 7. Venue is proper in the United States District Court for the Southern District of Florida pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b) and (c) because Defendant is deemed to reside in any judicial district in which it is subject to the court's personal jurisdiction, and because Defendant provides and markets its services within this district thereby establishing sufficient contacts to subject it to personal jurisdiction. Further, Defendant's tortious conduct against Plaintiff occurred within the State of Florida and, on information and belief, Defendant has sent the same text messages complained of by Plaintiff to other individuals within this judicial district, such that some of Defendant's acts in making such calls have occurred within this district, subjecting Defendant to jurisdiction in the State of Florida.

PARTIES

- 8. Plaintiff is a natural person who, at all times relevant to this action, was a resident of Miami-Dade County, Florida.
- 9. Defendant is an Ohio limited liability company whose principal office is located at 2789 E State St., Ste 185, Salem, OH 44460-9327. Defendant directs, markets, and provides its business activities throughout the State of Florida.

THE TCPA

- 10. The TCPA prohibits: (1) any person from calling a cellular telephone number; (2) using an automatic telephone dialing system or an artificial or prerecorded voice; (3) without the recipient's prior express consent. 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(1)(A).
- 11. The TCPA exists to prevent communications like the ones described within this Complaint. "Voluminous consumer complaints about abuses of telephone technology—for example, computerized calls dispatched to private homes—prompted Congress to pass the TCPA." *Mims v. Arrow Fin. Servs., LLC*, 132 S. Ct. 740, 744 (2012).
- 12. In an action under the TCPA, a plaintiff must only show that the defendant "called a number assigned to a cellular telephone service using an automatic dialing system or prerecorded voice." *Breslow v. Wells Fargo Bank, N.A.*, 857 F. Supp. 2d 1316, 1319 (S.D. Fla. 2012), *aff'd*, 755 F.3d 1265 (11th Cir. 2014).
- 13. The Federal Communications Commission ("FCC") is empowered to issue rules and regulations implementing the TCPA. According to the FCC's findings, calls in violation of the TCPA are prohibited because, as Congress found, automated or prerecorded telephone calls are a greater nuisance and invasion of privacy than live solicitation calls, and such calls can be costly and inconvenient. The FCC also recognized that wireless customers are charged for incoming calls whether they pay in advance or after the minutes are used. *Rules and Regulations Implementing the Telephone Consumer Protection Act of 1991*, CG Docket No. 02-278, Report and Order, 18 FCC Rcd 14014 (2003).
- 14. In 2012, the FCC issued an order tightening the restrictions for automated telemarketing calls, requiring "prior express <u>written</u> consent" for such calls to wireless numbers. *See In the Matter of Rules & Regulations Implementing the Tel. Consumer Prot. Act of 1991*, 27 F.C.C.R. 1830, 1838 ¶ 20 (Feb. 15, 2012) (emphasis supplied).

- 15. To obtain express written consent for telemarketing calls, a defendant must establish that it secured the plaintiff's signature in a form that gives the plaintiff a "clear and conspicuous disclosure" of the consequences of providing the requested consent....and having received this information, agrees unambiguously to receive such calls at a telephone number the [plaintiff] designates." *In re Rules & Regulations Implementing the Tel. Consumer Prot. Act of 1991*, 27 F.C.C.R. 1830, 1837 ¶ 18, 1838 ¶ 20, 1844 ¶ 33, 1857 ¶ 66, 1858 ¶ 71 (F.C.C. Feb. 15, 2012).
- 16. The TCPA regulations promulgated by the FCC define "telemarketing" as "the initiation of a telephone call or message for the purpose of encouraging the purchase or rental of, or investment in, property, goods, or services." 47 C.F.R. § 64.1200(f)(12). In determining whether a communication constitutes telemarketing, a court must evaluate the ultimate purpose of the communication. *See Golan v. Veritas Entm't, LLC*, 788 F.3d 814, 820 (8th Cir. 2015).
- 17. "Neither the TCPA nor its implementing regulations 'require an explicit mention of a good, product, or service' where the implication of an improper purpose is 'clear from the context." *Id.* (citing *Chesbro v. Best Buy Stores, L.P.*, 705 F.3d 913, 918 (9th Cir. 2012)).
- 18. "Telemarketing' occurs when the context of a call indicates that it was initiated and transmitted to a person for the purpose of promoting property, goods, or services." *Golan*, 788 F.3d at 820 (citing 47 C.F.R. § 64.1200(a)(2)(iii); 47 C.F.R. § 64.1200(f)(12); *In re Rules and Regulations Implementing the Telephone Consumer Protection Act of 1991*, 18 F.C.C. Rcd at 14098 ¶ 141, 2003 WL 21517853, at *49).
- 19. The FCC has explained that calls motivated in part by the intent to sell property, goods, or services are considered telemarketing under the TCPA. *See In re Rules and Regulations Implementing the Telephone Consumer Protection Act of 1991*, 18 FCC Rcd. 14014, ¶¶ 139-142 (2003). This is true whether call recipients are encouraged to purchase, rent, or invest in property, goods, or services during the call *or in the future. Id.*

- 20. In other words, offers "that are part of an overall marketing campaign to sell property, goods, or services constitute" telemarketing under the TCPA. See In re Rules and Regulations Implementing the Telephone Consumer Protection Act of 1991, 18 FCC Rcd. 14014, ¶ 136 (2003).
- 21. If a call is not deemed telemarketing, a defendant must nevertheless demonstrate that it obtained the plaintiff's prior express consent. *See In the Matter of Rules and Regulaions Implementing the Tel. Consumer Prot. Act of 1991*, 30 FCC Rcd. 7961, 7991-92 (2015) (requiring express consent "for non-telemarketing and non-advertising calls").
- 22. As recently held by the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit: "Unsolicited telemarketing phone calls or text messages, by their nature, invade the privacy and disturb the solitude of their recipients. A plaintiff alleging a violation under the TCPA 'need not allege any *additional* harm beyond the one Congress has identified." *Van Patten v. Vertical Fitness Grp.*, No. 14-55980, 2017 U.S. App. LEXIS 1591, at *12 (9th Cir. May 4, 2016) (quoting *Spokeo, Inc. v. Robins*, 136 S. Ct. 1540, 1549 (2016) (emphasis original)).

FACTS

- 23. On or about January 10, 2019, Defendant caused a call with a prerecorded message to be transmitted to Plaintiff's cellular telephone number ending in 4057 (the "4057 Number").
- 24. Because Plaintiff did not answer his telephone after it rang, a voicemail containing a prerecorded message was left on Plaintiff's phone.
- 25. The following is a transcript of the voicemail that was left in Plaintiff's voicemail box:

This is this is Ken and as promised I let you know about anything that was making the team a great deal of cash on a daily basis. We have found it. It is perfectly price of people are snatching it up left and right. It pays a 100% instant commission. So the comp plan is you keep everything there's no pass up there's no admin fee. It literally is a genuine, 100% instant commission program. The domain we're using is cashpump.com. Cash c-a-s-h pump p-u-m-p

- cashpump.com. My information is at the bottom of the page so if you have any questions just reach out to me.
- 26. The prerecorded call at issue, which was left as a voicemail, was transmitted to Plaintiff's cellular telephone, and within the time frame relevant to this action.
- 27. When Plaintiff listened to the voicemail he was easily able to determine that it was a prerecorded message. *Rahn v. Bank of Am.*, No. 1:15-CV-4485-ODE-JSA, 2016 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 186171, at *10-11 (N.D. Ga. June 23, 2016) ("When one receives a call, it is a clear-cut fact, easily discernible to any lay person, whether or not the recipient is speaking to a live human being, or is instead being subjected to a prerecorded message.").
- 28. Defendant's prerecorded call constitutes telemarketing because it encourages the future purchase or investment in property, goods, and/or services, i.e., requesting that Plaintiff use its services.
- 29. The prerecorded call Plaintiff received originated from a telephone number owned and/or operated by or on behalf of Defendant.
- 30. Plaintiff received the subject call with a prerecorded voice within this judicial district and, therefore, Defendant's violation of the TCPA occurred within this district. Upon information and belief, Defendant caused other prerecorded messages to be sent to individuals residing within this judicial district.
- 31. At no point in time did Plaintiff provide Defendant with his express consent to be contacted with a prerecorded call.
- 32. Plaintiff is the subscriber and sole user of the 4057 Number and is financially responsible for phone service to the 4057 Number.
- 33. Plaintiff has been registered with the national do-not-call registry since August 4, 2018.

34. Defendant's unsolicited prerecorded call caused Plaintiff actual harm, including invasion of his privacy, aggravation, annoyance, intrusion on seclusion, trespass, and conversion. Defendant's prerecorded call also inconvenienced Plaintiff and caused disruption to his work-day as he received the prerecorded messages while at work. *See Patriotic Veterans, Inc. v. Zoeller*, No. 16- 2059, 2017 WL 25482, at *2 (7th Cir. Jan. 3, 2017) ("Every call uses some of the phone owner's time and mental energy, both of which are precious.").

CLASS ALLEGATIONS

PROPOSED CLASS

- 35. Plaintiff brings this case as a class action pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 23, on behalf of himself and all others similarly situated.
 - 36. Plaintiff brings this case on behalf of a Class defined as follows:

No Consent Class: All persons within the United States who, within the four years prior to the filing of this Complaint, were sent a call using an artificial or prerecorded voice, from Defendant or anyone on Defendant's behalf, to said person's cellular telephone number, without emergency purpose and without the recipient's prior express written consent.

<u>Do Not Call Registry Class:</u> All persons in the United States who from four years prior to the filing of this action (1) were sent a prerecorded message by or on behalf of Defendant; (2) more than one time within any 12-month period; (3) where the person's telephone number had been listed on the National Do Not Call Registry for at least thirty days; (4) for the purpose of selling Defendant's products and services; and (5) for whom Defendant claims (a) it did not obtain prior express written consent, or (b) it obtained prior express written consent in the same manner as Defendant claims it supposedly obtained prior express written consent to call the Plaintiff.

37. Defendant and its employees or agents are excluded from the Class. Plaintiff does not know the number of members in the Class, but believes the Class members number in the several thousands, if not more.

NUMEROSITY

- 38. Upon information and belief, Defendant has placed automated and/or prerecorded calls to cellular telephone numbers belonging to thousands of consumers throughout the United States without their prior express consent. The members of the Class, therefore, are believed to be so numerous that joinder of all members is impracticable.
- 39. The exact number and identities of the Class members are unknown at this time and can only be ascertained through discovery. Identification of the Class members is a matter capable of ministerial determination from Defendant's call records.

COMMON QUESTIONS OF LAW AND FACT

- 40. There are numerous questions of law and fact common to the Class which predominate over any questions affecting only individual members of the Class. Among the questions of law and fact common to the Class are:
 - (1) Whether Defendant made non-emergency prerecorded telemarketing calls to Plaintiff's and Class members' cellular telephones;
 - (2) Whether Defendant can meet its burden of showing that it obtained prior express written consent to make such calls;
 - (3) Whether Defendant's conduct was knowing and willful;
 - (4) Whether Defendant is liable for damages, and the amount of such damages; and
 - (5) Whether Defendant should be enjoined from such conduct in the future.
- 41. The common questions in this case are capable of having common answers. If Plaintiff's claim that Defendant routinely transmits text messages to telephone numbers assigned to cellular telephone services is accurate, Plaintiff and the Class members will have identical claims capable of being efficiently adjudicated and administered in this case.

TYPICALITY

42. Plaintiff's claims are typical of the claims of the Class members, as they are all based on the same factual and legal theories.

ADEQUACY

45.

43. Plaintiff is a representative who will fully and adequately assert and protect the interests

of the Class, and has retained competent counsel. Accordingly, Plaintiff is an adequate representative

and will fairly and adequately protect the interests of the Class.

44. In addition, Plaintiff has retained counsel with substantial experience in prosecuting

complex litigation and class actions, including those involving violations of the TCPA. Plaintiff

and his counsel are committed to vigorously prosecuting this action on behalf of the other

respective members of the Class and have the financial resources to do so. Neither Plaintiff nor his

counsel have any interests adverse to those of the other members of the Class.

PROCEEDING VIA CLASS ACTION IS SUPERIOR AND ADVISABLE

A class action is superior to all other available methods for the fair and efficient

adjudication of this lawsuit, because individual litigation of the claims of all members of the Class is

economically unfeasible and procedurally impracticable. While the aggregate damages sustained by the

Class are in the millions of dollars, the individual damages incurred by each member of the Class

resulting from Defendant's wrongful conduct are too small to warrant the expense of individual

lawsuits. The likelihood of individual Class members prosecuting their own separate claims is remote,

and, even if every member of the Class could afford individual litigation, the court system would be

unduly burdened by individual litigation of such cases.

46. The prosecution of separate actions by members of the Class would create a risk of

establishing inconsistent rulings and/or incompatible standards of conduct for Defendant. For example,

one court might enjoin Defendant from performing the challenged acts, whereas another may not.

Additionally, individual actions may be dispositive of the interests of the Class, although certain class

members are not parties to such actions.

COUNT I
Violations of the TCPA, 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)

(On Behalf of Plaintiff and the Class)

- 47. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates the foregoing allegations as if fully set forth herein.
- 48. It is a violation of the TCPA to make "any call (other than a call made for emergency purposes or made with the prior express consent of the called party) using any automatic telephone dialing system or an artificial or prerecorded voice ... to any telephone number assigned to a ... cellular telephone service" 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(1)(A)(iii).
- 49. Defendant or third parties directed by Defendant transmitted calls using an artificial or prerecorded voice to the cellular telephone numbers of Plaintiff and members of the putative class.
- 50. These calls were made without regard to whether Defendant had first obtained express permission from the called party to make such calls. In fact, Defendant did not have prior express consent to call the cell phones of Plaintiff and the other members of the putative Class when its calls were made.
- 51. Defendant has, therefore, violated § 227(b)(1)(A)(iii) of the TCPA by using an artificial or prerecorded voice to make non-emergency telephone calls to the cell phones of Plaintiff and the other members of the putative Class without their prior express consent.
- 52. Defendant knew that it did not have prior express consent to make these calls, and knew or should have known that it was using an artificial or prerecorded voice. The violations were therefore willful or knowing.
- 53. As a result of Defendant's conduct and pursuant to § 227(b)(3) of the TCPA, Plaintiff and the other members of the putative Class were harmed and are each entitled to a minimum of \$500.00 in damages for each violation. Plaintiff and the class are also entitled to an injunction against future calls. *Id*.

54. Because Defendant knew or should have known that Plaintiff and the other members of the putative Class had not given prior express consent to receive its prerecorded calls to their cellular telephones the Court should treble the amount of statutory damages available to Plaintiff and the other members of the putative Class pursuant to § 227(b)(3) of the TCPA.

COUNT II Knowing and/or Willful Violation of the TCPA, 47 U.S.C. § 227(b) (On Behalf of Plaintiffs and the Class)

- 55. Plaintiff re-allege and incorporates paragraphs 1-46 as if fully set forth herein.
- 56. At all times relevant, Defendant knew or should have known that its conduct as alleged herein violated the TCPA.
- 57. Defendant knew that it did not have prior express consent to transmit artificial or prerecorded voice calls, and knew or should have known that its conduct was a violation of the TCPA.
- 58. Because Defendant knew or should have known that Plaintiffs and Class Members had not given prior express consent to receive its prerecorded calls, the Court should treble the amount of statutory damages available to Plaintiffs and the other members of the putative Class pursuant to § 227(b)(3) of the TCPA.
- 59. As a result of Defendant's violations, Plaintiffs and the Class Members are entitled to an award of \$1,500.00 in statutory damages, for each and every violation, pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(3)(B) and 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(3)(C).

COUNT III <u>Violation of the TCPA, 47 U.S.C. § 227</u> (On Behalf of Plaintiff and the Do Not Call Registry Class)

- 60. Plaintiff repeats and realleges the paragraphs 1 through 46 of this Complaint and incorporates them by reference herein.
- 61. The TCPA's implementing regulation, 47 C.F.R. § 64.1200(c), provides that "[n]o person or entity shall initiate any telephone solicitation" to "[a] residential telephone subscriber

who has registered his or her telephone number on the national do-not-call registry of persons who do not wish to receive telephone solicitations that is maintained by the federal government."

- 62. 47 C.F.R. § 64.1200(e), provides that § 64.1200(c) and (d) "are applicable to any person or entity making telephone solicitations or telemarketing calls to wireless telephone numbers."
- 63. 47 C.F.R. § 64.1200(d) further provides that "[n]o person or entity shall initiate any call for telemarketing purposes to a residential telephone subscriber unless such person or entity has instituted procedures for maintaining a list of persons who request not to receive telemarketing calls made by or on behalf of that person or entity."
- 64. Any "person who has received more than one telephone call within any 12-month period by or on behalf of the same entity in violation of the regulations prescribed under this subsection may" may bring a private action based on a violation of said regulations, which were promulgated to protect telephone subscribers' privacy rights to avoid receiving telephone solicitations to which they object. 47 U.S.C. § 227(c).
- 65. Defendant violated 47 C.F.R. § 64.1200(c) by initiating, or causing to be initiated, telephone solicitations to telephone subscribers such as Plaintiff and the Do Not Call Registry Class members who registered their respective telephone numbers on the National Do Not Call Registry, a listing of persons who do not wish to receive telephone solicitations that is maintained by the federal government.
- 66. Defendant violated 47 U.S.C. § 227(c)(5) because Plaintiff and the Do Not Call Registry Class received more than one telephone call in a 12-month period made by or on behalf of Defendant in violation of 47 C.F.R. § 64.1200, as described above. As a result of Defendant's conduct as alleged herein, Plaintiff and the Do Not Call Registry Class suffered actual damages and, under section 47 U.S.C. § 227(c), are entitled, *inter alia*, to receive up to \$500 in damages for such violations of 47 C.F.R. § 64.1200.

67. To the extent Defendant's misconduct is determined to be willful and knowing, the

Court should, pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 227(c)(5), treble the amount of statutory damages recoverable by

the members of the Do Not Call Registry Class.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff Rick Garcia on behalf of himself and the other members of the

Class, pray for the following relief:

a. A declaration that Defendant's practices described herein violate the Telephone

Consumer Protection Act, 47 U.S.C. § 227;

b. An injunction prohibiting Defendant from using an artificial or prerecorded voice to

contact telephone numbers assigned to cellular telephones without the prior express permission of

the called party;

c. An award of actual and statutory damages; and

d. Such further and other relief the Court deems reasonable and just.

JURY DEMAND

Plaintiff and Class Members hereby demand a trial by jury.

Dated: February 14, 2019

SHAMIS & GENTILE, P.A.

/s/ Andrew J. Shamis Andrew J. Shamis, Esq. Florida Bar No. 101754 ashamis@shamisgentile.com 14 NE 1st Avenue, Suite 1205 Miami, Florida 33132

Telephone: 305-479-2299

Counsel for Plaintiff and the Class

EDELSBERG LAW, PA

Scott Edelsberg, Esq. Florida Bar No. 0100537 scott@edelsberglaw.com 19495 Biscayne Blvd #607 Aventura, FL 33180 Telephone: 305-975-3320

Counsel for Plaintiff and the Class

Case 1:19-cv-20670-FAM Document 1-1 Entered on FLSD Docket 02/21/2019 Page 1 of 1

JS 44 (Rev. 08/18)

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				DEFENDANTS				•	
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(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, A. Shamis & Gentile, P.A. 14 NE 1st Ave, STE 1205 (305) 479-2299)		Attorneys (If Known)					
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VI. CAUSE OF ACTION	Brief description of ca	ause:		e Telephone Consur	mer Protec	etion Act 47 I	LSC 8 227	et sen	
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IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

DERICK DECKER, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated,	Case No.
DI : CCC	CLASS ACTION
Plaintiff,	
v.	SUMMONS
NO COMPETITION MARKETING, LLC, an Ohio Limited Liability Company,	
Defendant.	
SUMMONS IN A C	CIVIL ACTION
To: (Defendant's name and address) No Competition Marketing, LLC Registered Agent: Tim Berger 2789 E State St. Suite 185 Salem, OH 44460	
A lawsuit has been filed against you.	
are the United States or a United States agency, or an officer or P. 12 (a)(2) or (3) — you must serve on the plaintiff an answer the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. The answer or motion members are and address are:	to the attached complaint or a motion under Rule 12 of
whose name and address are: Shamis & Gentile, P.A. Andrew J. Shamis, Esq. 14 NE 1 st Ave, STE 1205 Miami, FL 33132 305-479-2299	
If you fail to respond, judgment by default will be ente You also must file your answer or motion with the court.	red against you for the relief demanded in the complaint.
	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 (name of individual and title, if any) was received by me on (date) .		
was received by me on (date) I personally served the summons on the individual at (place) On(date)		
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on (date), and mailed a copy to t	he individual's last kno	wn address; or
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on ((date)	_; or
☐ I returned the summons unexecuted because		; or
I declare under penalty of perjury that this information is true.		
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	Prin	ited name and title
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This complaint is part of ClassAction.org	s searchable <u>class action lawsuit database</u>
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