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U.S. DISTRICT COURT E.D.N.Y.

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**BROOKLYN OFFICE** 

Helen F. Dalton & Associates, P.C. Helen F. Dalton (HFD 3231) Roman Avshalumov (RA 5508) 69-12 Austin Street Forest Hills, NY 11375 Telephone: 718-263-9591

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

-----X

SELVIN ESPINOZA and ALEJANDRO SUCUP, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

-against-

DOUGH JOE LLC D/B/A HINOMARU RAMEN and MIN LEE, an individual,

COLLECTIVE ACTION COMPLAINT

CV18-5745

JURY TRIAL REQUESTED

Defendants.

VITALIANO , J. LEVY, M.J.

1. Plaintiffs, SELVIN ESPINOZA and ALEJANDRO SUCUP, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated, (hereinafter referred to as "Plaintiffs"), by his attorneys at Helen F. Dalton & Associates, P.C., alleges, upon personal knowledge as to himself and upon information and belief as to other matters, as follows:

#### PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

- 2. Plaintiffs, SELVIN ESPINOZA and ALEJANDRO SUCUP, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated, through undersigned counsel, brings this action against DOUGH JOE LLC D/B/A HINOMARU RAMEN and MIN LEE, an individual, (hereinafter referred to as "Defendants"), to recover damages for egregious violations of state and federal wage and hour laws arising out of Plaintiffs' employment at DOUGH JOE LLC D/B/A HINOMARU RAMEN located at 33-18 Ditmars Boulevard, Astoria, New York 11105.
- 3. Plaintiff **SELVIN ESPINOZA** was employed by Defendants from in or around July 2013 until in or around June 2018.

- **4.** Plaintiff **ALEJANDRO SUCUP** was employed by Defendants from in or around December 2013 until in or around January 2015.
- 5. As a result of the violations of Federal and New York State labor laws delineated below, Plaintiffs seek compensatory damages and liquidated damages in an amount exceeding \$100,000.00. Plaintiffs also seek interest, attorneys' fees, costs, and all other legal and equitable remedies this Court deems appropriate.

#### JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- **6.** This Court has subject matter jurisdiction over Plaintiffs' federal claims pursuant to the FLSA, 29 U.S.C. §216 and 28 U.S.C. §1331.
- 7. This Court has supplemental jurisdiction over Plaintiffs' state law claims pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §1367.
- 8. Venue is proper in the EASTERN District of New York pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §1391(b) because a substantial part of the events or omissions giving rise to the claims occurred in this district.
- 9. This Court is empowered to issue a declaratory judgment pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§2201 & 2202.

#### THE PARTIES

- **10.** Plaintiff SELVIN ESPINOZA resides at 35-15 101<sup>st</sup> Street, Corona, New York 11368, and was employed by Defendants at DOUGH JOE LLC D/B/A HINOMARU RAMEN from in or around July 2013 until in or around June 2018.
- 11. Plaintiff ALEJANDRO SUCUP resides at 37-23 94<sup>th</sup> Street, Jackson Heights, New York 11373, and has been employed by Defendants at DOUGH JOE LLC D/B/A HINOMARU RAMEN from in or around December 2013 until in or around January 2015.
- 12. Upon information and belief, Defendant, DOUGH JOE LLC D/B/A HINOMARU RAMEN, is a corporation organized under the laws of New York with a principal executive office at 5-37 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Long Island City, New York 11101.
- **13.** Upon information and belief, Defendant, DOUGH JOE LLC D/B/A HINOMARU RAMEN, is a corporation authorized to do business under the laws of New York.

- **14.** Upon information and belief, Defendant MIN LEE owns and/or operates DOUGH JOE LLC D/B/A HINOMARU RAMEN.
- 15. Upon information and belief, Defendant MIN LEE is the Chairman of the Board of DOUGH JOE LLC D/B/A HINOMARU RAMEN.
- **16.** Upon information and belief, Defendant MIN LEE is the Chief Executive Officer of DOUGH JOE LLC D/B/A HINOMARU RAMEN.
- 17. Upon information and belief, Defendant MIN LEE is an agent of DOUGH JOE LLC D/B/A HINOMARU RAMEN.
- **18.** Upon information and belief, Defendant MIN LEE has power over personnel decisions at DOUGH JOE LLC D/B/A HINOMARU RAMEN.
- **19.** Upon information and belief, Defendant MIN LEE has power over payroll decisions at DOUGH JOE LLC D/B/A HINOMARU RAMEN.
- **20.** Defendant MIN LEE has the power to hire and fire employees, establish and pay their wages, set their work schedule, and maintains their employment records at DOUGH JOE LLC D/B/A HINOMARU RAMEN.
- **21.** During all relevant times herein, Defendant MIN LEE was Plaintiffs' employer within the meaning of the FLSA and NYLL.
- 22. On information and belief, DOUGH JOE LLC D/B/A HINOMARU RAMEN is, at present and has been at all times relevant to the allegation in the complaint, an enterprise engaged in interstate commerce within the meaning of the FLSA in that the entity (i) has had employees engaged in commerce or in the production of goods for commerce, and handle, sell or otherwise work on goods or material that have been moved in or produced for commerce by any person: and (ii) has had an annual gross volume of sales of not less than \$500,000.00.

#### **FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS**

- **23.** Plaintiff SELVIN ESPINOZA was employed by Defendants from in or around June July 2013 until in or around June 2018.
- 24. During Plaintiff SELVIN ESPINOZA' employment by Defendants at DOUGH JOE LLC D/B/A HINOMARU RAMEN, Plaintiff was a cook, food preparer and kitchen

- worker, and performing other miscellaneous duties from in or around July 2013 until in or around June 2018.
- 25. Plaintiff SELVIN ESPINOZA was paid by Defendants approximately \$600.00 per week from in or around 2013 until in or around 2014 and approximately \$620.00 per week from in or around 2015 until in or around June 2018.
- 26. Although Plaintiff SELVIN ESPINOZA worked approximately seventy (77) hours or per week during the period of his employment by Defendants from in or around July 2013 until in or around June 2018, Defendants did not pay Plaintiff time and a half (1.5) for hours worked over forty (40), a blatant violation of the overtime provisions contained in the FLSA and NYLL.
- 27. Plaintiff ALEJANDRO SUCUP was employed by Defendants from in or around December 2013 until in or around January 2015.
- 28. During Plaintiff ALEJANDRO SUCUP'S employment by Defendants at DOUGH JOE LLC D/B/A HINOMARU RAMEN, Plaintiff was a dishwasher and cook, and performing other miscellaneous duties from in or around December 2013 until in or around January 2015.
- **29.** Plaintiff ALEJANDRO SUCUP was paid by Defendants approximately \$300.00 per week from in or around December 2013 until in or around January 2015.
- 30. Although Plaintiff ALEJANDRO SUCUP worked approximately fort-eight (48) hours or more per week during the period of his employment by Defendants from in or around 2010 to the present, Defendants did not pay Plaintiff time and a half (1.5) for hours worked over forty (40), a blatant violation of the overtime provisions contained in the FLSA and NYLL.
- 31. Defendants failed to pay Plaintiff ALEJANDRO SUCUP the legally prescribed minimum wage for his hours worked from in or around December 2013 until in or around January 2015, a blatant violation of the minimum wage provisions contained in the FLSA and NYLL.
- 32. Furthermore, although Plaintiff ALEJANDRO SUCUP worked approximately twelve (12) or more hours per day, Defendants did not pay Plaintiff an extra hour at the legally prescribed minimum wage for each day worked over ten (10) hours, a blatant violation of the spread of hours provisions contained in the NYLL.

- 33. Upon information and belief, Defendants willfully failed to post notices of the minimum wage and overtime wage requirements in a conspicuous place at the location of their employment as required by both the NYLL and the FLSA.
- **34.** Upon information and belief, Defendants willfully failed to keep payroll records as required by both NYLL and the FLSA.
- 35. As a result of these violations of Federal and New York State labor laws, Plaintiffs seek compensatory damages and liquidated damages in an amount exceeding \$100,000.00. Plaintiffs also seek interest, attorneys' fees, costs, and all other legal and equitable remedies this Court deems appropriate.

#### COLLECTIVE ACTION ALLEGATIONS

- 36. Plaintiffs bring this action on behalf of themselves and other employees similarly situated as authorized under the FLSA, 29 U.S.C. § 216(b). The employees similarly situated are:
- 37. Collective Class: All persons who are or have been employed by the Defendants as food preparers, cooks, dishwashers, kitchen workers, or other similarly titled personnel with substantially similar job requirements and pay provisions, who were performing the same sort of functions for Defendants, other than the executive and management positions, who have been subject to Defendants' common practices, policies, programs, procedures, protocols and plans including willfully failing and refusing to pay required proper minimum wages and overtime wages.
- 38. Upon information and belief, Defendants employed between 10 to 20 employees within the past three years subjected to similar payment structures.
- 39. Upon information and belief, Defendants suffered and permitted Plaintiffs and the Collective Class to work more than forty hours per week without appropriate overtime compensation.
- **40.** Upon information and belief, Defendants suffered and permitted Plaintiffs and the Collective Class to work without receiving proper minimum wage compensation.
- 41. Defendants' unlawful conduct has been widespread, repeated, and consistent.

- **42.** Upon information and belief, Defendant had knowledge that Plaintiffs and the Collective Class performed work requiring overtime pay and proper minimum wage pay.
- **43.** Defendants' conduct as set forth in this Complaint, was willful and in bad faith, and has caused significant damages to Plaintiffs and the Collective Class.
- 44. Defendants are liable under the FLSA for failing to properly compensate Plaintiffs and the Collective Class, and as such, notice should be sent to the Collective Class. There are numerous similarly situated current and former employees of Defendants who have been denied overtime pay and proper minimum wage pay in violation of the FLSA and NYLL, who would benefit from the issuance of a Court-supervised notice of the present lawsuit, and the opportunity to join the present lawsuit. Those similarly situated employees are known to Defendants and are readily identifiable through Defendants' records.
- **45.** The questions of law and fact common to the putative class predominate over any questions affecting only individual members.
- 46. The claims of Plaintiffs are typical of the claims of the putative class.
- **47.** Plaintiffs and their counsel will fairly and adequately protect the interests of the putative class.
- **48.** A class action is superior to other available methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of this controversy.

#### FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION

### Overtime Wages Under The Fair Labor Standards Act

- **49.** Plaintiffs re-allege and incorporate by reference all allegations in all preceding paragraphs.
- **50.** Plaintiffs have consented in writing to be a party to this action, pursuant to 29 U.S.C. §216(b).
- 51. At all times relevant to this action, Plaintiffs were engaged in commerce or the production of goods for commerce within the meaning of 29 U.S.C. §§206(a) and 207(a).

- 52. At all times relevant to this action, Defendants were employers engaged in commerce or the production of goods for commerce within the meaning of 29 U.S.C. §§206(a) and 207(a).
- 53. Defendants willfully failed to pay Plaintiffs' overtime wages for hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours per week at a wage rate of one and a half (1.5) times the regular wage, to which Plaintiffs were entitled under 29 U.S.C. §§206(a) in violation of 29 U.S.C. §207(a)(1).
- 54. Defendants' violations of the FLSA as described in this Complaint have been willful and intentional. Defendants have not made a good effort to comply with the FLSA with respect to the compensation of the Plaintiffs.
- 55. Due to Defendants' FLSA violations, Plaintiffs are entitled to recover from Defendants, jointly and severally, his unpaid wages and an equal amount in the form of liquidated damages, as well as reasonable attorneys fees and costs of the action, including interest, pursuant to the FLSA, specifically 29 U.S.C. §216(b).

#### SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION

#### Overtime Wages Under New York Labor Law

- **56.** Plaintiffs re-allege and incorporate by reference all allegations in all preceding paragraphs.
- 57. At all times relevant to this action, Plaintiffs were employed by Defendants within the meaning of New York Labor Law §§2 and 651.
- 58. Defendants failed to pay Plaintiffs' overtime wages for hours worked in excess of forty hours per week at a wage rate of one and a half (1.5) times the regular wage to which Plaintiffs were entitled under New York Labor Law §652, in violation of 12 N.Y.C.R.R. 137-1.3.
- 59. Due to Defendants' New York Labor Law violations, Plaintiffs are entitled to recover from Defendants, jointly and severally, their unpaid overtime wages and an amount equal to their unpaid overtime wages in the form of liquidated damages, as well as reasonable attorneys' fees and costs of the action, including interest in accordance with NY Labor Law §198(1-a).

# <u>THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION</u> Minimum Wages Under The Fair Labor Standards Act

- **60.** Plaintiffs re-allege and incorporate by reference all allegations in all preceding paragraphs.
- 61. Plaintiffs have consented in writing to be a party to this action, pursuant to 29 U.S.C. §216(b).
- 62. At all times relevant to this action, Plaintiffs were engaged in commerce or the production of services and goods for commerce within the meaning of 29 U.S.C. §§206(a) and 207(a).
- 63. At all times relevant to this action, Defendants were employers engaged in commerce or the production of goods for commerce within the meaning of 29 U.S.C. §§206(a) and 207(a).
- **64.** Defendants willfully failed to pay Plaintiffs a minimum wage in accordance with 29 U.S.C. §§201, 202 and 203.
- 65. Defendants' violations of the FLSA, as described in this Complaint have been willful and intentional.
- **66.** Defendants have not made a good faith effort to comply with the FLSA with respect to the Plaintiffs' compensation.
- 67. Due to Defendants' FLSA violations, Plaintiffs are entitled to recover from Defendants, jointly and severally, his unpaid minimum wages and an equal amount in the form of liquidated damages, as well as reasonable attorneys' fees and costs of the action including interest, pursuant to the FLSA, specifically 29 U.S.C. §216(b).

### <u>FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION</u> Minimum Wages Under New York Labor Law

- **68.** Plaintiffs re-allege and incorporate by reference all allegations in all preceding paragraphs.
- **69.** At all times relevant to this action, Plaintiffs were employed by Defendants within the meaning of NYLL §§2 and 651.
- **70.** At all times relevant to this action, Defendants were employers within the meaning of NYLL.

- 71. Defendants failed to record, credit or compensate Plaintiffs the applicable minimum hourly wage, in violation of the New York Minimum Wage Act, specifically NYLL §652.
- 72. Defendants also failed to pay Plaintiffs the required minimum wage, which Plaintiffs were entitled under NYLL §652, in violation of 12 N. Y. C. R. R. 137-1.3.
- 73. Due to Defendants' NYLL violations, Plaintiffs are entitled to recover from Defendants, jointly and severally, his unpaid minimum wages and an amount equal to their unpaid minimum wages in the form of liquidated damages, as well as reasonable attorneys' fees and costs of the action, including interest in accordance with NYLL §198 (1-a).

#### FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION

### Spread of Hours Compensation Under New York Labor Law

- 74. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates by reference all allegations in all preceding paragraphs.
- 75. Defendants willfully violated Plaintiff's rights by failing to pay Plaintiff an additional hour of pay at minimum wage for each day worked more than ten (10) hours, in violation of the New York Minimum Wage Act and its implementing regulations. N.Y. Labor Law §§ 650 et seq.; 12 N.Y. C. R. R. § 142-2.4
- 76. Due to Defendants' New York Labor Law violations, Plaintiff is entitled to recover from Defendants his unpaid spread of hour compensation, reasonable attorneys' fees, and costs of the action, pursuant to N. Y. Labor Law § 663 (1).

#### SIXTH CAUSE OF ACTION

### Violation of the Notice and Recordkeeping Requirements of the New York Labor Law

- 77. Plaintiffs re-allege and incorporate by reference all allegations in all preceding paragraphs.
- 78. Defendants failed to provide Plaintiffs with a written notice, in English and in Spanish (Plaintiffs' primary language), of their rate of pay, regular pay day, and such other information as required by NYLL §195(1).
- 79. Defendants are liable to Plaintiffs in the amount of \$5,000.00 per Plaintiff together with costs and attorneys' fees.

#### SEVENTH CAUSE OF ACTION

#### Violation of the Wage Statement Requirements of the New York Labor Law

- **80.** Plaintiffs re-allege and incorporate by reference all allegations in all preceding paragraphs.
- 81. Defendants failed to provide Plaintiffs with wage statements upon each payment of wages, as required by NYLL §195(3)
- **82.** Defendants are liable to Plaintiffs in the amount of \$5,000.00 per Plaintiff together with costs and attorneys' fees.

#### PRAYER FOR RELIEF

Wherefore, Plaintiffs respectfully request that judgment be granted:

- a. Declaring Defendants' conduct complained herein to be in violation of the Plaintiff's rights under the FLSA, the New York Labor Law, and its regulations;
- b. Awarding Plaintiffs unpaid overtime wages;
- c. Awarding Plaintiffs liquidated damages pursuant to 29 U.S.C. §216 and New York Labor Law §§198(1-a), 663(1);
- d. Awarding Plaintiffs prejudgment and post-judgment interest;
- e. Awarding Plaintiffs the costs of this action together with reasonable attorneys' fees; and
- f. Awarding such and further relief as this court deems necessary and proper.

#### **DEMAND FOR TRIAL BY JURY**

Pursuant to Rule 38(b) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, Plaintiffs demand a trial by jury on all questions of fact raised by the complaint.

Dated: This 5th day of October 2018/

Roman Avshalumov (RA 5508)

Helen F. Dalton & Associates, PC

69-12 Austin Street Forest Hills, NY 11375

Telephone: 718-263-9591

# UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

SELVIN ESPINOZA and ALEJANDRO SUCUP, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

-against-

DOUGH JOE LLC D/B/A HINOMARU RAMEN and MIN LEE, an individual,

Defendants.

#### COLLECTIVE ACTION COMPLAINT

HELEN F. DALTON & ASSOCIATES, P.C.

Attorneys for Plaintiffs 69-12 Austin Street Forest Hills, NY 11375 Phone (718) 263-9591 Fax (718) 263-9598

#### TO:

DOUGH JOE LLC D/B/A HINOMARU RAMEN 33-18 DITMARS BOULEVARD ASTORIA, NEW YORK 11105

5-37 51st AVENUE LONG ISLAND CITY, NEW YORK 11101

MIN LEE 33-18 DITMARS BOULEVARD ASTORIA, NEW YORK 11105

5-37 51st AVENUE LONG ISLAND CITY, NEW YORK 11101 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 de	ocket sheet. (SEE INSTRUC	TIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF	THIS FO	RM.)	774, is requi	ca for the ase of t	ale clerk of et	out to: a	1.0
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(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff QUEENS (EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)				County of Residence of First Listed Defendant QUEENS (IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY)  NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF					
VITALIANO , J.				THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED.					
(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, A Helen F. Dalton & Associ 69-12 Austin Street Forest Hills, NY 11375 (7	Address, and Telephone Number ates, P.C.	ĽEVY, M.	J.	Attorneys (If Known)					
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VI. CAUSE OF ACTION  Cite the U.S. Civil Statute under which you ar Fair Labor Standards Act  Brief description of cause: Compensation for unpaid overtime w				Oo not cite jurisdictional stat	tutes unless div	ersity):			<u>,                                      </u>
VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:	CHECK YES only if demanded in complaint:  JURY DEMAND: X Yes  No								
VIII. RELATED CASE IF ANY	E(S) (See instructions):	INDOE			DOCKE	NUMBER			
DATE		STONATURE OF ATT	ORNFY (	NEAR ECOROV /					

APPLYING IFP

JUDGE

MAG. JUDGE

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AMOUNT

10/05/2018 FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

# EZNGASE 1:18:6Y-0574515NV-RML Document 1-1 Filed 10/15/18 Page 2 of 2 PageID #: 13 CERTIFICATION OF ARBITRATION ELIGIBILITY

exclus	ive of inte	n Rule 83.10 provides that with certain exceptions, actions seeking money damages only in an amount not in excess of \$150,000, rest and costs, are eligible for compulsory arbitration. The amount of damages is presumed to be below the threshold amount unless a ne contrary is filed.
I		counsel for do hereby certify that the above captioned civil action is
inelig	ible for	, counsel for, do hereby certify that the above captioned civil action is 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)
provide becaus same ju case: (A	es that "A e the case: udge and r A) involved dge to dete	es 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) civil case is "related" to another civil case for purposes of this guideline when, because of the similarity of facts and legal issues or a raise from the same transactions or events, a substantial saving of judicial resources is likely to result from assigning both cases to the nagistrate judge." Rule 50.3.1 (b) provides that "A civil case shall not be deemed "related" to another civil case merely because the civil is identical legal issues, or (B) involves the same parties." Rule 50.3.1 (c) further provides that "Presumptively, and subject to the power termine otherwise pursuant to paragraph (d), civil cases shall not be deemed to be "related" unless both cases are still pending before the
		NY-E DIVISION OF BUSINESS RULE 50.1(d)(2)
1.)	Is the Count	civil action being filed in the Eastern District removed from a New York State Court located in Nassau or Suffolk
2.)		answered "no" above: the events or omissions giving rise to the claim or claims, or a substantial part thereof, occur in Nassau or Suffolk y? NO
	b) Did Distric	the events of omissions giving rise to the claim or claims, or a substantial part thereof, occur in the Eastern ot? YES
Suffol	k County folk Cou	
	(	Note: A corporation shall be considered a resident of the County in which it has the most significant contacts).
		BAR ADMISSION
I am c	urrently	admitted in the Eastern District of New York and currently a member in good standing of the bar of this court.  No
Are yo	ou curren	tly the subject of any disciplinary action (s) in this or any other state or federal court?  Yes (If yes, please explain) No
Attori	ney Ba	r Code: RA5508
I certi	fy the acc	curacy of all information provided above

## **ClassAction.org**

This complaint is part of ClassAction.org's searchable class action lawsuit database and can be found in this post: <u>Astoria Eatery Hinomaru Ramen Accused of Wage Violations in Lawsuit</u>