UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA MIAMI DIVISION

Chelsea Leonard,	individually a	and on	behalf	of all	others
similarly situated:					

Plaintiff,

Civil Action No: _____

CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT
DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

-v.Accounts Receivable and
John Does 1-25,

Defendant(s).

Plaintiff Chelsea Leonard (hereinafter, "Plaintiff" or "Leonard"), brings this Class Action Complaint by and through her attorneys, Zeig Law Firm, LLC, against Defendant Accounts Recievable (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

1. Congress enacted the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act ("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 pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692 et. seq. and 28 U.S.C. § 2201. The Court 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) as this is where the majority of acts and omissions occurred.

NATURE OF THE ACTION

- 5. Plaintiff brings this class action on behalf of a class of consumers under §1692 et seq. of Title 15 of the United States Code, commonly referred to as the Fair Debt Collections Practices Act ("FDCPA"), and
 - 6. Plaintiff is seeking damages and declaratory relief.

PARTIES

- 7. Plaintiff is a resident of the State of Florida, County of Miami-Dade, residing at 1699 NW 4th Avenue, Apt. 409, Miami, FL 33136.
- 8. Defendant Accounts Receivable is a "debt collector" as the phrase is defined in 15 U.S.C. § 1692(a)(6) and used in the FDCPA with an address at 1806 33rd Street, Suite 180, Orlando, FL 32839.
- 9. Upon information and belief, 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.
- 10. John Does 1-25, are fictitious names of individuals and businesses alleged for the purpose of substituting names of Defendants whose identities will be disclosed in discovery and should be made parties to this action.

CLASS ALLEGATIONS

- Plaintiff brings this claim on behalf of the following case, pursuant to Fed. R. Civ.P. 23(a) and 23(b)(3).
 - 12. The Class consists of:
 - a. all individuals residing in the state of Florida;
 - b. to whom Defendant sent a collection letter;
 - c. that falsely threatens negative reporting of the consumer's debt for seven years;
 - d. which letter was sent on or after a date one (1) year prior to the filing of this action and on or before a date twenty-one (21) days after the filing of this action.
- 13. The identities of all class members are readily ascertainable from the records of Defendants and those companies and entities on whose behalf they attempt to collect and/or have purchased debts.

- 14. Excluded from the Plaintiff Class are the Defendants and all officer, members, partners, managers, directors and employees of the Defendants and their respective immediate families, and legal counsel for all parties to this action, and all members of their immediate families.
- 15. There are questions of law and fact common to the Plaintiff Class, which common issues predominate over any issues involving only individual class members. The principal issue is whether the Defendants' written communications to consumers, in the forms attached as Exhibit A, violate 15 U.S.C. §§ 1692d and 1692e.
- 16. The Plaintiff's claims are typical of the class members, as all are based upon the same facts and legal theories. The Plaintiff will fairly and adequately protect the interests of the Plaintiff Class defined in this complaint. The Plaintiff has retained counsel with experience in handling consumer lawsuits, complex legal issues, and class actions, and neither the Plaintiff nor his attorneys have any interests, which might cause them not to vigorously pursue this action.
- 17. This action has been brought, and may properly be maintained, as a class action pursuant to the provisions of Rule 23 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure because there is a well-defined community interest in the litigation:
 - e. <u>Numerosity:</u> The Plaintiff is informed and believes, and on that basis alleges, that the Plaintiff Class defined above is so numerous that joinder of all members would be impractical.
 - f. <u>Common Questions Predominate:</u> Common questions of law and fact exist as to all members of the Plaintiff Class and those questions predominate over any questions or issues involving only individual class members. The principal issue

- is \whether the Defendants' written communications to consumers, in the forms attached as Exhibit A violate 15 USC §1692d and §1692e.
- g. **Typicality:** The Plaintiff's claims are typical of the claims of the class members.

 The Plaintiff and all members of the Plaintiff Class have claims arising out of the Defendants' common uniform course of conduct complained of herein.
- h. Adequacy: The Plaintiff will fairly and adequately protect the interests of the class members insofar as Plaintiff has no interests that are adverse to the absent class members. The Plaintiff is committed to vigorously litigating this matter. Plaintiff has also retained counsel experienced in handling consumer lawsuits, complex legal issues, and class actions. Neither the Plaintiff nor his counsel have any interests which might cause them not to vigorously pursue the instant class action lawsuit.
- i. <u>Superiority:</u> A class action is superior to the other available means for the fair and efficient adjudication of this controversy because individual joinder of all members would be impracticable. Class action treatment will permit a large number of similarly situated persons to prosecute their common claims in a single forum efficiently and without unnecessary duplication of effort and expense that individual actions would engender.
- 18. Certification of a class under Rule 23(b)(3) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure is also appropriate in that the questions of law and fact common to members of the Plaintiff Class predominate over any questions affecting an individual member, and a class action is superior to other available methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of the controversy.

19. Depending on the outcome of further investigation and discovery, Plaintiff may, at the time of class certification motion, seek to certify a class(es) only as to particular issues pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 23(c)(4).

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

- 20. Plaintiff repeats, reiterates and incorporates the allegations contained in paragraphs numbered above herein with the same force and effect as if the same were set forth at length herein.
- 21. Some time prior to September 5, 2017, an obligation was allegedly incurred to Credit Innovations.
- 22. The Credit Innovations obligation arose out of transactions for credit repair services which involved the transaction of money, property, insurance or services. These credit repair services were incurred primarily for personal purposes.
- 23. The alleged Credit Innovations obligation is a "debt" as defined by 15 U.S.C.§ 1692a(5).
- 24. Creditor Credit Innovations contracted with the Defendant Accounts Receivable to collect the alleged debt.
- 25. Defendant Accounts Receivable 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.

<u>Violation – September 5, 2017 Collection Letter</u>

26. On or around September 5, 2017 the Plaintiff received a collection letter from Defendant. (See Letter attached hereto as Exhibit A).

- 27. The Letter states "Arrangements must be made immediately to avoid credit bureau reporting to the three major credit reporting agencies for up to seven years."
- 28. This statement is deceptive since the debt can only be reported on a Plaintiff's credit report for seven years from the date of default,
- 29. The Plaintiff's account was in default well before September 5, 2017, thus it is impossible that Plaintiff's account would be reported for seven years from that date.
- 30. Defendant's letter is a deceptive tactic to coerce a payment from Plaintiff on the debt by threating her with harm to her credit report for significantly longer than allowable by law.
- 31. Plaintiff incurred an informational injury as Defendant falsely advised that her debt could be reported to the credit bureaus for seven years when this was knowingly false information.
- 32. Consequently, Plaintiff incurred anxiety and emotional turmoil regarding this false threat of damage to her credit.
- 33. As a result of Defendant's deceptive and misleading statement Plaintiff has been harmed.

VIOLATIONS OF THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT 15 U.S.C. §1692d et seq.

- 34. Plaintiff repeats, reiterates and incorporates the allegations contained in paragraphs above herein with the same force and effect as if the same were set forth at length herein.
- 35. Defendant's debt collection efforts attempted and/or directed towards the Plaintiff violated various provisions of the FDCPA, including but not limited to 15 U.S.C. § 1692d.

- 36. Pursuant to 15 U.S.C. §1692d, a debt collector may not engage in any conduct the natural consequence of which is to harass, oppress, or abuse any person in connection with the collection of a debt.
- 37. Defendant engaged in harassing and abuse debt collection methods in harassing Plaintiff to pay a debt by threatening her with false threats of negative credit reporting, in violation of 15 U.S.C. §§1692d.
- 38. By reason thereof, Defendant is liable to Plaintiff for judgment that Defendant's conduct violated Section 1692d et seq. of the FDCPA, actual damages, statutory damages, costs and attorneys' fees.

COUNT II VIOLATIONS OF THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT 15 U.S.C. §1692e et seq.

- 39. Plaintiff repeats, reiterates and incorporates the allegations contained in paragraphs above herein with the same force and effect as if the same were set forth at length herein.
- 40. Defendant's debt collection efforts attempted and/or directed towards the Plaintiff violated various provisions of the FDCPA, including but not limited to 15 U.S.C. § 1692e.
- 41. Pursuant to 15 U.S.C. §1692e, a debt collector may not use any false, deceptive, or misleading representation or means in connection with the collection of any debt.
 - 42. Defendants made false, deceptive and misleading representations when
 - (a) they advised Plaintiff that her debt would be reported to the credit bureaus for seven years when that was impossible; and
 - (b) falsely and deceptively mischaracterized the legal status of the debt allegedly owed in violation of 15 U.S.C. §§1692e, 1692e(2), 1692e(5) and 1692e(10).

43. 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.

DEMAND FOR TRIAL BY JURY

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

a trial by jury on all issues so triable.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff Chelsea Leonard, individually and on behalf of all others similarly

situated, demands judgment from Defendant Accounts Receivable as follows:

1. Declaring that this action is properly maintainable as a Class Action and certifying

Plaintiff as Class representative, and Justin Zeig, Esq. as Class Counsel;

2. Awarding Plaintiff and the Class statutory damages;

3. Awarding Plaintiff and the Class actual damages;

4. Awarding Plaintiff costs of this Action, including reasonable attorneys' fees and

expenses;

5. Awarding pre-judgment interest and post-judgment interest; and

6. Awarding Plaintiff and the Class such other and further relief as this Court may deem

just and proper.

Dated: June 15, 2018

Respectfully Submitted,

ZEIG LAW FIRM, LLC

/s/ Justin Zeig

Justin Zeig, Esq. FL Bar No. 112306 3475 Sheridan Street, Suite 310 Hollywood, FL 33021 Telephone: 754-217-3084

Fax: 954-272-7807

justin@zeiglawfirm.com

Attorneys for Plaintiff Chelsea Leonard

EXHIBIT A

ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE

September 5, 2017

Chelsea Leonard

1806 33rd Street Suite 180 • Orlando, FL 32839 Telephone: 877.832.2482 • Facsimile: 877.730.5805 Website: www.AccountsReceivable.com

Account Summary

RE Credit Innovations

Account No 8930

Balance Due \$399.00

Dear Sir or Madam:

All reasonable efforts to resolve your seriously delinquent account have been exhausted. This is our final notification in attempt to clear this balance.

Arrangements must be made immediately to avoid credit bureau reporting to the three major credit reporting agencies for up to seven years.

Contact us at once if you wish to avoid this action.

Sincerely,

Account Manager

This is an attempt to collect a debt. Any information obtained will be used for that purpose.

PAYMENT OPTIONS

Payments By Internet

www.AccountsReceivable.com Visa, MasterCard, Discover & American Express Check (ACH) also available

Payments By Phone

Please Call 877.832.2482 Visa, MasterCard, American Express & Discover Debit Card Check-by-Phone

Payments By Mail

Visa, MasterCard, Discover & American Express Check

(You can use the return envelope provided and the bottom portion of this notice for your convenience.)

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*** Detach Lower Portion And Return With Payment ***

1806 33rd Street Suite 180 Orlando FL 32839 ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED RE: Credit Innovations Account #: 8930 Amount Due: \$399.00

PLEASE CIRCLE THE CREDIT CARD YOU WISH TO USE DISCOVER VISA EXP. DATE CARD NUMBER CVN

CARD HOLDER NAME

SIGNATURE

AMOUNT PAID

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JS 44 (Rev. Gases 1:18 ecoto 22417-KMW Docume OIVIL CONSERCISION Docket 06/15/2018 Page 1 of 2

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.) NOTICE: Attorneys MUST Indicate All Re-filed Cases Below.

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JS 44 (Rev. 06/17) FLSD Revised 06/01/2017

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ATTORNEYS COMPLETING CIVIL COVER SHEET FORM JS 44

Authority For Civil Cover Sheet

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replaces nor supplements the filings and service of pleading 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. Consequently, a civil cover sheet is submitted to the Clerk of Court for each civil complaint filed. The attorney filing a case should complete the form as follows:

- I. (a) **Plaintiffs-Defendants.** Enter names (last, first, middle initial) of plaintiff and defendant. If the plaintiff or defendant is a government agency, use only the full name or standard abbreviations. If the plaintiff or defendant is an official within a government agency, identify first the agency and then the official, giving both name and title.
- (b) County of Residence. For each civil case filed, except U.S. plaintiff cases, enter the name of the county where the first listed plaintiff resides at the time of filing. In U.S. plaintiff cases, enter the name of the county in which the first listed defendant resides at the time of filing. (NOTE: In land condemnation cases, the county of residence of the "defendant" is the location of the tract of land involved.)
- (c) Attorneys. Enter the firm name, address, telephone number, and attorney of record. If there are several attorneys, list them on an attachment, noting in this section "(see attachment)".
- **II. Jurisdiction**. The basis of jurisdiction is set forth under Rule 8(a), F.R.C.P., which requires that jurisdictions be shown in pleadings. Place an "X" in one of the boxes. If there is more than one basis of jurisdiction, precedence is given in the order shown below.

United States plaintiff. (1) Jurisdiction based on 28 U.S.C. 1345 and 1348. Suits by agencies and officers of the United States are included here.

United States defendant. (2) When the plaintiff is suing the United States, its officers or agencies, place an "X" in this box.

Federal question. (3) This refers to suits under 28 U.S.C. 1331, where jurisdiction arises under the Constitution of the United States, an amendment to the Constitution, an act of Congress or a treaty of the United States. In cases where the U.S. is a party, the U.S. plaintiff or defendant code takes precedence, and box 1 or 2 should be marked. Diversity of citizenship. (4) This refers to suits under 28 U.S.C. 1332, where parties are citizens of different states. When Box 4 is checked, the citizenship of the different parties must be checked. (See Section III below; federal question actions take precedence over diversity cases.)

- **III. Residence** (citizenship) of **Principal Parties.** This section of the JS 44 is to be completed if diversity of citizenship was indicated above. Mark this section for each principal party.
- **IV. Nature of Suit.** Nature of Suit. Place an "X" in the appropriate box. If there are multiple nature of suit codes associated with the case, pick the nature of suit code that is most applicable. Click here for: Nature of Suit Code Descriptions.
- V. Origin. Place an "X" in one of the seven boxes.

Original Proceedings. (1) Cases which originate in the United States district courts.

Removed from State Court. (2) Proceedings initiated in state courts may be removed to the district courts under Title 28 U.S.C., Section 1441. When the petition for removal is granted, check this box.

Refiled (3) Attach copy of Order for Dismissal of Previous case. Also complete VI.

Reinstated or Reopened. (4) Check this box for cases reinstated or reopened in the district court. Use the reopening date as the filing date.

Transferred from Another District. (5) For cases transferred under Title 28 U.S.C. Section 1404(a). Do not use this for within district transfers or multidistrict litigation transfers.

Multidistrict Litigation. (6) Check this box when a multidistrict case is transferred into the district under authority of Title 28 U.S.C. Section 1407. When this box is checked, do not check (5) above.

Appeal to District Judge from Magistrate Judgment. (7) Check this box for an appeal from a magistrate judge's decision.

Remanded from Appellate Court. (8) Check this box if remanded from Appellate Court.

- VI. Related/Refiled Cases. This section of the JS 44 is used to reference related pending cases or re-filed cases. Insert the docket numbers and the corresponding judges name for such cases.
- VII. Cause of Action. Report the civil statute directly related to the cause of action and give a brief description of the cause. **Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity**. Example: U.S. Civil Statute: 47 USC 553

Brief Description: Unauthorized reception of cable service

VIII. Requested in Complaint. Class Action. Place an "X" in this box if you are filing a class action under Rule 23, F.R.Cv.P.

Demand. In this space enter the dollar amount (in thousands of dollars) being demanded or indicate other demand such as a preliminary injunction.

Jury Demand. Check the appropriate box to indicate whether or not a jury is being demanded.

Date and Attorney Signature. Date and sign the civil cover sheet.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

Southern District of Florida						
Chelsea Leonard, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated,)))					
Plaintiff(s)						
V.	Civil Action No.					
Accounts Receivable and John Does 1-25,))					
Defendant(s))					
SUMMONS IN A CIVIL ACTION						
To: (Defendant's name and address) Accounts Receivable 1806 33rd Street, Ste 180 Orlando, FL 32839						
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: Justin Zeig, Esq. Zeig Law Firm, LLC 3475 Sheridan Street, Suite 310 Hollywood, Florida 33021						
If you fail to respond, judgment by default will be You also must file your answer or motion with the court.	entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint.					
	CLERK OF COURT					
Date:						
	Signature of Clerk or Deputy Clerk					

AO 440 (Rev. 06/12) Summons in a Civil Action (Page 2)

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 (no	ame of individual and title, if a	ny)				
was rec	ceived by me on (date)	-	·				
	☐ I personally served	d the summons on the ind	dividual at (place)				
		on (date)	; or				
	☐ I left the summons at the individual's residence or usual place of abode with (name)						
			, a person of suitable age and discretion who res	sides there,			
	on (date), and mailed a copy to the individual's last known address; or I served the summons on (name of individual),						
	designated by law to	accept service of proces	s on behalf of (name of organization)				
			on (date)	; or			
	☐ I returned the sum	se	; or				
	☐ Other (specify):						
	My fees are \$	for travel and	\$ for services, for a total of \$	0.00			
	I declare under penalty of perjury that this information is true.						
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Date:		-	Server's signature	·			
		-	Printed name and title				
		_	Server's address				

Additional information regarding attempted service, etc:

Print Save As... Reset

ClassAction.org

This complaint is part of ClassAction.org's searchable class action lawsuit database and can be found in this post: Class Action Claims Accounts Receivable Falsely Threatened Consumer with Unlawful Debt Reporting