BARSHAY SANDERS, PLLC

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Attorneys for Plaintiffs
Our File No.: 111514

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

Patricia A. Lobosco and Michelina Hoffman, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated,

Plaintiffs,

VS.

Optio Solutions LLC d/b/a Qualia Collection Services,

Defendant.

Docket No:

CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

Patricia A. Lobosco and Michelina Hoffman, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated (hereinafter referred to collectively as "*Plaintiffs*"), by and through the undersigned counsel, complain, state and allege against Optio Solutions LLC d/b/a Qualia Collection Services (hereinafter referred to as "*Defendant*"), as follows:

INTRODUCTION

1. This action seeks to recover for violations of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1692, *et seq.*, ("FDCPA").

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 2. This Court has federal subject matter jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331 and 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(d).
- 3. Venue is proper under 28 U.S.C. §1391(b) because a substantial part of the events or omissions giving rise to the claim occurred in this Judicial District.

4. At all relevant times, Defendant conducted business within the State of New York.

PARTIES

- 5. Plaintiff Patricia A. Lobosco is an individual who is a citizen of the State of New York residing in Suffolk County, New York.
- 6. Plaintiff Michelina Hoffman is an individual who is a citizen of the State of New York residing in Suffolk County, New York.
 - 7. Plaintiffs are "consumers" as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(3).
- 8. On information and belief, Defendant's principal place of business is located in Petaluma, California.
- 9. Defendant is regularly engaged, for profit, in the collection of debts allegedly owed by consumers.
 - 10. Defendant is a "debt collector" as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(6).

ALLEGATIONS

- 11. Defendant alleges each of the Plaintiffs owe a debt ("the debt").
- 12. The debts were primarily for personal, family or household purposes and are therefore "debts" as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(5).
- 13. Sometime after the incurrence of the debts, Plaintiffs fell behind on payments owed.
 - 14. Plaintiffs' debts were incurred on credit cards issued by Capital One, N.A.
- 15. At all relevant times herein, Plaintiffs' debts accrued, and were subject to, interest.
- 16. At all relevant times herein, Plaintiffs' debt accrued, and were subject to, late fees.
- 17. Thereafter, at an exact time known only to Defendant, the debts were assigned or otherwise transferred to Defendant for collection.
- 18. In its efforts to collect the debt, Defendant contacted Plaintiff Patricia A. Lobosco by letter dated March 21, 2016. ("Exhibit 1.")
- 19. In its efforts to collect the debt, Defendant contacted Plaintiff Michelina Hoffman by letter dated May 5, 2016. ("Exhibit 1.")

- 20. The letters were the initial communication to each Plaintiff received from Defendant.
 - 21. The letters are identical in all material respects.
 - 22. The letters are "communications" as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(2).
- 23. 15 U.S.C. § 1692g provides that within five days after the initial communication with a consumer in connection with the collection of any debt, a debt collector shall, unless the information is contained in the initial communication or the consumer has paid the debt, send the consumer a written notice containing certain enumerated information.
- 24. One such requirement is that the debt collector provide "the amount of the debt." 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(1).
- 25. A debt collector has the obligation not just to convey the amount of the debt, but to convey such clearly.
 - 26. The letter to Plaintiff Lobosco sets forth a "Balance Due" of \$1450.34.
 - 27. The letter to Plaintiff Hoffman sets forth a "Balance Due" of \$3609.80.
 - 28. The letter to Plaintiff Lobosco sets forth "Fees" of \$506.98.
 - 29. The letter to Plaintiff Hoffman sets forth "Fees" of \$648.36.
- 30. The letters fail to disclose whether the "Balance Due" may increase due to additional interest.
- 31. The letters fail to disclose whether the "Balance Due" may increase due to additional fees.
 - 32. The letters fail to disclose whether the "Fees" may increase.
 - 33. The letters fail to disclose whether the "Fees" may increase.
 - 34. The letters fail to disclose the nature of the "Fees."
- 35. The letters fail to indicate whether payment of the amount stated would satisfy the debt.
- 36. The letters fail to indicate whether payment of the amount stated by any date certain would satisfy the debt.
- 37. The letters fail to include any "safe harbor" language concerning the accrual of interest and/or fees. *Avila v. Riexinger & Associates, LLC*, 817 F.3d 72, 76 (2d Cir. 2016).
- 38. The letters, because of the aforementioned failures, would render the least sophisticated consumer unable to determine the amount of his or her debt.

- 39. The letters, because of the aforementioned failures, would render the least sophisticated consumer unable to determine the amount of his or her debt because the consumer would not know whether interest and fees would continue to accrue, or whether the amount of the debt was static.
- 40. The least sophisticated consumer could reasonably believe that the debt could be satisfied by remitting the "Balance Due" at any time after receipt of the letters.
- 41. The least sophisticated consumer could also reasonably believe that the "Balance Due" was accurate only on the date of the letters because of the continued accumulation of interest.
- 42. The least sophisticated consumer could also reasonably believe that the "Balance Due" was accurate only on the date of the letters because of the continued assessment of fees.
- 43. If interest is continuing to accrue, the least sophisticated consumer would not know how to satisfy the debt because the letters fail to indicate the applicable interest rate, or date of accrual.
- 44. If late fees are continuing to accrue, the least sophisticated consumer would not know how to satisfy the debt because the letters fail to indicate the amount increase, if any, of fees.
 - 45. For these reasons, Defendant failed to clearly state the amount of the debt.
- 46. For these reasons, Defendant failed to unambiguously state the amount of the debt.
- 47. For these reasons, the letters would likely make the least sophisticated consumer uncertain as to the amount of the debts.
- 48. For these reasons, the letters would likely make the least sophisticated consumer confused as to the amount of the debts.
- 49. Defendant violated § 1692g as it failed to clearly, explicitly and unambiguously convey the amount of the debt.
- 50. 15 U.S.C. § 1692e prohibits a debt collector from using any false, deceptive, or misleading representation or means in connection with the collection of any debt.
- 51. The question of whether a collection letter is deceptive is determined from the perspective of the "least sophisticated consumer."
 - 52. While § 1692e specifically prohibits certain practices, the list is non-exhaustive,

and does not preclude a claim of falsity or deception based on any non-enumerated practice.

- 53. A collection letter is deceptive under 15 U.S.C. § 1692e if it can reasonably be read by the least sophisticated consumer to have two or more meanings, one of which is inaccurate.
- 54. A collection letter is also deceptive under 15 U.S.C. § 1692e if it is reasonably susceptible to an inaccurate reading by the least sophisticated consumer.
- 55. 15 U.S.C. § 1692e requires debt collectors, when they notify consumers of their account balance, to disclose whether the balance may increase due to interest and fees. *Avila v. Riexinger & Associates, LLC*, 817 F.3d 72, 76 (2d Cir. 2016).
- 56. As previously alleged, the least sophisticated consumer could reasonably read the letters to mean that the "Balance Due" was static.
- 57. As previously alleged, the least sophisticated consumer could also reasonably read the letters to mean that the "Balance Due" was dynamic due to the continued accumulation of interest.
- 58. As previously alleged, the least sophisticated consumer could also reasonably read the letters to mean that the "Balance Due" was dynamic due to the continued accumulation of fees.
- 59. Because the letters are susceptible to an inaccurate reading by the least sophisticated consumer, they are deceptive under 15 U.S.C. § 1692e.
- 60. Because the letters can reasonably be read by the least sophisticated consumer to have two or more meanings, one of which is inaccurate, as described, they are deceptive under 15 U.S.C. § 1692e.
- 61. Defendant violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692e by using a false, deceptive and misleading representation in its attempt to collect a debt.

CLASS ALLEGATIONS

- 62. Plaintiffs bring 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 means described herein, from one year before the date of this Complaint to the present.
 - 63. This action seeks a finding that Defendant's conduct violates the FDCPA, and

asks that the Court award damages as authorized by § 1692k(a)(2) of the FDCPA.

- 64. Defendant regularly engages in debt collection, using the same unlawful conduct described herein, in its attempts to collect delinquent consumer debts from other persons.
- 65. The Class consists of more than 35 persons from whom Defendant attempted to collect delinquent consumer debts using the same unlawful conduct described herein.
- 66. Plaintiffs' claims are typical of the claims of the Class. Common questions of law or fact raised by this class action complaint affect all members of the Class and predominate over any individual issues. Common relief is therefore sought on behalf of all members of the Class. This class action is superior to other available methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of this controversy.
- 67. The prosecution of separate actions by individual members of the Class would create a risk of inconsistent or varying adjudications with respect to the individual members of the Class, and a risk that any adjudications with respect to individual members of the Class would, as a practical matter, either be dispositive of the interests of other members of the Class not party to the adjudication, or substantially impair or impede their ability to protect their interests. Defendants have acted in a manner applicable to the Class as a whole such that declaratory relief is warranted.
- 68. Plaintiffs will fairly and adequately protect and represent the interests of the Class. The management of the class action proposed is not extraordinarily difficult, and the factual and legal issues raised by this class action complaint will not require extended contact with the members of the Class, because Defendants' conduct was perpetrated on all members of the Class and will be established by common proof. Moreover, Plaintiffs have retained counsel experienced in actions brought under the FDCPA.

JURY DEMAND

69. Plaintiffs hereby demand a trial of this action by jury.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs respectfully request judgment as follows:

- a. Certify this action as a class action; and
- b. Appoint Plaintiffs as Class Representative of the Class, and their

attorneys as Class Counsel; and

- c. Find that Defendant's actions violate the FDCPA; and
- d. Grant damages against Defendant pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k; and
- e. Grant Plaintiffs' attorneys' fees pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k; and
- f. Grant Plaintiffs' costs; together with
- g. Such other relief that the Court determines is just and proper.

DATED: March 9, 2017

BARSHAY SANDERS, PLLC

By: <u>/s/ Craig B. Sanders</u>

Craig B. Sanders, Esq. 100 Garden City Plaza, Suite 500 Garden City, New York 11530

Tel: (516) 203-7600 Fax: (516) 706-5055

csanders@barshaysanders.com

Attorneys for Plaintiffs
Our File No.: 111514

Petaluma, CA 94955 (844) 598-5454

Office Hours: Monday - Friday 6:00am - 5:00pm PST

Qualia Collection Services

ACCOUNT SUMMARY Original Creditor: Capital One N.A. Kohl's Dept. Stores Inc. Kohl's Dept. Stores Inc. Current Creditor: Agency Account #: Reference #: 7375 Principal: \$943.36 Fees: \$506 98 Interest: \$0.00 Balance Due: \$1450.34 Additional Information Amt. of Debt at Charge-Off \$1450.34 Tot. Int. Since Charge-Off Tot. Fees Since Charge-Off \$0.00 \$0.00 Tot. Pmts. Since Charge-Off

PAYMENT OPTIONS
Website
www.payQCS.com
Pay By Phone
(855) 593-5047
Mail
PO Box 4699 Petaluma, CA 94955
(Please use the payment coupon and return envelope provided)

March 21, 2016

Dear Patricia A Lobosco:

Your account has been assigned to our agency by Kohl's Dept. Stores Inc. for collection.

To pay your bill, please send your payment to the address below. In addition, payments may be made online at www.payQCS.com, or by phone at (855) 593-5047.

If you cannot pay the entire amount, please call the telephone number below to make arrangements to pay.

(844) 598-5454

THIS IS AN ATTEMPT TO COLLECT A DEBT. ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. THIS COMMUNICATION IS FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR.

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 have such verification mailed to you. 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.

NOTICE: SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR IMPORTANT INFORMATION.

2140-SFOPTO10-1K-1/06/10

*** Please detach the lower portion and return with your payment ***

PO BOX 4699
PETALUMA CA 94955-4699
CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

March 21, 2016

CARD NUMBER

CARD HOLDER NAME

SIGNATURE

SIGNATURE

CARD WISH TO PAY BY CREDIT CARD, CIRCLE ONE AND FILL IN THE INFORMATION BELOW.

VISA

EXP. DATE

AMOUNT PAID

Account #: 7375 Balance Due: \$1450.34

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0008120024019742573611731121203-1Y-Y1ACDA6805 2140 Patricia A Lobosco ,

3 Kalmia St East Northport NY 11731-1212



QUALIA COLLECTION SERVICES PO BOX 4699 PETALUMA CA 94955-4699

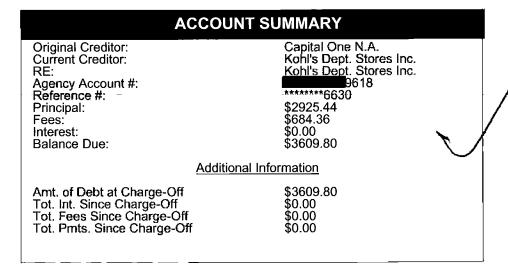


12345678-002140-01-1-AA

Petaluma, CA 94955 (844) 598-5454

QUALIA COLLECTION SERVICES

Office Hours: Mongray - Friday 6:00am - 5:00pm PST



	PAYMENT OPTIONS
/	Website
•	www.payQCS.com
	Pay-By-Phone
	(855) 593-5047
	* Mail
	PO Box 4699
	Petaluma, CA 94955
	(Please use the payment coupon and return envelope provided)

May 5, 2016

Dear Michelina Hoffman:

Your account has been assigned to our agency by Kohl's Dept. Stores Inc. for collection.

To pay your bill, please send your payment to the address below. In addition, payments may be made online at www.payQCS.com, or by phone at (855) 593-5047.

If you cannot pay the entire amount, please call the telephone number below to make arrangements to pay.

(844) 598-5454

THIS IS AN ATTEMPT TO COLLECT A DEBT. ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. THIS COMMUNICATION IS FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR.

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 have such verification mailed to you. 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.

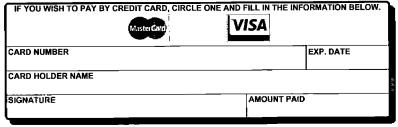
NOTICE: SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR IMPORTANT INFORMATION.

110-SFOPTO10-1K-1/06/10

*** Please detach the lower portion and return with your payment ***

PETALUMA CA 94955-4699 CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

May 5, 2016



Account #: \$618 Balance Due: \$3609.80

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Michelina Hoffman 15 Harbor Hill Rd East Setauket NY 11733-2908



QUALIA COLLECTION SERVICES PO BOX 4699 PETALUMA CA 94955-4699



JS 44 (Rev. 07/16)

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 purpose of initiating the civil do	. This form, approved by the ocket sheet. (SEE INSTRUC	e Judicial Conference of th CTIONS ON NEXT PAGE (ne Ûnited S OF THIS F	tates in September ORM.)	er 1974	is requi	red for the use of	the Clerk of Co	ourt for the	ė
I. (a) PLAINTIFFS				DEFENDANTS						
PATRICIA A. LOBOSCO				OPTIO SOLUTIONS LLC D/B/A QUALIA COLLECTION SERVICES						
(b) County of Residence of	First Listed Plaintiff	SUFFOLK		County of Residen	nce of	First Liste	ed Defendant	SONOMA		
•	XCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CA	ASES)	County of residence of				PLAINTIFF CASES	ONLY)		
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(a) Attornova (Fig. No.)	All IT last Now last			Attomosys (ICK						
(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, A BARSHAY SAND	•	er)		Attorneys (If Know	wn)					
	laza, Ste 500, Garden Ci	ty, NY 11530								
II. BASIS OF JURISDI	CTION (Place an "X" in C	One Box Only)		ZENSHIP OF	PRI	NCIPA	L PARTIES			
O 1 U.S. Government	3 Federal Question		(For Diver	sity Cases Only)	PTF	DEF		and One I	Box for Defend PIF	
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VI. CAUSE OF ACTIO	Brief description of cau	ıse: 15 USC §1692 Fa	nir Debt Co	ollection Practices	Act V	iolation				
VII. REQUESTED IN		S A CLASS ACTION	DEM	AND \$			CHECK YES on	ly if demanded	in complai	int:
COMPLAINT:	UNDER RULE 2	3, F.R.Cv.P.				JU	RY DEMAND:	• Yes	O No	
VIII. RELATED CASE IF ANY	$\Sigma(S)$	(See Instructions) JUDGE				DOC	KET NUMBER			
DATE		SIGNATURE OF ATTO	RNEY OF F	RECORD		_	_			
March 20, 2017		/s Crai	ig B. Sa	nders						
FOR OFFICE USE ONLY										
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Case 2:17-cv-01564 Document 1-2 Filed 03/20/17 Page 2 of 2 PageID #: 11 CERTIFICATION OF ARBITRATION ELIGIBILITY

Local Arbitration Rule 83.10 provides that with certain exceptions, actions seeking money damages only in an amount not in excess of \$150,000, exclusive of interest and costs, are eligible for compulsory arbitration. The amount of damages is presumed to be below the threshold amount unless a certification to the contrary is filed.

I, <u>Craig B. Sanders</u> , counsel for <u>Plaintiff</u> , do hereby certify that the above captioned civil action is ineligible for compulsory arbitration for the following reason(s):
☐ monetary damages sought are in excess of \$150,000, exclusive of interest and costs,
☐ the complaint seeks injunctive relief,
☐ the matter is otherwise ineligible for the following reason
DISCLOSURE STATEMENT - FEDERAL RULES CIVIL PROCEDURE 7.1
Identify any parent corporation and any publicly held corporation that owns 10% or more or its stocks:
RELATED CASE STATEMENT (Section VIII on the Front of this Form)
Please list all cases that are arguably related pursuant to Division of Business Rule 50.3.1 in Section VIII on the front of this form. Rule 50.3.1 (a) provides that "A civil case is "related" to another civil case for purposes of this guideline when, because of the similarity of facts and legal issues or because the cases arise from the same transactions or events, a substantial saving of judicial resources is likely to result from assigning both cases to the same judge and magistrate judge." Rule 50.3.1 (b) provides that "A civil case shall not be deemed "related" to another civil case merely because the civil case: (A) involves identical legal issues, or (B) involves the same parties." Rule 50.3.1 (c) further provides that "Presumptively, and subject to the power of a judge to determine otherwise pursuant to paragraph (d), civil cases shall not be deemed to be "related" unless both cases are still pending before the court."
NY-E DIVISION OF BUSINESS RULE 50.1(d)(2)
 Is the civil action being filed in the Eastern District removed from a New York State Court located in Nassau or Suffolk County: NO
 If you answered "no" above: a) Did the events or omissions giving rise to the claim or claims, or a substantial part thereof, occur in Nassau or Suffolk County?YES
b) Did the events or omissions giving rise to the claim or claims, or a substantial part thereof, occur in the Eastern District? YES
If your answer to question 2 (b) is "No," does the defendant (or a majority of the defendants, if there is more than one) reside in Nassau or Suffolk County, or, in an interpleader action, does the claimant (or a majority of the claimants, if there is more than one) reside in Nassau or Suffolk County?
(Note: A corporation shall be considered a resident of the County in which it has the most significant contacts).
BAR ADMISSION
I am currently admitted in the Eastern District of New York and currently a member in good standing of the bar of this court. Yes No
Are you currently the subject of any disciplinary action (s) in this or any other state or federal court? ☐ Yes (If yes, please explain) ■ No
I certify the accuracy of all information provided above.

Signature: <u>/s Craig B. Sanders</u>

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

Eastern District of New York

Patricia A. Lobosco and Michelina Hoffman, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated Plaintiff(s) v. Optio Solutions LLC d/b/a Qualia Collection Services Defendant(s))))) Civil Action No.)))							
Dejenaam(s)	,							
SUMMONS IN A CIVIL ACTION								
To: (Defendant's name and address) Optio Solutions LLC d/b/a Qualia Collection Services THE CORPORATION TRUST COMPANY CORPORATION TRUST CENTER 1209 ORANGE ST WILMINGTON DE 19801								
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: Craig B. Sanders, Esq. Barshay Sanders, PLLC 100 Garden City Suite 500 Garden Clty, New York 11530								
If you fail to respond, judgment by default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint. You also must file your answer or motion with the court.								
	CLERK OF COURT							
Date:								
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))

was re	This summons for (na ceived by me on (date)	me of individual and title, if any)								
	•	I the summons on the indiv	idual at (place)							
		on (date)								
	☐ I left the summons	I left the summons at the individual's residence or usual place of abode with (name)								
	, a person of suitable age and discretion who resides there,									
	on (date)	, and mailed a copy to the individual's last known address; or								
	☐ I served the summ	erved the summons on (name of individual)								
	designated by law to	accept service of process o	n behalf of (name of organization)							
		on (date)		; or						
	☐ I returned the sum	e summons unexecuted because		; or						
	☐ Other (<i>specify</i>):									
	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.									
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: <u>Class Action Claims Optio Solutions Broke Debt Collection Laws</u>