#### IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT NOTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA ATLANTA DIVISION

AARON MILLS, Individually and on Behalf of All Those Similarly Situated,	)
Plaintiff,	) Case No.:
<b>v.</b>	)
T.J. MAXX, INC.	)
Defendant.	) ) )

## COLLECTIVE ACTION COMPLAINT (Jury Trial Demanded)

Plaintiff, Aaron Mills, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated, upon personal knowledge as to himself and upon information and belief as to other matters, alleges as follows:

#### **NATURE OF THE ACTION**

1. Defendant operates retail chain of stores called T.J. Maxx, Inc. T.J. Maxx, Inc. has multiple stores across the nation, including many parts of Georgia. Plaintiff worked for T.J. Maxx, Inc., in multiple locations across Georgia during his

employment.

- 2. Plaintiff worked for T.J. Maxx, Inc. as a loss prevention detective.
- 3. Plaintiff was paid straight-time for the first 40 hours worked, despite working in excess of 40 hours per week throughout his employment.
- 4. The exact number of employees who have suffered the same unpaid overtime wage injury as Plaintiff, and have yet to receive redress is unknown at this time, but the number is estimated to be at least 20 other loss prevention employees.
- 5. Plaintiff brings this action on behalf of himself and all other similarly situated employees of Defendant, to recover unpaid overtime pay, owed to them pursuant to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), 29 U.S.C. §§ 201 et seq, and supporting regulations.

#### **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

- 6. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331, 1337, 1343. In addition, the Court has jurisdiction over Plaintiff's claims under the FLSA pursuant to 29 U.S.C. § 216(b).
- 7. Venue is proper in this district pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391 because a substantial part of the events or omissions leading to this claim occurred while

Plaintiff performed work for T.J. Maxx, Inc. at their location in Northlake Mall at 2146 Henderson Mill Road, Atlanta, GA, which is in DeKalb County. Therefore, venue is proper in the Northern District of Georgia.

8. This Court is empowered to issue a declaratory judgment pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 2201 and 2202.

#### **THE PARTIES**

#### **Plaintiffs:**

9. Plaintiff, Aaron Mills, was at all relevant times, an adult individual residing at 110 Bell Chase, Dallas, GA 30157, which is in Paulding County.

#### **Defendant:**

- 10. Defendant T.J. Maxx, Inc., is an active Massachusetts corporation. Its principal place of business is 770 Cochituate Rd., Framingham, MA, 01701-4672, USA, which is in Middesex County.
- 11. Defendant acted intentionally and maliciously. Defendant is considered an "employer" pursuant to the FLSA, 29 U.S.C. § 203(d), and the regulations promulgated under 29 C.F.R. § 791.2.
- 12. Defendant set the unlawful payroll policies complained of in this complaint.

- 13. At all relevant times, Defendant has been an employer of Plaintiff, and/or joint employers within the meaning of the FLSA.
- 14. Upon information and belief, at all relevant times, Defendant has had gross revenues in excess of \$500,000, within the meaning of 29 U.S.C. § 203(s)(1)(A)(ii).
- 15. Additionally, upon information and belief, at all relevant times, Defendant has had employees working on goods that have been moved or produced for commerce, in that they operate a retail chain that sells clothes, shoes and other accessories across various parts of the United States, within the meaning of 29 U.S.C. § 203(s)(1)(A)(i).

#### **STATEMENT OF FACTS**

- 16. At all relevant times, Defendant has been in the retail industry, supplying customers with various clothing needs.
- 17. Upon information and belief, Defendant handles payroll and record keeping for Plaintiff's employment, and is actively involved in the day-to-day operations.
- 18. Plaintiff Mills was employed by Defendant as a loss prevention detective. Mr. Mills' job duties included: investigating incidents of internal theft throughout a high volume multi-store environment, conducting fact-finding, installing covert cameras,

reviewing media, and resolving internal theft cases with the help of a national task force. Mr. Mills worked for T.J. Maxx from October 1, 2016 to September 28, 2017 (102 weeks).

- 19. Plaintiff worked at various locations throughout Atlanta Georgia for Defendant, such as in Northlake, Kennesaw, and Austell.
- 20. Mr. Mills was assigned to work 40 hours per week by T.J. Maxx. However, in actuality, Mr. Mills worked 45 hours each week, as a result of being required to work off-the-clock 5 hours each week in order to respond to phone calls and e-mails from his supervisor for loss prevention cases. These off-the-clock e-mails and calls would occur before his shift, after his shift, and on weekends.
- 21. Mr. Mills was paid \$14.93 per hour, and worked 45 hours per week. Mr. Mills was generally paid \$597.20 per week reflecting only being paid for 40 hours of work. Mr. Mills was never compensated for this extra 5 hours of time worked.
- 22. Mr. Mills was frequently called and e-mailed by his direct supervisor Anna White, despite being off-the-clock, and expected to respond to his supervisor's needs at all times.
- 23. Plaintiff was also called to testify at various hearings for his employment, and

would not be compensated for all hours worked while testifying or appearing in court.

- 24. Plaintiff was paid straight-time for the first 40 hours worked, despite working well in excess of 40 hours per week.
- 25. This failure to pay overtime wages to this hourly employee can only be considered a willful violation of the FLSA, within the meaning of 29 U.S.C. § 255(a).

#### **STATEMENT OF CLAIM**

- 26. Mr. Mills worked 45 hours per week, which includes 40 regular hours and 5 overtime hours. Mr. Mills was paid straight-time for the first 40 hours worked. His rate of pay was \$14.93 per hour, so his "one-and-half-times-rate" is \$22.40 per hour, for the purposes of computing overtime. 5 overtime hours multiplied by \$22.40 one-and-half-times-rate, equals \$112 unpaid overtime per week. Mr. Mills was employed 102 weeks by Defendant. 102 weeks multiplied by \$112 unpaid overtime per week, equals \$11,424 in unpaid overtime wages. If the Court grants liquidated damages in this case, pursuant to 29 U.S. Code § 216(b), then the total damages are \$11,424 plus \$11,424, which equals \$22,848.
- 27. Therefore, Plaintiff Mills is owed \$22,848.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The one-and-half-times-rate is determined by multiplying the regular rate of pay by 1.5.

#### FLSA COLLECTIVE ACTION ALLEGATIONS

28. Pursuant to 29 U.S.C. §§ 207 & 216(b), Plaintiff bring his First Cause of Action as a collective action under the FLSA on behalf of himself and the following collective:

All persons employed by Defendant, at any time since December 18, 2015, and through the entry of judgment in this case (the "Collective Action Period") who worked as loss prevention detectives, loss prevention associates, and all other similarly situated hourly employees (the "Collective Action Members").

- 29. A collective action is appropriate in this circumstance because Plaintiff and the Collective Action Members are similarly situated, in that they were all subjected to Defendant's illegal policy of failing to pay overtime for work performed in excess of 40 hours per week. As a result of this policy, Plaintiff and the Collective Action Members did not receive the legally-required overtime payments for all hours worked in excess of 40 hours per week.
- 30. The exact number of employees who have suffered the same unpaid overtime wage injury as Plaintiff, and have yet to receive redress is unknown at this time, but the number is estimated to be at least 20 other employees because there are 20 other similar loss prevention detectives in the district where Plaintiff works.

# FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT – UNPAID OVERTIME

- 31. Plaintiffs, on behalf of himself, the Collective Action Members, and the Class Members, repeat and reallege each and every allegation of the preceding paragraphs hereof with the same force and effect as though fully set forth herein.
- 32. As a result of Defendant's failure to compensate its employees, including Plaintiff and Collective Action Members, at a rate of not less than one and one-half times their regular rate of pay for work performed in excess of 40 hours per week, Defendant has violated and continue to violate the FLSA, 29 U.S.C. § 201 *et seq.*, including 29 U.S.C. § 207(a)(1) and 215(a), for which Plaintiff and the Collective Action Members are entitled to relief pursuant to 29 U.S.C. 216(b).
- 33. Defendant has have failed to pay overtime to these hourly employees, with no colorable argument as to why these workers are exempt. This constitutes a willful violation of the FLSA within the meaning of 29 U.S.C. § 255(a).
- 34. The failure to pay overtime has caused Plaintiff to suffer lost wages and interest thereon. Plaintiff and Collective Action Members are entitled to recover from Defendant's his unpaid overtime compensation, liquidated damages, attorney's

fees, and costs and disbursements of the action pursuant to 29 U.S.C. § 216(b).

**PRAYER FOR RELIEF** 

Therefore, Plaintiff respectfully requests that this Court grant the following

relief:

a. An order tolling the relevant statutes of limitations;

b. An order declaring that Defendant violated the FLSA;

c. An award of unpaid overtime wages due under the FLSA;

d. An award of liquidated and/or punitive damages as a result of Defendant's willful

failure to pay overtime wages

e. An award of prejudgment and post-judgment interest;

f. An award of costs and expenses of this action together with attorney's fees;

g. Such other and further relief and this Court deems just and proper.

**DEMAND FOR TRIAL BY JURY** 

Pursuant to Rule 38(b) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, Plaintiff

demands a trial by jury on all questions of fact raised by the complaint.

Dated: December 18, 2017

Respectfully submitted,

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s/ Brandon A. Thomas BRANDON A. THOMAS GA BAR NO.: 742344

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JS44 (Rev. 6/2017 NDGA)

#### **CIVIL COVER SHEET**

The JS44 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 is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket record. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ATTACHED)

I. (a) PLAINTIFF(S)	DEFENDANT(S)	
Aaron Mills, Individually and on Behalf of All Those Sin Situated	nilarly T.J. Maxx, Inc.	
(b) COUNTY OF RESIDENCE OF FIRST LISTED PLAINTIFF Paulding (EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)	COUNTY OF RESIDENCE OF FIRST LISTED  DEFENDANT DeKalb  (IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY)  NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED	
(c) ATTORNEYS (FIRM NAME, ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUMBER, A	ATTORNEYS (IF KNOWN)	
The Law Offices of Brandon A. Thomas, PC 1800 Peachtree Street, Suite 300 Atlanta, GA 30309 (404) 343-2441 brandon@brandonthomaslaw.com		
II. BASIS OF JURISDICTION (PLACE AN "X" IN ONE BOX ONLY)	III. CITIZENSHIP OF PRINCIPAL PARTIES  (PLACE AN "X" IN ONE BOX FOR PLAINTIFF AND ONE BOX FOR DEFENDANT)  (FOR DIVERSITY CASES ONLY)	
1 U.S. GOVERNMENT PLAINTIFF  1 U.S. GOVERNMENT PLACE OF BUSINESS IN THIS STATE  1 U.S. GOVERNMENT PLACE OF BUSINESS IN THIS STATE  1 U.S. GOVERNMENT PLACE OF BUSINESS IN THIS STATE  1 U.S. GOVERNMENT PLAINTIFF  1 U.S. GOVERNMENT PLACE OF BUSINESS IN THIS STATE  1 U.S. GOVERNMENT PLAINTIFF  2 U.S. GOVERNM		
IV. ORIGIN (PLACE AN "X "IN ONE BOX ONLY)  1 ORIGINAL PROCEEDING STATE COURT 3 REMANDED FROM APPELLATE COURT 4 REINSTATED OR REOPENED 5 ANOTHER DISTRICT (Specify District) 6 LITIGATION TRANSFER 7 FROM MAGISTRATE JUDGE 1 TRANSFER 7 JUDGMENT		
MULTIDISTRICT 8 LITIGATION - DIRECT FILE		
V. CAUSE OF ACTION (CITE THE U.S. CIVIL STATUTE UNDER WHICH YOU ARE FILING AND WRITE A BRIEF STATEMENT OF CAUSE - DO NOT CITE JURISDICTIONAL STATUTES UNLESS DIVERSITY)  Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), 29 U.S.C. §§ 201 et seq.  Defendants have failed to pay overtime wages for all hours worked.		
(IF COMPLEX, CHECK REASON BELOW)		
1. Unusually large number of parties.	6. Problems locating or preserving evidence	
2. Unusually large number of claims or defenses.	7. Pending parallel investigations or actions by government.	
3. Factual issues are exceptionally complex		
4. Greater than normal volume of evidence.	9. Need for discovery outside United States boundaries.	
5. Extended discovery period is needed.	10. Existence of highly technical issues and proof.	
CONTINUED ON REVERSE		
FOR OFFICE USE ONLY		
RECEIPT # AMOUNT \$	APPLYING IFP MAG. JUDGE (IFP) NATURE OF SUIT CAUSE OF ACTION	
(Referral)	***************************************	

#### VI. NATURE OF SUIT (PLACE AN "X" IN ONE BOX ONLY) SOCIAL SECURITY - "0" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK CONTRACT - "0" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK 150 RECOVERY OF OVERPAYMENT & ENFORCEMENT OF JUDGMENT CIVIL RIGHTS - "4" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK 440 OTHER CIVIL RIGHTS 441 VOTING 442 EMPLOYMENT 861 HIA (1395ff) 862 BLACK LUNG (923) 863 DIWC (405(g)) ☐ 152 RECOVERY OF DEFAULTED STUDENT LOANS (Excl. Veterans) 153 RECOVERY OF OVERPAYMENT OF 443 HOUSING/ ACCOMMODATIONS 445 AMERICANS with DISABILITIES - Employment 863 DIWW (405(g) VETERAN'S BENEFITS 446 AMERICANS with DISABILITIES - Other 864 SSID TITLE XVI CONTRACT - "4" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK 110 INSURANCE 120 MARINE 130 MILLER ACT 140 NEGOTIABLE INSTRUMENT 151 MEDICARE ACT 160 STOCKHOLDERS' SUITS 190 OTHER CONTRACT 448 EDUCATION 865 RSI (405(g)) FEDERAL TAX SUITS - "4" MONTHS DISCOVERY IMMIGRATION - "0" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK 462 NATURALIZATION APPLICATION 465 OTHER IMMIGRATION ACTIONS 870 TAXES (U.S. Plaintiff or Defendant) 871 IRS - THIRD PARTY 26 USC 7609 PRISONER PETITIONS - "0" MONTHS DISCOVERY OTHER STATUTES - "4" MONTHS DISCOVERY 190 OTHER CONTRACT 195 CONTRACT PRODUCT LIABILITY 463 HABEAS CORPUS- Alien Detainee 375 FALSE CLAIMS ACT 196 FRANCHISE 376 Qui Tam 31 USC 3729(a) 400 STATE REAPPORTIONMENT 510 MOTIONS TO VACATE SENTENCE 530 HABEAS CORPUS 535 HABEAS CORPUS DEATH PENALTY 210 LAND CONDEMNATION 220 FORECLOSURE 230 RENT REAL PROPERTY - "4" MONTHS DISCOVERY 430 BANKS AND BANKING 540 MANDAMUS & OTHER 550 CIVIL RIGHTS - Filed Pro se 450 COMMERCE/ICC RATES/ETC. 450 COMMERCE/ICC RATES/ETC. 460 DEPORTATION 470 RACKETEER INFLUENCED AND CORRUPT 220 FORECLOSURE 230 RENT LEASE & EJECTMENT 555 PRISON CONDITION(S) - Filed Pro se 560 CIVIL DETAINEE: CONDITIONS OF ORGANIZATIONS 480 CONSUMER CREDIT 240 TORTS TO LAND 245 TORT PRODUCT LIABILITY CONFINEMENT 480 CONSUMER CREDIT 490 CABLE/SATELLITE TV 890 OTHER STATUTORY ACTIONS 891 AGRICULTURAL ACTS 893 ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS 290 ALL OTHER REAL PROPERTY PRISONER PETITIONS - "4" MONTHS DISCOVERY TORTS - PERSONAL INJURY - "4" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK 310 AIRPLANE 315 AIRPLANE PRODUCT LIABILITY 320 ASSAULT, LIBEL & SLANDER 340 FEDERAL EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY 340 MARINE 345 MARINE PRODUCT LIABILITY 350 MOTOR VEHICLE 355 MOTOR VEHICLE 550 CTVIL RIGHTS - Filed by Counsel 555 PRISON CONDITION(S) - Filed by Counsel 895 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 899 ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES ACT / FORFEITURE/PENALTY - "4" MONTHS DISCOVERY REVIEW OR APPEAL OF AGENCY DECISION 950 CONSTITUTIONALITY OF STATE STATUTES TRACK 625 DRUG RELATED SEIZURE OF PROPERTY 21 TIRC 881 OTHER STATUTES - "8" MONTHS DISCOVERY ☐ 690 OTHER 350 MOTOR VEHICLE 355 MOTOR VEHICLE PRODUCT LIABILITY 410 ANTITRUST OR - "4" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK 7 710 FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT 720 LABOR/MGMT. RELATIONS 850 SECURITIES / COMMODITIES / EXCHANGE 360 OTHER PERSONAL INJURY 362 PERSONAL INJURY - MEDICAL OTHER STATUTES - "0" MONTHS DISCOVERY MALPRACTICE 365 PERSONAL INJURY - PRODUCT LIABILITY 740 RAILWAY LABOR ACT 751 FAMILY and MEDICAL LEAVE ACT 790 OTHER LABOR LITIGATION 896 ARBITRATION 367 PERSONAL INJURY - HEALTH CARE/ PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCT LIABILITY (Confirm / Vacate / Order / Modify) 791 EMPL. RET. INC. SECURITY ACT 368 ASBESTOS PERSONAL INJURY PRODUCT LIABILITY PROPERTY RIGHTS - "4" MONTHS DISCOVERY \* PLEASE NOTE DISCOVERY TORTS - PERSONAL PROPERTY - "4" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK 370 OTHER FRAUD 371 TRUTH IN LENDING 820 COPYRIGHTS 820 COPYRIGHTS 840 TRADEMARK TRACK FOR EACH CASE TYPE. SEE LOCAL RULE 26.3 PROPERTY RIGHTS - "8" MONTHS DISCOVERY 380 OTHER PERSONAL PROPERTY DAMAGE 385 PROPERTY DAMAGE PRODUCT LIABILITY 830 PATENT 835 PATENT-ABBREVIATED NEW DRUG BANKRUPTCY - "0" MONTHS DISCOVERY TRACK 422 APPEAL 28 USC 158 APPLICATIONS (ANDA) - a/k/a Hatch-Waxman cases 423 WITHDRAWAL 28 USC 157 VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT: CHECK IF CLASS ACTION UNDER F.R.Civ.P. 23 DEMAND \$ JURY DEMAND $\square$ YES $\square$ NO (CHECK YES ONLY IF DEMANDED IN COMPLAINT) VIII. RELATED/REFILED CASE(S) IF ANY DOCKET NO. CIVIL CASES ARE DEEMED RELATED IF THE PENDING CASE INVOLVES: (CHECK APPROPRIATE BOX) ☐ 1. PROPERTY INCLUDED IN AN EARLIER NUMBERED PENDING SUIT. □ 2. SAME ISSUE OF FACT OR ARISES OUT OF THE SAME EVENT OR TRANSACTION INCLUDED IN AN EARLIER NUMBERED PENDING SUIT. 3. VALIDITY OR INFRINGEMENT OF THE SAME PATENT, COPYRIGHT OR TRADEMARK INCLUDED IN AN EARLIER NUMBERED PENDING SUIT. 4. APPEALS ARISING OUT OF THE SAME BANKRUPTCY CASE AND ANY CASE RELATED THERETO WHICH HAVE BEEN DECIDED BY THE SAME BANKRUPTCY JUDGE. ☐ 5. REPETITIVE CASES FILED BY PRO SE LITIGANTS. ☐ 6. COMPANION OR RELATED CASE TO CASE(S) BEING SIMULTANEOUSLY FILED (INCLUDE ABBREVIATED STYLE OF OTHER CASE(S)): ☐ 7. EITHER SAME OR ALL OF THE PARTIES AND ISSUES IN THIS CASE WERE PREVIOUSLY INVOLVED IN CASE NO. DISMISSED. This case IS IS IS NOT (check one box) SUBSTANTIALLY THE SAME CASE. , WHICH WAS

SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY OF RECORD

### **ClassAction.org**

This complaint is part of ClassAction.org's searchable class action lawsuit database and can be found in this post: Former Loss Prevention Detective Pegs T.J. Maxx with Unpaid Overtime Lawsuit in Georgia