1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	LAW OFFICE OF KYLE GURWELL 7755 Center Ave Ste 1100 Huntington Beach CA 92647 Telephone: (714) 372-2245 kng@lawofficekg.com  Counsel for Plaintiff  UNITED STATES DIS CENTRAL DISTRICT OF WESTERN DISTRICT OF The County of the County of the County of the Central District o	OF CALIFORNIA				
9	JOSEPH MUSHARBASH, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated,  Plaintiff,	No. 2:22-cv-7963				
.2 .3 .4	- against - SONY ELECTRONICS INC., Defendant.	CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT <u>DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL</u>				
.5	Plaintiff Joseph Musharbash ("Plaintiff") all	eges upon information and belief, except for				
6	allegations pertaining to Plaintiff, which are based on personal knowledge, as follows:					
.7	1. Sony Electronics Inc. ("Defendant" or "Sony") markets, manufactures, labels, and					
.8	designs cameras and lenses under the Sony brand ("F	Product").				
.9	I. SONY CAMERAS AND LENSES					
20	2. Sony is the market leader in the sale	e of cameras and lenses, above rivals such as				
21	Canon and Nikon.					
22	3. The most popular camera amongst p	rofessional and hobbyist photographers is the				
23	full-frame mirrorless interchangeable-lens camera.					
24	4. Interchangeable lenses provide expa	nded image-capture capabilities to the same				
25	camera.					
26	5. While Sony has long been a leader in	5. While Sony has long been a leader in digital imaging technology, it did not become				
27	the leading camera maker overnight.	the leading camera maker overnight.				
28	6. Around 2006, it acquired camera ma	nufacturer Minolta, and slowly integrated its				
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technology with Sony camera.

- 7. However, Sony cameras lacked the numerous lens options available to Canon and Nikon users.
- 8. Sony quickly developed a range of more than 40 advanced lenses, under its own brand and with well-known third parties such as Zeiss.
  - 9. The G Master ("GM" or "Gold Master") lenses represent Sony's top-of-the-line lens.







10. According to Sony's website:

[T]hey are designed and built to meet the rigorous requirements of professionals both in the field and in the studio. They are heavily weather sealed for use outdoors, they have the best available lens coatings to minimize flare and maximize contrast, and they are build using the latest materials to minimize weight despite the often complex optical formulae.

- 11. The G Master lenses are made to satisfy professional requirements, through imaging, speed, efficiency, and reliability.
- 12. The G Master lenses are known for their reliability because they are more resistant to dust and water.

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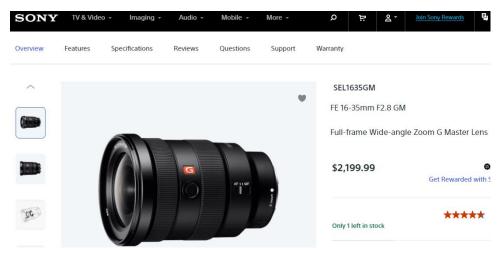
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- By incorporating advanced actuator technology, the lenses can operate faster and 13. focus with greater precision when the camera is in manual or auto mode.
- 14. Professional photographers often prefer one brand of camera to another, which means they will buy several lenses from the same company for shooting.
- 15. Lenses are just one type of peripheral sold to camera users, in addition to flashes and mounts.
- Advanced lenses like the G Master often cost more than the cameras to which they 16. are mounted.
  - 17. The prices for the G Master range from \$1,500 to \$2,800.
- 18. The SEL1635GM F2.8 lens was released in May 2017 and is currently sold for \$2,199.99 by Sony, and even more from third-parties.



- 19. One of the key features of the SEL1635GM F2.8 is that is the same weight as F4 lenses sold by competitors.
- 20. This weight is significant because a photographer may use the camera for long periods of time, making the difference in weight noticeable.

#### II. **RECALL OF SEL1635GM**

- 21. Companies issue recalls of products for reasons including safety risk and defective design.
  - 22. Recalls are an important way that companies can address product issues they are not

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to customers and the public.

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- 35. Each Sony camera and lens contains a unique serial number.
- 36. These serial numbers are affixed via a small sticker plate, shown below by the number 1807205 attached to the lens base of the SEL1635GM lens.



37. Plaintiff's SEL1635GM is shown below, and the space where the serial number sticker is supposed to be is empty.



- 38. Since the serial number is on a sticker affixed to the lens, it is at significant risk of
  - Cameras and lenses are handled intensively by their users.
- This causes dirt, moisture, and oils, from the skin and environment, to contact the outer parts of the lens, which is where the serial number sticker is located.
- Cameras and lenses must be able to withstand the constant oils and moisture from
  - Over time, the serial number stickers on Sony lenses have a high tendency to fall off.
- Should that happen, users of Sony lenses will not be able to receive product support, servicing, warranty coverage, nor participate in any recalls, because Sony requires the user to
- If a serial number on a Sony lens falls off, law enforcement will not be able to identify
  - The absence of a serial number may prevent users from insuring their lenses.
  - Sony's application of serial numbers is an outlier among leading lens manufacturers.
- For instance, competitor companies, such as Canon, Zeiss, Loxia, Pentax, Batis, Nikon, and Fuji, either engrave or etch the serial numbers onto the barrel or mount of their lenses.
- Where other companies may use a plate or sticker, it is situated in a sunken location
- The application of the serial numbers through stickers makes Sony lenses more vulnerable to theft, because criminals know they can easily remove the serial numbers.
- They can do this without having to file down the serial number which would reveal
- Prospective buyers of stolen lenses will not know the serial number sticker had been intentionally removed, nor where a serial number was affixed on the lens.
- The cost of affixing a serial number by a sticker is less than etching or engraving,
  - 53. The serial numbers on Sony lenses can become detached within six months of

intensive usage.

- 54. Sony relies solely on the serial number sticker for warranty verification and administering recalls, which prevents lens owners from receiving these services.
- 55. The absence of a serial number prevents owners from returning their items within the allotted time period.

## **PARTIES**

- 56. Plaintiff is a resident of Pomona, Los Angeles County, California.
- 57. During the relevant statutes of limitations for each cause of action, between October and November 2021, Plaintiff purchased the Product for personal and household use, in reliance on the representations it was not defective, due to design or manufacture, and that if it was, Sony would be able to identify it through a permanent marking in the form of a serial number to provide servicing.
- 58. Plaintiff purchased the Product over other comparable lenses because he believed it would operate without defects of design and manufacture, and that if it suffered from such defects, Sony would be able to identify the Product and perform necessary servicing.
- 59. Plaintiff sought to purchase a lens without design defects that would prevent the camera to which it was attached from operating correctly, including preventing the rear screen of the camera from displaying correctly.
- 60. After Plaintiff purchased and attempted to use the Product, he experienced display issues with the rear screen of his camera due to the lens.
- 61. Plaintiff contacted Sony customer support, who confirmed that what he experienced was consistent with the reasons which prompted the recall.
- 62. The representative asked Plaintiff to provide the serial number, and he responded that it was not affixed or otherwise indicated on the lens.
- 63. Defendant's representative did not question or have reason to doubt that Plaintiff's lens was anything but an authentic, legitimate Sony lens, but informed him that company policy was that only lenses containing verified serial numbers would be accepted under the recall.
  - 64. Plaintiff did not expect the serial number to not be permanently affixed to the Product

represent are citizens of different states.

- 76. Sales of the Product along with statutory, punitive and other monetary damages exceed \$5 million during the applicable statutes of limitations, exclusive of interest and costs.
- 77. Venue is in this District because a substantial part of the events or omissions giving rise to the claim occurred here, including Plaintiff's purchase and experiences.
- 78. This Court has personal jurisdiction over Defendant because it transacts business within California and sells its products to consumers from thousands of stores within California.

### **Intradistrict Assignment**

- 79. Pursuant to General Order No. 21-01, In the Matter of Assignment of Cases and Duties to District Judges, and Rule I.B.1.a.(1)(c) ("Non-Removed Cases Not Involving the United States"), this Action should be assigned to the Western Division.
- 80. This assignment is because 50% or more of the plaintiffs who reside in this District do not reside in the Southern or Eastern Division.

# CLASS ACTION ALLEGATIONS

- 81. Plaintiff seeks certification under Fed. R. Civ. P. 23 of the following class:
  - **National Class:** All persons in the United States who purchased the Product during the statutes of limitations for each cause of action alleged (the "Class").
- 82. Excluded from the Class are: (a) Defendant, Defendant's board members, executive-level officers, and attorneys, and immediate family members of any of the foregoing persons; (b) governmental entities; (c) the Court, the Court's immediate family, and the Court staff; and (d) any person that timely and properly excludes himself or herself from the Class in accordance with Court-approved procedures.
- 83. Common questions of issues, law, and fact predominate and include whether Defendant's representations were and are misleading and if Plaintiff and class members are entitled to damages.
- 84. Plaintiff's claims and basis for relief are typical to other members because all were subjected to the same unfair, misleading, and deceptive representations, omissions, and actions.
  - 85. Plaintiff is an adequate representative because his interests do not conflict with other

1	members.			
2	86. No individual inquiry is necessary since the focus is only on Defendant's pr	actices		
3	and the class is definable and ascertainable.			
4	87. Individual actions would risk inconsistent results, be repetitive and are impr	actical		
5	to justify, as the claims are modest relative to the scope of the harm.			
6	88. Plaintiff's counsel is competent and experienced in complex class action lit	gation		
7	and intends to protect class members' interests adequately and fairly.			
8	<u>CLAIMS FOR RELIEF</u>			
9 10	FIRST CLAIM Violation of California's Unfair Competition Law, Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 17200 et seq.			
11	89. Plaintiff incorporates all preceding paragraphs.			
12	90. California's Unfair Competition Law, Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 17200	et seq.		
13	("UCL"), prohibits any "unlawful, unfair or fraudulent business act or practice."			
14	91. Defendant's conduct constitutes an "unfair" and/or "fraudulent" business prac	tice, as		
15	set forth in California Business & Professions Code §§ 17200-17208.			
16	92. Defendant's conduct is "unlawful" because it violates the California's	False		
17	Advertising Law, Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 17500 et seq. ("FAL"), and California's Cons	sumers		
18	Legal Remedies Act, Cal. Civ. Code § 1750 et seq. ("CLRA").			
19	93. Defendant's conduct was and continues to be unfair and fraudulent because i	t made		
20	materially false representations and omissions about the Product's quality, as this relates to its ability			
21	to be serviced or repaired after purchase.			
22	94. Defendant made express and implied representations that the Produc	t was		
23	manufactured in accordance with industry standards, which includes affixing a serial n	umber		
24	through etching or engraving.			
25	95. Defendant is aware that the representations and omissions it has made about	out the		
26	Product's quality and workmanship extend beyond their immediate functionality and include the			
27	ability of the purchasers to receive required and necessary services and repair, which they are			
28	entitled to.  10			

1	consumers about the extent to which it will stand behind the Product in the event a defect of design				
2	or manufacture is discovered.				
3	108.	In reliance on this false and misleading advertising, Plaintiff purchased and used the			
4	Product with	Product without knowledge Defendant would not provide post-purchase servicing in the high			
5	likelihood the serial number became detached.				
6	109.	Defe	ndant knew or should have known that its representations and omissions were		
7	likely to deceive consumers.				
8	110.	Plain	tiff and Class Members seek injunctive and equitable relief, restitution, and an		
9	order for the disgorgement of the funds by which Defendant was unjustly enriched.				
10	FOURTH CLAIM				
11	Violation of California's Consumers Legal Remedies Act, Cal. Civ. Code § 1750 et seq.				
12	111.	The C	CLRA adopts a statutory scheme prohibiting deceptive practices in connection		
13	with the conduct of a business providing goods, property, or services primarily for personal, family,				
14	or household purposes.				
15	112.	Defendant's policies, acts, and practices were designed to, and did, result in the			
16	purchase and use of the Product primarily for personal, family, or household purposes, and violated				
17	and continues to violate sections of the CLRA, including:				
18		1.	Civil Code § 1770(a)(5), because Defendant represented that the		
19		1.	Product had characteristics, attributes, features, capabilities, uses,		
20			benefits, and qualities it does not have;		
21			benefits, and quanties it does not have,		
22		2.	Civil Code § 1770(a)(7), because Defendant represented that the		
23			Product was of a particular standard, quality, or grade, which it is not;		
24		3.	Civil Code § 1770(a)(9), because Defendant advertised the Product		
25		3.	with an intent not to sell the Product as advertised; and		
26			an intent not to son the reduct as acrondoc, and		
27		4.	Civil Code § 1770(a)(16), because Defendant represented the Product		
28			had been supplied in accordance with its previous representations,		
			CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT		

1 when it was not. 2 113. Pursuant to the provisions of Cal. Civ. Code § 1782(a), Plaintiff will send a CLRA Notice to Defendant concurrently with the filing of this action or shortly thereafter, which details 3 and includes these violations of the CLRA, demand correction of these violations, and provide the 4 5 opportunity to correct these business practices. If Defendant does not correct these business practices, Plaintiff will amend or seek 114. 6 leave to amend the Complaint to add claims for monetary relief, including restitution and actual 7 8 damages under the CLRA. 9 115. If Defendant does not correct these business practices, Plaintiff will request 10 injunctive relief and ask that this Court enjoin Defendant from continuing to employ the unlawful methods, acts and practices alleged herein pursuant to Cal. Civ. Code § 1780. 11 12 FIFTH CLAIM **Breaches of Express Warranty**, 13 Implied Warranty of Merchantability/Fitness for a Particular Purpose and Magnuson Moss Warranty Act, 15 U.S.C. §§ 2301, et seq. 14 The Product was manufactured, identified, marketed, and sold by Defendant and 116. 15 expressly and impliedly warranted to Plaintiff that it was not designed and manufactured 16 defectively, and that if it was, post-sale servicing or a recall would correct these issues. 17 Defendant directly marketed the Product to Plaintiff through its advertisements and 117. 18 marketing, through various forms of media, on the packaging, in print circulars, direct mail, product 19 descriptions distributed to resellers, and targeted digital advertising. 20 Defendant knew the product attributes that potential customers like Plaintiff were 118. 21 seeking and developed its marketing and labeling to directly meet those needs and desires. 22 119. Defendant's representations about the Product were conveyed in writing and 23 promised it would be defect-free, and Plaintiff understood this meant that it would be subject to 24 post-sale servicing and manufacturer recalls in the event of discovery of defects. 25 120. Defendant's representations affirmed and promised that the Product would be subject 26 to post-sale servicing and manufacturer recalls in the event of discovery of defects. 27 Defendant described the Product so Plaintiff believed it would be subject to post-sale 121. 28

repaired, insured, and located in the event it would require post-sale servicing, be subject 14

Defendant promised and expressly warranted that the Product could be serviced,

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131.

1	manufacturer recalls in the event of discovery of defects, and became missing or was stolen.				
2	132.	As a direct and proximate result of Defendant's breach, Plaintiff and Class Members			
3	suffered economic damages, including costly repairs, loss of use, replacement costs, loss in value				
4	and resale value of the Product.				
5	SIXTH CLAIM				
6	Violation of the Magnusson-Moss Warranty Act, 15 U.S.C. §§ 2301 et seq. ("MMWA")				
7	133.	The Product is a "consumer product" within the meaning of the MMWA, 15 U.S.C.			
8	§ 2301(1).				
9	134.	Defendant's express warranties are written warranties within the meaning of 15			
10	U.S.C. § 2301(6).				
11	135.	The Product's implied warranties are accounted for under 15 U.S.C. § 2301(7).			
12	136.	Defendant breached its warranties with Plaintiff and Class Members.			
13	137.	The Products owned by Plaintiff and Class Members share common defects in that			
14	they are unable to be serviced, repaired, insured or located in the event their serial numbers become				
15	detached.				
16	138.	Prior to the filing of this Complaint, Plaintiff notified Defendant of these defects			
17	through calling its representatives, and was informed his Product could not be serviced or repaired				
18	due to the missing serial number.				
19	139.	The amount in controversy for the Plaintiff's and Class Members' individual claims			
20	exceeds \$25.				
21	140.	The total amount in controversy of this action in sum exceeds \$50,000, exclusive of			
22	interest and costs, computed on the basis of all claims to be determined in this lawsuit.				
23	141.				
24		<u>SEVENTH CLAIM</u> Breach of Implied Warranty of Merchantability			
25		and Fitness for a Particular Purpose			
26	142.	Defendant markets its products as superior in quality and dependability to its			
27	competitors,	and touts its post-purchase servicing and repair of the Products as a reason to buy Sony			
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CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT *Musharbash v. Sony Electronics Inc.*, No. 2:22-cv-7963

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Counsel for Plaintiff and the Proposed Class

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# **ClassAction.org**

This complaint is part of ClassAction.org's searchable class action lawsuit database and can be found in this post: <u>Sony Hit with Class Action Over 2019 G Master Camera Lens Recall</u>