

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK**

ABRAHAM SHREM, on behalf of himself
and all others similarly situated,

Plaintiffs,

-against-

ARCADIA RECOVERY BUREAU, LLC

Defendant.

CIVIL ACTION

**CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT
AND
DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL**

Plaintiff ABRAHAM SHREM (hereinafter, “Plaintiff”), a New York resident, brings this action complaint by and through his attorneys, Daniel Cohen, PLLC, against Defendant ARCADIA RECOVERY BUREAU, LLC (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 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 under 28 U.S.C. § 1331, 15 U.S.C. § 1692 *et seq.* and 28 U.S.C. § 2201. If applicable, the Court also 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).

NATURE OF THE ACTION

5. Plaintiff brings this class action on behalf of a class of New York consumers seeking redress for Defendant's illegal practices, in connection with the collection of a debt allegedly owed by Plaintiff in violation of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1692, *et seq.* ("FDCPA").
6. Defendant's actions violated § 1692 *et seq.* of Title 15 of the United States Code, commonly referred to as the "FDCPA," which prohibits debt collectors from engaging in abusive, deceptive and unfair practices.
7. Plaintiff is seeking damages, and declaratory and injunctive relief.

PARTIES

8. Plaintiff is a natural person and a resident of the State of New York, and is a "Consumer" as defined by 15 U.S.C. §1692(a)(3).
9. Defendant is a collection agency with an office maintained in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
10. 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.

11. Defendant is a “debt collector,” as defined under the FDCPA under 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(6).

CLASS ALLEGATIONS

12. Plaintiff brings claims, pursuant to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure (hereinafter “FRCP”)

Rule 23, individually and on behalf of the following consumer class (the “Class”):

- All New York consumers who received a collection letter from Defendant attempting to collect an obligation owed to or allegedly owed to Weill Cornell Medical College (hereinafter “Cornell”), that contains the alleged violation arising from Defendant's violation of 15 U.S.C. §1692e, *et seq.*
- The Class period begins one year to the filing of this Action.

13. The Class satisfies all the requirements of Rule 23 of the FRCP for maintaining a class action:

- Upon information and belief, the Class is so numerous that joinder of all members is impracticable because there are hundreds and/or thousands of persons whom Defendant has improperly denied the right to dispute a debt in violation of specific provisions of the FDCPA.
- There are questions of law and fact which are common to the Class and which predominate over questions affecting any individual Class member. These common questions of law and fact include, without limitation:
 - a. Whether Defendant violated various provisions of the FDCPA;
 - b. Whether Plaintiff and the Class have been injured by Defendant’s conduct;
 - c. Whether Plaintiff and the Class have sustained damages and are entitled to restitution as a result of Defendant’s wrongdoing and if so, what is the proper measure and appropriate statutory formula to be applied in determining such damages and restitution; and

d. Whether Plaintiff and the Class are entitled to declaratory and/or injunctive relief.

- Plaintiff's claims are typical of the Class, which all arise from the same operative facts and are based on the same legal theories.
- Plaintiff has no interest adverse or antagonistic to the interest of the other members of the Class.
- Plaintiff will fairly and adequately protect the interest of the Class and has retained experienced and competent attorneys to represent the Class.
- A Class Action is superior to other methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of the claims herein asserted. Plaintiff anticipates that no unusual difficulties are likely to be encountered in the management of this class action.
- A Class Action will permit large numbers of similarly situated persons to prosecute their common claims in a single forum simultaneously and without the duplication of effort and expense that numerous individual actions would engender. Class treatment will also permit the adjudication of relatively small claims by many Class members who could not otherwise afford to seek legal redress for the wrongs complained of herein. Absent a Class Action, class members will continue to suffer losses of statutory protected rights as well as monetary damages. If Defendant's conduct is allowed to proceed without remedy they will continue to reap and retain the proceeds of their ill-gotten gains.
- Defendant has acted on grounds generally applicable to the entire Class, thereby making appropriate final injunctive relief or corresponding declaratory relief with respect to the Class as a whole.

ALLEGATIONS OF FACT

14. Plaintiff repeats, reiterates and incorporates the allegations contained in paragraphs numbered “1” through “13” herein with the same force and effect as if the same were set forth at length herein.
15. Upon information and belief, Defendant, on behalf of a third-party, began efforts to collect an alleged consumer debt from Plaintiff.
16. Defendant was attempting to collect on Plaintiff’s purportedly overdue account with Cornell.
17. On or about April 26, 2017, Plaintiff received a collection letter (the “Letter”) from Defendant.
See Exhibit A.
18. The Letter states in pertinent part: The important rights included below apply to each account individually and you have the right to dispute any or all of the accounts included in this notice.
19. Thereafter, on or about July 7, 2017, Plaintiff called Defendant to discuss the alleged debt.
20. On the line with Plaintiff was his representative, whom he authorized to discuss the alleged debt on behalf of Plaintiff (hereinafter collectively referred to as “Plaintiff”).
21. After coming to a disagreement as to the amount owed, Plaintiff stated that he disagreed with the balance and wanted to dispute the debt, to which Defendant hastily responded, “You have no valid dispute.”
22. When Plaintiff sought to confirm whether she could dispute the debt over the phone, Defendant explicitly stated, “No, there is no dispute on this amount...that is not a dispute.”
23. As set forth in the following Counts Defendant violated the FDCPA.

First Count
15 U.S.C. §1692e et seq.
False and Misleading Representations

24. Plaintiff repeats, reiterates and incorporates the allegations contained in paragraphs numbered “1” through “23” herein with the same force and effect as if the same were set forth at length herein.
25. Defendant’s debt collection efforts attempted and/or directed towards Plaintiff violated various

provisions of the FDCPA, including but not limited to § 1692(e) by using false, deceptive, and misleading representations in connection with the collection of a debt.

26. Here, Plaintiff repeatedly stated that he disagreed with the balance and wished to dispute the account.

27. Nonetheless, despite the Letter stating that Plaintiff had “the right to dispute...the account,” when Plaintiff attempted to dispute said account Defendant assured Plaintiff that he could not dispute the debt because “there is no dispute on this amount...that is not a dispute.”

28. Defendant unilaterally determined that Plaintiff could not dispute his account.

29. As the Second Circuit opined, “a debt collector cannot require a consumer to have a valid reason or to submit particular types of documentation in order to dispute a debt.” *DeSantis v. Computer Credit, Inc.*, 269 F.3d 159, 162 (2d Cir. 2001).

30. Plaintiff was misled into believing that there was no way to dispute this debt over the phone, without a valid reason, where it stated to Plaintiff that “there is no dispute on this amount...that is not a dispute.”

31. Nor does the FDCPA require the consumer to provide any reason at all in order to dispute a debt.¹

32. Upon information and belief, Defendant and its employees, wrongfully stated to Plaintiff that he could not orally dispute the debt with Defendant absent a valid reason.

33. Upon information and belief, Defendant and its employees, wrongfully stated to Plaintiff that he could only dispute a debt with a valid reason.

¹ *Sambor v. Omnia Credit Servs.*, 183 F. Supp. 2d 1234 (D. Haw. 2002), *Mendez v. M.R.S. Assoc.*, 2004 WL 1745779 *2 (N.D. Ill. Aug. 3, 2004). (A consumer is entitled to dispute the validity of a debt for a good reason, a bad reason, or no reason at all), *Whitten v. ARS National Servs. Inc.*, 2002 WL 1050320 *4 (N.D. 111 May 23, 2002). (Imposing a requirement that a consumer have a `valid' reason to dispute the debt is inconsistent with FDCPA), *Castro v. ARS National Servs., Inc.*, 2000 WL 264310 (S.D.N.Y. Mar. 8, 2000), *Frey v. Satter, Beyer & Spires.*, 1999 WL 301650 (N.D. Ill. May 3, 1999), *DeSantis v. Computer Credit, Inc.*, 269 f.3d 159 (2nd Cir. 2001), *Mejia v. Marauder Corporation.*, 2007 WL 806486 (N.D. Cal. 2007). (Unlawful to suggest that proof of payment required for dispute).

34. Defendant's employee who spoke with Plaintiff intended to speak said words to Plaintiff.
35. The acts and omissions of Defendant and its employees done in connection with efforts to collect a debt from Plaintiff were done intentionally and willfully.
36. Upon information and belief, Defendant and its employees intentionally and willfully violated the FDCPA and do so as a matter of pattern and practice by not letting any of the class members orally dispute the debt contrary to the FDCPA.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff demands judgment against Defendants as follows:

- (a) Declaring that this action is properly maintainable as a Class Action and certifying Plaintiff as Class representative and Daniel Cohen, PLLC, as Class Counsel;
- (b) Awarding Plaintiff and the Class statutory damages;
- (c) Awarding Plaintiff and the Class actual damages;
- (d) Awarding Plaintiff costs of this Action, including reasonable attorneys' fees and expenses;
- (e) Awarding pre-judgment interest and post-judgment interest; and
- (f) Awarding Plaintiff and the Class such other and further relief as this Court may deem just and proper.

Respectfully submitted,

By: /s/ Daniel Cohen
Daniel Cohen, Esq.
Daniel Cohen, PLLC
300 Cadman Plaza W, 12th floor
Brooklyn, New York 11201
Phone: (646) 645-8482
Fax: (347) 665-1545
Email: Dan@dccohen.com
Attorney for Plaintiff

DEMAND FOR TRIAL BY JURY

Pursuant to Rule 38 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, Plaintiff hereby requests a trial by jury on all issues so triable.

/s/ Daniel Cohen

Daniel Cohen, Esq.

Dated: Brooklyn, New York
September 12, 2017

CIVIL COVER SHEET

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.)

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS

ABRAHAM SHREM, on behalf of himself and all others similarly situated,

(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff (EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)

(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, Address, and Telephone Number)

DANIEL COHEN PLLC, 300 Cadman Plz W, 12 Fl, Brooklyn, NY 11201, (646) 645-8482

DEFENDANTS

ARCADIA RECOVERY BUREAU, LLC

County of Residence of First Listed Defendant (IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY)

NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED.

Attorneys (If Known)

II. BASIS OF JURISDICTION (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

- 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff, 2 U.S. Government Defendant, 3 Federal Question (U.S. Government Not a Party), 4 Diversity (Indicate Citizenship of Parties in Item III)

III. CITIZENSHIP OF PRINCIPAL PARTIES (Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintiff and One Box for Defendant)

Table with columns for Plaintiff (PTF) and Defendant (DEF) citizenship and business location (Citizen of This State, Citizen of Another State, Citizen or Subject of a Foreign Country, Incorporated or Principal Place of Business In This State, Incorporated and Principal Place of Business In Another State, Foreign Nation).

IV. NATURE OF SUIT (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

Large table with categories: CONTRACT, REAL PROPERTY, CIVIL RIGHTS, TORTS, PRISONER PETITIONS, FORFEITURE/PENALTY, LABOR, IMMIGRATION, BANKRUPTCY, SOCIAL SECURITY, FEDERAL TAX SUITS, OTHER STATUTES.

V. ORIGIN (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

- 1 Original Proceeding, 2 Removed from State Court, 3 Remanded from Appellate Court, 4 Reinstated or Reopened, 5 Transferred from Another District (specify), 6 Multidistrict Litigation - Transfer, 8 Multidistrict Litigation - Direct File

VI. CAUSE OF ACTION

Cite the U.S. Civil Statute under which you are filing (Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity): 15 USC 1692

Brief description of cause: Defendant violated the FDCPA

VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:

CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION UNDER RULE 23, F.R.Cv.P. DEMAND \$

CHECK YES only if demanded in complaint: JURY DEMAND: Yes No

VIII. RELATED CASE(S) IF ANY

(See instructions):

JUDGE DOCKET NUMBER

DATE 09/12/2017 SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY OF RECORD /s/ Daniel Cohen

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

RECEIPT # AMOUNT APPLYING IFP JUDGE MAG. JUDGE

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, DANIEL COHEN, counsel for PLAINTIFF, 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: Question of law rather than question of fact predominates

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT - FEDERAL RULES CIVIL PROCEDURE 7.1

Identify any parent corporation and any publicly held corporation that owns 10% or more of its stocks:

NONE

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)

- 1.) Is the civil action being filed in the Eastern District removed from a New York State Court located in Nassau or Suffolk County? NO
2.) 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? NO
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: /s/ Daniel Cohen

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

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

Eastern District of New York

ABRAHAM SHREM, on behalf of himself and all others similarly situated

Plaintiff(s)

v.

ARCADIA RECOVERY BUREAU, LLC

Defendant(s)

Civil Action No.

SUMMONS IN A CIVIL ACTION

To: (Defendant's name and address) ARCADIA RECOVERY BUREAU, LLC CORPORATION SERVICE COMPANY 80 STATE STREET ALBANY, NEW YORK 12207

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:

DANIEL COHEN PLLC 300 CADMAN PLAZA WEST 12TH FLOOR BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11201

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.

DOUGLAS C. PALMER CLERK OF COURT

Date:

Signature of Clerk or Deputy Clerk

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 *(name of individual and title, if any)* _____
was received by me on *(date)* _____ .

I personally served the summons on the individual 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 resides there,
on *(date)* _____ , and mailed a copy to the individual's last known address; or

I served the summons on *(name of individual)* _____ , who is
designated by law to accept service of process on behalf of *(name of organization)* _____
_____ on *(date)* _____ ; or

I returned the summons unexecuted because _____ ; 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.

Date: _____

Server's signature

Printed name and title

Server's address

Additional information regarding attempted service, etc:

PO Box 6768
Wyomissing, PA 19610
For return mail and correspondence only



Date	April 26, 2017
Creditor	WEILL CORNELL MEDICAL COLLEGE
Reference Number	[REDACTED] 4469
Balance Due	\$35.00



ALAN SHREM
[REDACTED]

You may pay your bill...

- 📄 Online at www.payarb.com
- ☎ By Phone at (866) 585-1564
- ✉ By Mail at the remit address below

MESSAGES

The subject account(s) has been placed with us for collection. The balance due as of the date of this letter is stated above.

Pamela Blimline
Director of Collections

The important rights included below apply to each account individually and you have the right to dispute any or all of the accounts included in this notice.

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 mail you a copy of such judgment or verification. If you request 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.

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

NOTICE: SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR IMPORTANT INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

Account Number	Balance	Date of Service
[REDACTED] 7416	35.00	01/09/17

PLEASE DETACH AND RETURN BOTTOM PORTION WITH YOUR PAYMENT

You may pay your bill...

- 📄 Online at www.payarb.com
- ☎ By Phone at (866) 585-1564
- ✉ By Mail at the remit address below

WE ACCEPT THE FOLLOWING:		
DISCOVER	VISA	FLEX CARD
MC	AMEX	FLEX CARD
NOTICE DATE	BALANCE	ARB ACCT #
April 26, 2017	\$35.00	[REDACTED] 469-W1
AMOUNT ENCLOSED		
\$		

REMIT TO:
ARCADIA RECOVERY BUREAU, LLC
PO BOX 70256
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19176-0256

When you provide a check as payment, you authorize us either to use information from your check to make a one-time electronic fund transfer from your account or to process the payment as a check transaction.

W1



0000035006

ClassAction.org

This complaint is part of ClassAction.org's searchable class action lawsuit database and can be found in this post: [Arcadia Recovery Hit with FDCPA Class Action](#)
