

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

Shlomo Silber, individually and on behalf of all others  
similarly situated;

Plaintiff,

-v.-

Paul J. Hooten & Associates, PLLC

John Does 1-25

Defendants.

Civil Action No: \_\_\_\_\_

**CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT**

**DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL**

Plaintiff Shlomo Silber (hereinafter, "Plaintiff" or "Silber" ), a New York resident, brings this Class Action Complaint by and through his attorneys, RC Law Group, PLLC, against Defendant Paul J. Hooten & Associates, PLLC (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 pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331, 15 U.S.C. § 1692 et. seq. and 28 U.S.C. § 2201. If applicable, the Court also has pendant 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 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 and injunctive relief.

### **PARTIES**

7. Plaintiff is a resident of the State of New York, County of Queens, residing at 73 37 141st Place, Flushing, NY 11367.

8. Paul J. Hooten & Associates, PLLC 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 5505 Nesconset Highway, Suite 203, Mount Sinai, NY 11766.

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

11. 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**

12. Plaintiffs bring this claim on behalf of the following case, pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 23(a) and 23(b)(3).

13. The Class consists of:

- a. all individuals with addresses in the State of New York;
- b. to whom Paul J. Hooten & Associates, PLLC sent a collection letter attempting to collect a consumer debt;
- c. wherein the subject line of the letter implies that legal action has been commenced against its recipient.
- 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.

14. 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.

15. Excluded from the Plaintiff Classes are the Defendants and all officers, 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.

16. There are questions of law and fact common to the Plaintiff Classes, 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 Exhibits A**, violate 15 U.S.C. §§ 1692e and 1692g.

17. The Plaintiffs' claims are typical of the class members, as all are based upon the same facts and legal theories. The Plaintiffs will fairly and adequately protect the interests of the Plaintiff Classes defined in this complaint. The Plaintiffs have retained counsel with experience in handling consumer lawsuits, complex legal issues, and class actions, and neither the Plaintiffs nor their attorneys have any interests, which might cause them not to vigorously pursue this action.

18. 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. **Numerosity:** The Plaintiffs are informed and believe, and on that basis allege, that the Plaintiff Classes defined above are so numerous that joinder of all members would be impractical.

- f. **Common Questions Predominate:** Common questions of law and fact exist as to all members of the Plaintiff Classes 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 § 1692e and §1692g.
- g. **Typicality:** The Plaintiff's claims are typical of the claims of the class members. The Plaintiffs and all members of the Plaintiff Classes have claims arising out of the Defendants' common uniform course of conduct complained of herein.
- h. **Adequacy:** The Plaintiffs will fairly and adequately protect the interests of the class members insofar as Plaintiffs have no interests that are adverse to the absent class members. The Plaintiffs are committed to vigorously litigating this matter. Plaintiffs have also retained counsel experienced in handling consumer lawsuits, complex legal issues, and class actions. Neither the Plaintiffs nor their counsel have any interests which might cause them not to vigorously pursue the instant class action lawsuit.
- i. **Superiority:** 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.

19. 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 Classes 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.

20. Depending on the outcome of further investigation and discovery, Plaintiffs 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**

21. 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.

22. Some time prior to January 9, 2017, an obligation was allegedly incurred to N. American Partners in Anesthesia, LLP.

23. The N. American Partners in Anesthesia, LLP obligation arose out of a transaction in which money, property, insurance or services, which are the subject of the transaction, are primarily for personal, family or household purposes.

24. The alleged N. American Partners in Anesthesia, LLP obligation is a "debt" as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(5).

25. N. American Partners in Anesthesia, LLP is a "creditor" as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(4).

26. N. American Partners in Anesthesia, LLP or a subsequent owner of the N. American Partners in Anesthesia, LLP debt contracted the Defendant to collect the alleged debt.

27. Defendant 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.

Violation I – January 9, 2017 Collection Letter

28. On or around January 9, 2017, Defendant sent a collection letter to Plaintiff.

29. The subject line of the letter states “RE: N. American Partners in Anesthesia, LLP v. Shlomo Silber”.

30. The use of the “v.” language strongly implies that Defendant has commenced legal action and filed a lawsuit against Plaintiff.

31. The use of the “v.” language is threatening and coercive and is made with the intent of scaring Plaintiff into making payment in order to quickly resolve what, falsely, appears to be a lawsuit filed against him.

32. Vague references to “N. American Partners in Anesthesia, LLP v. Shlomo Silber”, without any additional identifying information, only serves the purpose of misleading and deceiving the Plaintiff into believing that a lawsuit has been filed against it, when in fact it has not.

33. Such vague references were made with the sole intent to deceive and coerce a rushed payment from Plaintiff.

34. As a result of Defendant's deceptive, misleading and unfair debt collection practices, Plaintiff has been damaged.

**COUNT I**

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

35. 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.

36. 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.

37. 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.

38. Defendant violated said section by:

- a. Making a false and misleading representation as to the character, amount, or legal status of the debt in violation of §1692e(2)
- b. Making a false and misleading representation in violation of §1692e(10).

39. 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**

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





# PAUL J. HOOTEN & ASSOCIATES, PLLC

ATTORNEYS AT LAW  
5505 NESCONSET HIGHWAY  
SUITE 203  
MT. SINAI, NEW YORK 11766  
PHONE (631) 331-0547  
FAX (631) 331-2627

Website:  
www.pjhooten.com

email address:  
pjh@pjhooten.com

JANUARY 09, 2017

SHLOMO SILBER



RE: N. AMERICAN PARTNERS IN ANESTHESIA, LLP  
v. SHLOMO SILBER  
Claim #: [REDACTED] 456  
Balance: \$434.70

Dear SHLOMO SILBER:


Despite your failure to respond to our previous correspondence, in an attempt to amicably resolve the above referenced matter, as well as avoid any additional costs to you, N. AMERICAN PARTNERS IN ANESTHESIA, LLP has authorized me to accept \$347.76 as full settlement of this account.

Please be aware that this is a revocable offer. Unless your payment is received within the next thirty (30) days, it may be necessary to recommend to my client that they take further action to enforce this claim as there appears to be no legal basis for your delay in payment of your obligation.

Important Consumer 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, this office will: obtain verification of the debt or obtain a copy of the judgment and will mail you a copy of such verification or judgment. If you request from 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 is an attempt to collect a debt. Any information obtained will be used for that purpose.

Your cooperation in this matter is appreciated.




Very truly yours,

  
Paul J. Hooten, Esq.

N.Y.C.  
Dept. of

Consumer Affairs  
Lic. #2046443-DCA

If you wish to pay by credit or debit card, please enter the requested information in the spaces provided.  
Please note that the minimum amount for debit/credit cards is \$50 per month.

CHECK ONE:      VISA    
CARD TYPE:  CREDIT  DEBIT

CARD NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ AMOUNT AUTHORIZED: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

CARD HOLDER SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ EXP DATE \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

\* I HEREBY AUTHORIZE PAUL J. HOOTEN & ASSOCIATES TO DEBIT MY CREDIT OR DEBIT CARD LISTED ABOVE EACH MONTH FOR A TOTAL OF \$ \_\_\_\_\_ ON THE \_\_\_\_\_ DAY OF EACH MONTH.

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

Shlomo Silber, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated;

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

(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, Address, and Telephone Number) RC Law Group PLLC 285 Passaic Street, Hackensack, NJ, 07601 201-282-6500

DEFENDANTS

Paul J. Hooten & Associates, PLLC, John Does I-25

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: 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): Fair Debt Collection Practices Act - 15 USC 1692. Brief description of cause: Improper collection efforts regarding debt collection

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 01/05/2018 SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY OF RECORD /s/ Daniel Kohn

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, \_\_\_\_\_, counsel for \_\_\_\_\_, 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 of 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)**

- 1.) Is the civil action being filed in the Eastern District removed from a New York State Court located in Nassau or Suffolk County?  Yes  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?  Yes  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  No
  - c) If this is a Fair Debt Collection Practice Act case, specify the County in which the offending communication was received: **Queens County**

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?  Yes  No  
(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: \_\_\_\_\_

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

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

Eastern District of New York

Shlomo Silber, individually and on behalf of all others
similarly situated;

Plaintiff(s)

v.

Paul J. Hooten & Associates, PLLC,
John Does I-25

Defendant(s)

Civil Action No. 1:18-cv-00077

SUMMONS IN A CIVIL ACTION

To: (Defendant's name and address) Paul J. Hooten & Associates, PLLC
5505 Nesconset Highway
Suite 203
Mount Sinai, NY 11766

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 Kohn
RC Law Group, PLLC
285 Passaic Street,
Hackensack, New Jersey 07601

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:

Signature of Clerk or Deputy Clerk

Civil Action No. 1:18-cv-00077

**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:

**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: [Suit Claims Paul J. Hooten & Associates Violated Debt Collection Law](#)

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