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## BARSHAY SANDERS, PLLC

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#### UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY TRENTON DIVISION

Sarah Singer, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

vs.

Financial Recoveries Limited,

Defendant.

Docket No:

**CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT** 

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

Sarah Singer, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated (hereinafter referred to as "*Plaintiff*"), by and through the undersigned counsel, complains, states and alleges against Financial Recoveries Limited (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 Jersey.

BARSHAY | SANDERS PLLC 100 GARDEN CTTY PLAZA, SUITE 500 GARDEN CTTY, NEW YORK 11530 Case 1:18-cv-12563-JBS-AMD Document 1 Filed 08/08/18 Page 2 of 6 PageID: 2

#### **PARTIES**

5. Plaintiff Sarah Singer is an individual who is a citizen of the State of New Jersey residing in Ocean County, New Jersey.

6. Plaintiff is a "consumer" as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(3).

7. On information and belief, Defendant Financial Recoveries Limited, is a New Jersey Corporation with a principal place of business in Burlington County, New Jersey.

8. Defendant is regularly engaged, for profit, in the collection of debts allegedly owed by consumers.

9. Defendant is a "debt collector" as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(6).

#### **ALLEGATIONS**

10. Defendant alleges Plaintiff owes a debt ("the Debt").

11. The Debt was primarily for personal, family or household purposes and is therefore a "debt" as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(5).

12. Sometime after the incurrence of the Debt, Plaintiff fell behind on payments owed.

13. Thereafter, at an exact time known only to Defendant, the Debt was assigned or otherwise transferred to Defendant for collection.

14. In its efforts to collect the debt, Defendant contacted Plaintiff by letter ("the Letter") dated December 12, 2017. ("<u>Exhibit 1</u>.")

15. The Letter was the initial communication Plaintiff received from Defendant.

16. The Letter is a "communication" as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(2).

17. The Letter provided a telephone number to call.

18. The telephone number is a 1-800 number.

19. The telephone number is set forth in bold typeface.

20. The Letter provided a mailing address..

21. 15 U.S.C. \$1692g(a)(3) requires to debt collector to: "Within five days after the initial communication with a consumer in connection with the collection of any debt . . . send the consumer a written notice containing — a statement that unless the consumer, within thirty days after receipt of the notice, disputes the validity of the debt, or any portion thereof, the debt will be assumed to be valid by the debt collector."

22. In this Circuit, a dispute of a debt, to be effective, must be in writing. *See Caprio v. Healthcare Revenue Recovery Grp., LLC*, 709 F.3d 142 (3d Cir. 2013).

23. The Letter states in part: "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."

24. The failure to provide a proper 15 U.S.C. §1692g(a)(3) notice is a violation of the FDCPA.

25. A debt collector has the obligation not just to convey the 15 U.S.C. §1692g(a)(3) notice, but also to convey such clearly.

26. Even if a debt collector conveys the required information, the debt collector nonetheless violates the FDCPA if it conveys that information in a confusing or contradictory fashion so as to cloud the required message with uncertainty.

27. The Letter fails to properly inform the least sophisticated consumer that to effectively dispute the alleged debt, such dispute must be in writing.

28. The least sophisticated consumer upon reading the Letter would likely be confused as to what she must do to effectively dispute the alleged debt.

29. The least sophisticated consumer upon reading the Letter would likely be unsure as to what she must do to effectively dispute the alleged debt.

30. The Letter did not convey the 15 U.S.C. \$1692g(a)(3) notice clearly from the perspective of the least sophisticated consumer.

31. The Letter did not adequately set forth the 15 U.S.C. §1692g(a)(3) notice.

32. The Letter, because of the aforementioned failures, violates 15 U.S.C. §1692g(a)(3). *See Cadillo v. Stoneleigh Recovery Assocs., LLC*, No. CV 17-7472-SDW-SCM, 2017 WL 6550486 (D.N.J. Dec. 21, 2017), *motion to certify appeal denied*, No. CV177472SDWSCM, 2018 WL 702890 (D.N.J. Feb. 2, 2018).

33. 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.

34. While Section 1692e specifically prohibits certain practices, the list is nonexhaustive, and does not preclude a claim of falsity or deception based on any non-enumerated practice.

35. A collection letter violates 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.

36. 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.

37. 15 U.S.C. § 1692e(10) specifically prohibits the "use of any false representation or deceptive means to collect or attempt to collect any debt."

38. The question of whether a collection letter is deceptive is determined from the perspective of the "least sophisticated consumer."

39. The least sophisticated consumer upon reading the Letter would likely be misled into believing that if she wished to effectively dispute the Debt she may notify Defendant by calling the telephone numbers listed, or write to Defendant at the address listed.

40. The least sophisticated consumer would likely be confused concerning whether, to dispute the debt, she may notify Defendant by calling the telephone numbers listed, or write to Defendant at the address listed.

41. The least sophisticated consumer would likely be uncertain concerning whether, to dispute the debt, she may notify Defendant by calling the telephone numbers listed, or write to Defendant at the address listed.

42. The least sophisticated consumer would likely be uncertain as to her rights.

43. The least sophisticated consumer would likely be confused as to her rights.

44. Because the Letter can reasonably be read by the least sophisticated consumer to have two or more meanings, one of which is inaccurate, as described, it is deceptive within the meaning of 15 U.S.C. § 1692e.

45. Because the Letter is reasonably susceptible to an inaccurate reading by the least sophisticated consumer, as described, it is deceptive within the meaning of 15 U.S.C. § 1692e.

46. The least sophisticated consumer would likely be deceived by the Letter.

47. The least sophisticated consumer would likely be deceived in a material way by the Letter.

48. Defendant violated § 1692e by using a false, deceptive and misleading representation in its attempt to collect a debt.

49. The Letter, because of the aforementioned failures, violates 15 U.S.C. § 1692e. See Cadillo v. Stoneleigh Recovery Assocs., LLC, No. CV 17-7472-SDW-SCM, 2017 WL 6550486 (D.N.J. Dec. 21, 2017), motion to certify appeal denied, No. CV177472SDWSCM,

2018 WL 702890 (D.N.J. Feb. 2, 2018).

#### **CLASS ALLEGATIONS**

50. Plaintiff brings this action individually and as a class action on behalf of all persons similarly situated in the State of New Jersey from whom Defendant attempted to collect a consumer debt using a collection letter containing the same deficient 15 U.S.C. §1692g(a)(3) notice used in the Letter, from one year before the date of this Complaint to the present.

51. This action seeks a finding that Defendant's conduct violates the FDCPA, and asks that the Court award damages as authorized by 15 U.S.C. § 1692k.

52. Defendant regularly engages in debt collection.

53. The Class consists of more than 35 persons from whom Defendant attempted to collect delinquent consumer debts using a collection letter containing the same deficient 15 U.S.C. §1692g(a)(3) notice used in the Letter.

54. Plaintiff's 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.

55. 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. Defendant has acted in a manner applicable to the Class as a whole such that declaratory relief is warranted.

56. Plaintiff 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 Defendant's conduct was perpetrated on all members of the Class and will be established by common proof. Moreover, Plaintiff has retained counsel experienced in actions brought under consumer protection laws.

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#### JURY DEMAND

57. Plaintiff hereby demands a trial of this action by jury.

#### PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff respectfully requests judgment as follows:

a. Certify this action as a class action; and

b. Appoint Plaintiff as Class Representative of the Class, and Plaintiff's 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 Plaintiff's attorneys' fees pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k; and

f. Grant Plaintiff's costs; together with

g. Such other relief that the Court determines is just and proper.

DATED: August 7, 2018

#### **BARSHAY SANDERS, PLLC**

By: \_/s/ Todd D. Muhlstock \_

Todd D. Muhlstock, Esq. 100 Garden City Plaza, Suite 500 Garden City, New York 11530 Tel: (516) 974-9400 Fax: (516) 706-5055 tmuhlstock@barshaysanders.com *Attorneys for Plaintiff* Our File No.: 115494

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ONFIRI10 PO Box 1280 Oaks PA 19456-1280

# FINANCIAL RECOVERIES

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#### 800-220-0260

December 12, 2017

Account #:	8740
FinRee Acct#:	2458
Balance Due:	\$206.43

\*\*\*Detach Upper Portion And Return With Payment\*\*\* Past Due Balance

Your Account With:	Rutgers R
Account #:	8740
For:	Yentee Sin
Date of Charge:	07/11/17
Balance Due:	\$206.43

Rutgers R W J M G Pediatrics 8740 Yentee Singer 07/11/17 \$206.43

Rutgers R W J M G Pediatrics has listed your past due account with this office for collection. Please send the balance due to our office and include the top portion of this letter with your payment.

We report delinquent accounts to credit reporting agencies on a routine basis; however, no reports are made to any credit reporting agency prior to the expiration of the 30 day period described below.

Payments can be made by check or credit card. For prompt account resolution, payments can be made by accessing our automated interactive telephone system at 800-220-0260. If mailing a check or money order please make payable to Financial Recoveries.



#### 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 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 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.

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

JONFERI1045

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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.)* 

purpose of initiating the civil do I. (a) PLAINTIFFS	cket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCT)	IONS ON NEXT PAGE OF T	HIS FOR	HIS FORM.) DEFENDANTS						
SARAH SINGER			FINANCIAL RECOVERIES LIMITED							
<ul> <li>(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff OCEAN         <ul> <li>(EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)</li> </ul> </li> <li>(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, Address, and Telephone Number)         <ul> <li>BARSHAY SANDERS, PLLC</li> <li>100 Garden City Plaza, Ste 500, Garden City, NY 11530             <ul> <li>(516) 203-7600</li> </ul> </li> </ul></li></ul>				County of Residence of First Listed Defendant      BURLINGTON						
II. BASIS OF JURISDI	CTION (Place an "X" in C	One Box Only)	III. CI'	TIZENSHIP OF	PRINCIPA	L PARTIES (	Place an "X" in C	ne Box for	Plaintiff	
O I U.S. Government Plaintiff	• 3 Federal Question (U.S. Government 1	Not a Party)			PTF DEF O 1 O 1	Incorporated or Pri of Business In T	ncipal Place	x for Defenda <b>PIF</b> O 4	lant) DEF O 4	
O 2 U.S. Government Defendant	O 4 Diversity (Indicate Citizenshi	p of Parties in Item III)	Citize	en or Subject of a	0 2 0 2 0 3 0 3	Incorporated and P of Business In A Foreign Nation	•	0 5 0 6	O 5 O 6	
IV. NATURE OF SUIT	(Place an "X" in One Box On	lv)	Fo	oreign Country						
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(Excludes Veterans) O 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits	O 345 Marine Product Liability O 350 Motor Vehicle O 355 Motor Vehicle Product Liability O 360 Other Personal Injury O 362 Personal Injury -	Liability <b>PERSONAL PROPER</b> O 370 Other Fraud O 371 Truth in Lending O 380 Other Personal Property Damage O 385 Property Damage Product Liability	O 720 O 740 O 751	Act Labor/Management Relations Railway Labor Act Family and Medical Leave Act	SOCIAL SECURITY         0 490           0 861 HIA (1395ff)         0 850           0 862 Black Lung (923)         0 863           0 863 DIWC/DIWW (405(g))         0 890           0 864 SSID Title XVI         0 891           0 865 RSI (405(g))         0 892           0 865 RSI (405(g))         0 892			<ul> <li>490 Cable/Sat TV</li> <li>850 Securities/Commodities/ Exchange</li> <li>890 Other Statutory Actions</li> <li>891 Agricultural Acts</li> <li>893 Environmental Matters</li> <li>895 Freedom of Information Act</li> </ul>		
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IX. RELATED CASE IF ANY	(S) (See Instructions)	JUDGE			DOCKE	T NUMBER				
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SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY OF RECORD /s Craig B. Sanders

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

### **UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**

for the

#### DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY

Sarah Singer, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated	) ) )	
Plaintiff(s)	)	
	)	Civil Action No.
V.	)	
	)	
Financial Recoveries Limited	)	
Defendant(s)	)	

#### SUMMONS IN A CIVIL ACTION

To: (Defendant's name and address) Financial Recoveries Limited 200 E Park Dr Mount Laurel, New Jersey 08054

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:

BARSHAY SANDERS PLLC 100 GARDEN CITY PLAZA, SUITE 500 GARDEN CITY, NY 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: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Clerk or Deputy Clerk

# **ClassAction.org**

This complaint is part of ClassAction.org's searchable class action lawsuit database and can be found in this post: <u>Financial Recoveries Facing Lawsuit After Allegedly Failing to Provide Proper Debt Dispute</u> <u>Instructions</u>