UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

-----X Case No. 17-cv-01008

JADER VALENCIA, on behalf of himself individually and all others similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT

-against-

DIVERSIFIED ADJUSTMENT SERVICE, INC.,

Defendant.

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Plaintiff, by and through his attorneys, FAGENSON & PUGLISI, PLLC,

upon knowledge as to himself and his own acts, and as to all other matters upon information and belief, brings this complaint against above-named defendant and in support thereof alleges the following:

INTRODUCTION

1. This is an action for damages brought by an individual consumer and on behalf of a class for defendant's violations of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act ("FDCPA"), 15 U.S.C. § 1692, *et seq.* which prohibits debt collectors from engaging in abusive, deceptive and unfair acts and practices.

2. Further, this is an action for damages and injunctive relief brought by an individual consumer against defendant pursuant to New York General Business Law ("NYGBL") § 349 regarding defendant's deceptive acts and practices.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

This Court has federal question jurisdiction pursuant to the FDCPA,
 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(d) and 28 U.S.C. § 1331 and supplemental jurisdiction exists over
 the NYGBL § 349 claims pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1367.

4. This Court has venue pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b) in that plaintiff resides in this District and a substantial portion of the events or omissions giving rise to this action occurred in this District.

PARTIES

5. Plaintiff is a natural person who resides in this District.

Plaintiff is a consumer within the meaning of 15 U.S.C. §
 1692a(3) as she is a natural person who is alleged by defendant to owe a financial obligation.

7. The financial obligation which defendant sought to collect from plaintiff is a debt within the meaning of 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(5) in that the obligation which defendant sought to collect from plaintiff is alleged to be a defaulted debt which was originally incurred for personal, family or household purposes regarding SPRINT.

Plaintiff is a reasonable consumer within the meaning of NYGBL §
 349 who acted reasonably under the circumstances alleged herein.

Defendant is a debt collector within the meaning of 15 U.S.C. §
 1692a(6).

10. Defendant uses the mail and other means to collect defaulted consumer debts owed or due or alleged to be owed or due to others.

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11. The principal purpose of defendant is the collection of defaulted consumer debts owed or due or alleged to be owed or due to others.

12. Defendant regularly collects or attempts to collect defaulted consumer debts owed or due or alleged to be owed or due to others.

13. Upon information and belief, defendant is a foreign business corporation incorporated in Minnesota.

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

14. Plaintiff re-alleges paragraphs 1-13 as if fully re-stated herein.

15. Defendant sent to plaintiff a collection letter dated April 15, 2016.

16. Defendant stated in the caption of the letter in the top left-hand corner: "Re: SPRINT".

17. Defendant thereafter stated in the letter:

"Your account has been placed with us for collection."

18. The account was alleged to be in default.

19. The letter was defendant's first communication with plaintiff in connection with the collection of the debt.

20. The letter was defendant's first written communication with plaintiff

in connection with the collection of the debt.

21. Defendant sent no letter to plaintiff within five days after the date on which defendant sent the letter dated April 15, 2016.

22. In its letter defendant fails to identify the creditor to whom the debt is owed.

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23. Upon receipt of defendant's letter, plaintiff did not know who the creditor of his debt was and felt perplexed, confused and irritated thereby.

AS AND FOR A FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION

Failure to identify the creditor clearly and effectively

15 U.S.C. §§ 1692g(a)(2) and 1692e

24. Plaintiff re-alleges paragraphs 1-23 as if fully re-stated herein.

25. Defendant's letter stated in its caption that the letter was "Re: SPRINT".

26. Defendant's letter further stated: "Your account has been placed with us for collection."

27. In its letter defendant fails to identify clearly and effectively the creditor to whom the debt is owed.

28. Defendant does not state in the caption of the letter whether the entity it describes as "SPRINT" is the creditor of the debt defendant seeks to collect.

29. Defendant does not state anywhere in the letter whether SPRINT is the creditor of the debt defendant seeks to collect.

30. Nowhere in the letter does defendant state who the creditor of the

debt is.

31. The word "creditor" does not appear in the letter.

32. Defendant included no language in the letter to indicate who the creditor of the debt is.

33. Nowhere in the letter does defendant state what, if any, is the relationship between SPRINT and the debt.

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34. Nowhere in the letter does defendant state on whose behalf it is acting in sending the letter.

35. Nowhere in the letter does defendant state who it represents in sending the letter.

36. Nowhere in the letter does defendant state what, if any, is the relationship between SPRINT and defendant.

37. In the letter, defendant invited plaintiff to send all payments to defendant.

38. Defendant's failure to identify clearly and effectively the creditor of the debt contravenes the FDCPA, § 1692g(a)(2).

39. Defendant is further in violation of the FDCPA, § 1692e in that its failure to identify clearly and effectively the creditor of the debt constitutes a deceptive and misleading means used in an attempt to collect the debt.

AS AND FOR A SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION

NYGBL § 349

40. Plaintiff re-alleges paragraphs 1 to 39 as if fully re-stated herein.

41. Defendant owed a duty to plaintiff to effect its collection of plaintiff's alleged debt with reasonable care.

42. Defendant breached its duty to collect plaintiff's debt with reasonable care.

43. In the exercise of reasonable care defendant ought to have ensured that in its collection letters it identified, in a clear and effective manner, the creditors of the debts it seeks to collect.

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44. Defendant's letters confuse consumers as to the identity of the entities defendant is claiming they owe.

45. Defendant is a collector of consumer debts.

46. On information and belief, defendant sends collection letters to hundreds of consumers within the State of New York each month.

47. Defendant's letter to plaintiff is a form collection letter.

48. Defendant's letter to plaintiff is derived from a letter template.

49. Defendant's failure, in its collection letters, to identify in a clear and effective manner the creditors of the debts it seeks to collect is a deceptive act and practice.

50. Said deceptive act and practice was committed by defendant in the conduct of a business, trade or commerce or the furnishing of a service in the State of New York and constitutes a violation of NYGBL § 349.

51. Defendant's deceptive act and practice was consumer-oriented in that defendant's failure to identify in a clear and effective manner the creditors of the debts it seeks to collect was not an act limited to plaintiff's account, but extended to the accounts of other consumers which defendant sought to collect at all times relevant herein.

52. Defendant's said failure has a broad impact on consumers at large whose accounts are placed with defendant for collection because at all times relevant herein defendant sent substantially the same letter to all consumers, all of which failed to identify the creditors to whom the debts are owed.

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53. Because at all times relevant herein defendant's letters failed to inform consumers as to the identity of their creditors, while at the same time demanding the payment of money from consumers, defendant's failure was deceptive in a material way.

54. Plaintiff is a reasonable consumer within the meaning of the NYGBL and acted reasonably under the circumstances of this case.

55. Upon receipt of defendant's letter, plaintiff did not know who the creditor of his debt was and felt perplexed, confused and irritated thereby.

56. Defendant violated NYGBL § 349(a) by the sending of its letter and is liable to plaintiff under NYGBL § 349(h).

CLASS ALLEGATIONS

57. Plaintiff re-alleges paragraphs 1-56 as if fully re-stated herein.

58. This action is brought on behalf of plaintiff and the members of

a class. The class consists of all persons who defendant's records reflect were sent debt collection letters within the State of New York within the period of time commencing one year before the filing of this complaint up to and including the date of the filing of the complaint and who were sent a collection letter (a) in substantially the same form as the letter defendant sent to plaintiff dated April 15, 2016; (b) the collection letter was sent to a consumer seeking payment of a consumer debt; (c) the collection letter was not returned by the postal service as undelivered; and (d) the letter contained the aforesaid violations of 15 U.S.C. §§ 1692g(a)(2) and 1692e. The class does not include defendant or persons who are officers, directors or employees of defendant.

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59. Pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 23, a class action

is appropriate and preferable in this case because:

- (A) Based on the fact that the collection letter that is the gravamen of this litigation is a mass-mailed form letter, the class is so numerous that joinder of all members is impracticable. Upon information and belief, thousands of persons have received similar debt collection letters from defendant which violate the various provisions of the FDCPA.
- (B) There are questions of law and fact common to the class and these questions predominate over any questions affecting only individual class members. The principal question presented by this claim is whether defendant violated the FDCPA by sending collection letters to consumers which fail to identify clearly and effectively the creditor of the debt, in violation of the FDCPA, §§ 1692g(a)(2) and 1692e.
- (C) The only individual issue is the identification of the consumers who received the letters (the class members), a matter capable of ministerial determination from the records of defendant.
- (D) The claims of plaintiff are typical of those of the class members. All are based on the same facts and legal theories.
- (E) Plaintiff will fairly and adequately represent the class members' interests. Plaintiff has retained experienced counsel. Plaintiff's interests are consistent with those of the members of the class.

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60. A class action is superior for the fair and efficient adjudication

of the class members' claims. Congress specifically envisions class actions as a principal means of enforcing the FDCPA in 15 U.S.C. § 1692k. The members of the class are generally unsophisticated individuals, whose rights will not be vindicated in the absence of a class action. Prosecution of separate actions by individual members of the class would create the risk of inconsistent or varying adjudications resulting in the establishment of inconsistent or varying standards for the parties and would not be in the interest of judicial economy.

61. If the facts are discovered to be appropriate, plaintiff will seek to certify a class action pursuant to Rule 23(b)(3) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

62. Communications from debt collectors, such as those sent by defendant, are to be evaluated under the FDCPA by the objective standard of the hypothetical "least sophisticated consumer".

63. As a result of the above violations, defendant is liable to plaintiff and the members of the class for injunctive relief and damages in an amount to be determined at the time of trial, plus costs and attorneys' fees.

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WHEREFORE, plaintiff respectfully prays that judgment be entered against defendant as follows:

- (a) certifying a class action pursuant to Rule 23 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure;
- (b) awarding class members the maximum statutory damages pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k ;
- (c) awarding plaintiff the maximum statutory damages pursuant to 15
 U.S.C. § 1692k;
- (d) awarding plaintiff actual damages pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k in an amount to be determined at time of trial;
- (e) awarding reasonable attorneys' fees, costs and disbursements pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k;
- (f) enjoining defendant from committing further deceptive and misleading acts and practices against plaintiff, pursuant to NYGBL § 349;
- (g) awarding actual damages pursuant to NYGBL § 349 in an amount to be determined at time of trial;
- (h) awarding, in the alternative, statutory damages pursuant to NYGBL§ 349 in an amount to be determined at time of trial;
- (i) awarding reasonable attorneys' fees, costs and disbursements pursuant to NYGBL § 349(h); and
- (j) for such other and further relief as may be just and proper.

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DEMAND FOR TRIAL BY JURY

Plaintiff requests trial by jury on all issues so triable.

Dated: New York, New York February 22, 2017.

> /s/_Novlette R. Kidd_____ NOVLETTE R. KIDD, ESQ. (NK 9339) FAGENSON & PUGLISI, PLLC Attorneys for Plaintiff 450 Seventh Avenue, Suite 704 New York, New York 10123 Telephone: (212) 268-2128 Nkidd@fagensonpuglisi.com

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

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

Eastern District of New York

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JADER VALENCIA, on behalf of himself individually and all others similarly situated,

Plaintiff(s)

v.

Civil Action No. 17-CV-01008

DIVERSIFIED ADJUSTMENT SERVICE, INC.,

Defendant(s)

SUMMONS IN A CIVIL ACTION

To: (Defendant's name and address) DIVERSIFIED ADJUSTMENT SERVICE, INC. C/O C T Corporation System 111 Eighth Avenue New York, New York 10011

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: FAGENSON & PUGLISI, PLLC 450 Seventh Avenue, Suite 704

New York, New York 10123

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

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AO 440 (Rev. 06/12) Summons in a Civil Action (Page 2)

Civil Action No. 17-CV-01008

PROOF OF SERVICE

(This section should not be filed with the court unless required by Fed. R. Civ. P. 4 (l))

| | This summons for (no | ume of individual and title, if any) | | | | | | | | |
|---------|---|---|---------------------------------|------|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| was rec | ceived by me on (date) | | | | | | | | | |
| | □ I personally serve | d the summons on the individu | al at (place) | | | | | | | |
| | | | on (date) | ; or | | | | | | |
| | \Box I left the summon | I left the summons at the individual's residence or usual place of abode with (<i>name</i>) | | | | | | | | |
| | on (date) , and mailed a copy to the individual's last known address; or | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| | \Box I served the summ | , | , who is | | | | | | | |
| | I served the summons on (name of individual) | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | on (date) | ; or | | | | | | |
| | \Box I returned the sum | | ; or | | | | | | | |
| | Other (<i>specify</i>): | | | | | | | | | |
| | My fees are \$ | for travel and \$ | for services, for a total of \$ | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | |
| | I declare under penalty of perjury that this information is true. | | | | | | | | | |
| Date: | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | Server's signature | | | | | | | |
| | | | Printed name and title | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |

Additional information regarding attempted service, etc:

Server's address

JS 44 (Rev. 07/16) Case 1:17-cv-01008 Document 1-2 Filed 02/22/17 Page 1 of 2 PageID #: 14

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 JADER VALENCIA, on b similarly situated | ehalf of himself individ | lually and all others | 3 | DEFENDANTS DIVERSIFIED AD. | JUSTMENT SERVICE, | INC. | | |
|---|---|---|--|---|--|---|--|--|
| (b) County of Residence of <i>(Ez</i>) | f First Listed Plaintiff <u>G</u> CCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CA | Queens (SES) | | 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. | | | | |
| (c) Attorneys (Firm Name, J FAGENSON & PUGLISI, York, New York 10123. 7 | PLLC, 450 Seventh A | ^{r)} Avenue, Suite 704, | New | Attorneys (If Known) | | | | |
| II. BASIS OF JURISDI | CTION (Place an "X" in O | ne Box Only) | | | RINCIPAL PARTIES | (Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintif | | |
| 1 U.S. Government [*] 3 Federal Question Plaintiff 1 U.S. Government Not a Party) | | | (For Diversity Cases Only) and One Box for Defendant) PTF DEF PTF DEF Citizen of This State □ 1 □ 1 Incorporated or Principal Place □ 4 □ 4 of Business In This State | | | | | |
| 2 U.S. Government Defendant | | | | Citizen of Another State 2 2 Incorporated and Principal Place of Business In Another State 5 5 Citizen or Subject of a 3 3 Foreign Nation 6 6 | | | | |
| | | | | Citizen or Subject of a 3 3 Foreign Nation 6 6 6 Foreign Country | | | | |
| IV. NATURE OF SUIT | | lly) PRTS | FO | RFEITURE/PENALTY | BANKRUPTCY | OTHER STATUTES | | |
| CONTRACT CONTRACT CONTRACT 100 Marine 120 Marine 130 Miller Act 140 Negotiable Instrument 150 Recovery of Overpayment & Enforcement of Judgment 151 Medicare Act 152 Recovery of Defaulted Student Loans (Excludes Veterans) 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits 160 Stockholders' Suits 190 Other Contract 195 Contract Product Liability 196 Franchise REAL PROPERTY 210 Land Condemnation 220 Foreclosure 230 Rent Lease & Ejectment 245 Tort Product Liability 290 All Other Real Property | PERSONAL INJURY 310 Airplane 315 Airplane Product Liability 320 Assault, Libel & Slander 330 Federal Employers' Liability 340 Marine 345 Marine Product Liability 350 Motor Vehicle 355 Motor Vehicle 9 360 Other Personal Injury 362 Personal Injury - Medical Malpractice CIVIL RIGHTS 440 Other Civil Rights 441 Voting 445 Amer. w/Disabilities - Employment 446 Amer. w/Disabilities - Other 448 Education | PERSONAL INJUR 365 Personal Injury - Product Liability 367 Health Care/ Pharmaceutical Personal Injury Product Liability 368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability PERSONAL PROPER 370 Other Fraud 371 Truth in Lending 380 Other Personal Property Damage 385 Property Damage Product Liability PRISONER PETITION Habeas Corpus: 463 Alien Detainee 510 Motions to Vacate Sentence 530 General 535 Death Penalty Other: 540 Mandamus & Othe 550 Civil Rights 555 Prison Condition 560 Civil Detainee - Conditions of Confinement | IY □ 625 1 □ 690 1 □ 710 □ 720 □ □ 740 □ □ 740 □ □ 740 □ □ 790 □ e □ 791 | Bright Constraints of the second | □ 422 Appeal 28 USC 158 □ 423 Withdrawal 28 USC 157 ■ 28 USC 157 ■ 820 Copyrights □ 830 Patent □ 840 Trademark ■ 861 HIA (1395ff) □ 863 DIWC/DIWW (405(g)) □ 863 DIWC/DIWW (405(g)) □ 865 RSI (405(g)) ■ FEDERAL TAX SUITS □ 870 Taxes (U.S. Plaintiff or Defendant) □ 871 IRS—Third Party 26 USC 7609 | OTHER STATUTES 375 False Claims Act 376 Qui Tam (31 USC 3729(a)) 400 State Reapportionment 410 Antitrust 430 Banks and Banking 450 Commerce 460 Deportation 470 Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations 480 Consumer Credit 490 Cable/Sat TV 850 Securities/Commodities/ Exchange 890 Other Statutory Actions 891 Agricultural Acts 895 Freedom of Information Act 896 Arbitration 899 Administrative Procedure Act/Review or Appeal of Agency Decision 950 Constitutionality of State Statutes | | |
| | moved from \Box 3 | Remanded from Appellate Court | □ 4 Reins Reop | | r District Litigation | n - Litigation - | | |
| VI. CAUSE OF ACTIO | N 15 U.S.C. 1692 e Brief description of ca | t seq. | | o not cite jurisdictional stat | | | | |
| VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT: | CHECK IF THIS UNDER RULE 2 | IS A CLASS ACTION 3, F.R.Cv.P. | N DE | DEMAND \$CHECK YES only if demanded in complaint:JURY DEMAND:YesNo | | | | |
| VIII. RELATED CASI IF ANY | E(S) (See instructions): | JUDGE | | | DOCKET NUMBER | | | |
| DATE 02/22/2017 | | SIGNATURE OF AT | | FRECORD | | | | |
| FOR OFFICE USE ONLY RECEIPT # AN | AOUNT | APPLYING IFP | | JUDGE | MAG. JU | JDGE | | |
| Print | Save As | | | | | Reset | | |

Case 1:17-cv-01008 Document 1-2 Filed 02/22/17 Page 2 of 2 PageID #: 15 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, <u>Novlette R. Kidd</u>, counsel for <u>plaintiff</u>, do hereby certify that the above captioned civil action is ineligible for compulsory arbitration for the following reason(s):

- \mathbf{X} monetary damages sought are in excess of \$150,000, exclusive of interest and costs,
- \mathbf{X} the complaint seeks injunctive relief,
- Class action. the matter is otherwise ineligible for the following reason \mathbf{X}

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT - FEDERAL RULES CIVIL PROCEDURE 7.1

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

N/A - Plaintiff is a natural person.

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)

- Is the civil action being filed in the Eastern District removed from a New York State Court located in Nassau or Suffolk 1.) County: No
- If you answered "no" above: 2.) 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? (If yes, please explain)

 $\mathbf{\nabla}$ No

I certify the accuracy of all information provided above.

Yes

Signature: /s/ Novlette R. Kidd

ClassAction.org

This complaint is part of ClassAction.org's searchable class action lawsuit database and can be found in this post: Lawsuit Takes Issue with Diversified Adjustment Service Collection Methods