IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF ARKANSAS WESTERN DIVISION

1 2018

WILLIE WALKER, Individually and on **Behalf of All Others Similarly Situated**

VS.

No. 4:18-cv-57/- Sugar

EJ'S CLEANING SERVICES, INC... and EDWIN JOHNSON

DEFENDANTS

This case assigned to District Judge

and to Magistrate Judge_

ORIGINAL COMPLAINT—COLLECTIVE ACTION

COMES NOW Plaintiff Willie Walker ("Plaintiff"), individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated, by and through his attorneys Chris Burks and Josh Sanford of the Sanford Law Firm, PLLC, and for his Original Complaint— Collective Action against Defendants EJ's Cleaning Services, Inc., and Edwin Johnson (hereinafter "Defendants"), he does hereby state and allege as follows:

I. PRELIMINARY STATEMENTS

- 1. This is a collective action brought by Plaintiff, individually and on behalf of all other Janitors of Defendants at any time within a three-year period preceding the filing of this Complaint.
- 2. Plaintiff brings this action under the Fair Labor Standards Act, 29 U.S.C. § 201, et seq. ("FLSA") and the Arkansas Minimum Wage Act, Ark. Code Ann. § 11-4-201, et seq. ("AMWA"), for declaratory judgment, monetary damages, liquidated damages, prejudgment interest, and costs, including reasonable attorneys' fees, as a result of Defendants' failure to pay Plaintiff and

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other Janitors lawful minimum wages and overtime compensation for hours

worked in excess of forty (40) hours per week.

3. Upon information and belief, for at least three (3) years prior to the

filing of this Complaint, Defendants have willfully and intentionally committed

violations of the FLSA and the AMWA as described, infra.

II. JURISDICTION AND VENUE

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Arkansas

has subject matter jurisdiction over this suit under the provisions of 28 U.S.C. §

1331 because this suit raises federal questions under the FLSA.

5. Plaintiff's claims under the AMWA form part of the same case or

controversy and arise out of the same facts as the FLSA claims alleged in this

Complaint.

6. Therefore, this Court has supplemental jurisdiction over Plaintiff's

AMWA claims pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1367(a).

7. The acts complained of herein were committed and had their

principal effect within the Western Division of the Eastern District of Arkansas;

therefore, venue is proper within this District pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391.

8. Defendants do business in this District and a substantial part of the

events alleged herein occurred in this District.

9. The witnesses to overtime wage violations alleged in this Complaint

reside in this District.

10. On information and belief, the payroll records and other documents

related to the payroll practices that Plaintiff challenges are located in this District.

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III. THE PARTIES

11. Plaintiff repeats and re-alleges all the preceding paragraphs of this

Complaint as if fully set forth in this section.

12. Plaintiff is a citizen and resident of Pulaski County.

13. Plaintiff was employed by Defendants as a Janitor within the three

(3) years preceding the filing of this Complaint.

14. At all times material herein, Plaintiff and those similarly situated

have been entitled to the rights, protections and benefits provided under the

FLSA and the AMWA.

15. Separate Defendant EJ's Cleaning Services, Inc., is a domestic for-

profit corporation, registered and licensed to do business in the State of

Arkansas.

16. Separate Defendant EJ's Cleaning Services, Inc.'s registered agent

for service of process in Arkansas is Edwin Johnson, 2010 Martin Street, Little

Rock, Arkansas 72204.

17. Separate Defendant EJ's Cleaning Services, Inc., is an "employer"

within the meanings set forth in the FLSA and the AMWA, and was, at all times

relevant to the allegations in this Complaint, Plaintiff's employer, as well as the

employer of the members of the collective.

18. During each of the three years preceding the filing of this

Complaint, Separate Defendant EJ's Cleaning Services, Inc., employed at least

two individuals who were engaged in interstate commerce or in the production of

goods for interstate commerce, or had employees handling, selling, or otherwise

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working on goods or materials that has been moved in or produced for

commerce by any person.

19. Separate Defendant EJ's Cleaning Services, Inc.'s annual gross

volume of sales or business done is not less than \$500,000.00 (exclusive of

excise taxes at the retail level that are separately stated).

20. Within the past three (3) years preceding the filing of this

Complaint, Separate Defendant EJ's Cleaning Services, Inc., has had more than

four employees.

15. Separate Defendant Edwin Johnson is a citizen and resident of the

State of Arkansas.

16. At all times relevant hereto, Separate Defendant Edwin Johnson

was the owner of EJ's Cleaning Services, Inc., and had operational control over

the day-to-day functions of Plaintiff and similarly situated employees as well as

direct responsibility for the compensation of Plaintiff and similarly situated

employees.

21. Separate Defendant Edwin Johnson is an "employer" within the

meanings set forth in the FLSA and the AMWA, and was, at all times relevant to

the allegations in this Complaint, Plaintiff's employer, as well as the employer of

the members of the collective.

22. During each of the three years preceding the filing of this

Complaint, Separate Defendant Edwin Johnson employed at least two individuals

who were engaged in interstate commerce or in the production of goods for

interstate commerce, or had employees handling, selling, or otherwise working

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on goods or materials that has been moved in or produced for commerce by any

person.

23. Separate Defendant Edwin Johnson's annual gross volume of sales

or business done is not less than \$500,000.00 (exclusive of excise taxes at the

retail level that are separately stated).

24. Within the past three (3) years preceding the filing of this

Complaint, Separate Defendant Edwin Johnson has had more than four

employees.

25. Separate Defendants EJ's Cleaning Services, Inc., and Edwin

Johnson have unified operational control and management, as well as control

over employees, including shared power to supervise, hire and fire, establish

wages and wage policies and set schedules for their employees through unified

management.

26. Upon information and belief, the revenue generated from the

janitorial services was merged and managed in a unified manner.

27. As a result of this unified operation, control and management,

through shared employees and ownership with the authority to establish wages

and wage policy, Separate Defendants EJ's Cleaning Services, Inc., and Edwin

Johnson operated as a single enterprise.

IV. FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

28. Plaintiff repeats and re-alleges all previous paragraphs of this

Complaint as though fully incorporated in this section.

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29. Defendants own and operate a commercial janitorial services

company that provides cleaning and custodial services to its customers.

30. During part of the three (3) years prior to the filing of this lawsuit,

Defendants employed Plaintiff as a Janitor from May of 2015 to August of 2017.

31. Defendants directly hired Plaintiff and other Janitors, paid them

wages and benefits, controlled their work schedules, duties, protocols,

applications, assignments and employment conditions, and kept at least some

records regarding their employment.

32. Plaintiff and other Janitors regularly worked in excess of forty (40)

hours per week.

33. At all times relevant hereto, Plaintiff and other Janitors were paid a

total of \$1,000.00 a month in 2015, and then \$1,800.00 a month beginning on or

after January of 2016.

34. Defendants did not pay Plaintiff and other Janitors an amount equal

to or greater than minimum wage for all hours worked up to forty (40) hours per

week.

35. Defendants did not pay Plaintiff and other Janitors one and one-half

(1.5) times their regular rate of pay for all hours worked over forty (40) hours per

week.

36. As a result, Defendants did not pay Plaintiff or other Janitors a

lawful minimum wage and one and one-half (1.5) times their regular rate for all

hours in excess of forty (40) hours in one week.

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37. Plaintiff and other Janitors were and are entitled to a lawful

minimum wage and overtime compensation in the amount of one and one-half

(1.5) times their regular rate of pay for all hours worked in excess of forty (40)

hours in one week.

38. During the course of their employment, Plaintiffs and other Janitors

did not manage the enterprise or a customarily recognized subdivision of the

enterprise.

39. Plaintiff and other Janitors had no ability to hire and fire any

employee.

40. Plaintiff and other Janitors did not have any control of or authority

over any employee's rate of pay or working hours.

41. Plaintiff and other Janitors did not maintain or prepare production

reports or sales records for use in supervision or control in the business.

42. Plaintiff and other Janitors did not have responsibility for planning or

controlling budgets.

43. Defendants expected Plaintiff and others similarly situated to follow

Defendants' policies regarding their employment.

44. Defendants made decisions on what new business to pursue or

take without the input of Plaintiff and other Janitors.

45. Defendants knew, or showed reckless disregard for whether, the

way it paid Plaintiff and other Janitors violated the FLSA and the AMWA.

V. REPRESENTATIVE ACTION ALLEGATIONS

FLSA § 216(b) Collective

46. Plaintiff repeats and re-alleges all previous paragraphs of this

Original Complaint as if fully set forth in this section.

47. Plaintiff brings his claims for relief for violation of the FLSA as a

collective action pursuant to Section 216(b) of the FLSA, 29 U.S.C. § 216(b).

48. Plaintiff brings his FLSA claims on behalf of all Janitors employed

by Defendants at any time within the applicable statute of limitations period, who

were classified by Defendants as exempt from the overtime requirements of the

FLSA and who are entitled to payment of the following types of damages:

A. Proper payment for all hours worked, including payment of a lawful

minimum wage and overtime premium for all hours worked for Defendants in

excess of forty (40) hours in a workweek; and

B. Liquidated damages and attorneys' fees and costs.

49. In conformity with the requirements of FLSA Section 216(b),

Plaintiff has attached hereto as Exhibit "A" his written Consent to Join this

lawsuit.

50. The relevant time period dates back three years from the date on

which Plaintiff's Original Complaint—Collective Action was filed herein and

continues forward through the date of judgment pursuant to 29 U.S.C. § 255(a).

51. The members of the proposed FLSA Collective are similarly

situated in that they share these traits:

A. They were classified by Defendants as exempt from the minimum

wage and overtime requirements of the FLSA;

B. They were paid once a month;

C. They typically worked over forty (40) hours per week; and

D. They were subject to Defendants' common policy of denying pay

for all hours worked, including overtime pay for hours worked over forty (40) per

work week.

52. Plaintiff is unable to state the exact number of potential members of

the FLSA Collective but believes that the group exceeds 20 persons.

53. In the modern era, most working-class Americans have become

increasingly reliant on email and text messages, and generally use them just as

often, if not more so, than traditional U.S. Mail.

54. Defendants can readily identify the members of the Section 216(b)

Collective. The names, mailing addresses, phone numbers and email addresses

of the FLSA collective action plaintiffs are available from Defendants, and a

Court-approved Notice should be provided to the FLSA collective action plaintiffs

via first class mail, email and text message to their last known mailing and

electronic mailing addresses and cell phone numbers as soon as possible,

together with other documents and information descriptive of Plaintiff's FLSA

claim.

VI. FIRST CLAIM FOR RELIEF

(Individual Claim for Violation of FLSA)

55. Plaintiff repeats and re-alleges all previous paragraphs of this

Complaint as though fully incorporated in this section.

56. Plaintiff asserts this claim for damages and declaratory relief

pursuant to the FLSA.

57. At all relevant times, Defendants were Plaintiff's "employer" within

the meaning of the FLSA.

58. At all relevant times, Defendants have been, and continue to be, an

enterprise engaged in commerce within the meaning of the FLSA.

59. 29 U.S.C. §§ 206 and 207 require any enterprise engaged in

commerce to pay all employees a minimum wage for all hours worked up to forty

(40) in one week and to pay time and a half of regular wages for all hours worked

over forty (40) hours in a week, unless an employee meets certain exemption

requirements of 29 U.S.C. § 213 and all accompanying Department of Labor

regulations.

60. At all times relevant to this Complaint, Defendants classified

Plaintiff as exempt from the overtime requirements of the FLSA, and paid Plaintiff

once a month.

61. Defendants failed to pay Plaintiff a lawful minimum wage for all

hours up to forty (40) per week and one and one-half (1.5) times his regular rate

for all hours worked over forty (40) hours per week, despite his entitlement

thereto.

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62. Defendants' conduct and practice, as described above, has been

and is willful, intentional, unreasonable, arbitrary and in bad faith.

63. By reason of the unlawful acts alleged herein, Defendants are liable

to Plaintiff for, and Plaintiff seeks, unpaid overtime wages, liquidated damages,

and costs, including reasonable attorney's fees as provided by the FLSA.

64. Alternatively, should the Court find that Defendants acted in good

faith in failing to pay Plaintiff as provided by the FLSA, Plaintiff is entitled to an

award of prejudgment interest at the applicable legal rate.

VII. SECOND CLAIM FOR RELIEF

(Collective Action Claim for Violation of FLSA)

65. Plaintiff repeats and re-alleges all previous paragraphs of this

Complaint as though fully incorporated in this section.

66. Plaintiff asserts this claim on behalf of all Janitors employed by

Defendants to recover monetary damages owed by Defendants to Plaintiff and

members of the putative collective for unpaid minimum wage and overtime

compensation.

67. Plaintiff brings this action on behalf of himself and all other similarly

situated employees, former and present, who were and/or are affected by

Defendants' willful and intentional violation of the FLSA.

68. At all relevant times, Defendants have been, and continue to be, an

"employer" of Plaintiff and all those similarly situated within the meaning of the

FLSA.

69. At all relevant times, Defendants have been, and continue to be, an

enterprise engaged in commerce within the meaning of the FLSA.

70. 29 U.S.C. §§ 206 and 207 require any enterprise engaged in

commerce to pay all employees a minimum wage for all hours worked up to forty

(40) in one week and to pay time and a half of regular wages for all hours worked

over forty (40) hours in a week, unless an employee meets certain exemption

requirements of 29 U.S.C. § 213 and all accompanying Department of Labor

regulations.

71. At all times relevant to this Complaint, Defendants classified

Plaintiff and all those similarly situated as exempt from the overtime requirements

of the FLSA.

72. Defendants failed to pay Plaintiff and all those similarly situated a

lawful minimum wage for all hours up to forty (40) per week and one and one-half

(1.5) times their regular rate for all hours worked over forty (40) hours per week,

despite their entitlement thereto.

73. Because these employees are similarly situated to Plaintiff, and are

owed overtime for the same reasons, the proposed collective is properly defined

as follows:

All Janitors employed by Defendants within the past three years.

74. Defendants' conduct and practice, as described above, has been

and is willful, intentional, unreasonable, arbitrary and in bad faith.

75. By reason of the unlawful acts alleged herein, Defendants are liable

to Plaintiff and those similarly situated for, and Plaintiff and those similarly

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situated seek, unpaid overtime wages, liquidated damages, and costs, including

reasonable attorney's fees as provided by the FLSA.

76. Alternatively, should the Court find that Defendants acted in good

faith in failing to pay Plaintiff and those similarly situated as provided by the

FLSA, Plaintiff and those similarly situated are entitled to an award of

prejudgment interest at the applicable legal rate.

VIII. THIRD CLAIM FOR RELIEF

(Individual Claim for Violation of the AMWA)

77. Plaintiff repeats and re-alleges all previous paragraphs of this

Complaint as though fully incorporated in this section.

78. Plaintiff asserts this claim for damages and declaratory relief

pursuant to the AMWA.

79. At all relevant times, Defendants were Plaintiff's "employer" within

the meaning of the AMWA.

80. Arkansas Code Annotated §§ 11-4-210 and 211 require employers

to pay all employees a minimum wage for all hours worked up to forty (40) in one

week and to pay one and one-half (1.5) times regular wages for all hours worked

over forty (40) hours in a week, unless an employee meets the exemption

requirements of 29 U.S.C. § 213 and accompanying Department of Labor

regulations.

81. At all times relevant to this Complaint, Defendants classified

Plaintiff as exempt from the overtime requirements of the AMWA.

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82. Despite the entitlement of Plaintiff to minimum wage and overtime payments under the AMWA, Defendants failed to pay Plaintiff a lawful minimum wage and an overtime rate of one and one-half (1.5) times his regular rate of pay

for all hours worked over forty (40) in each one-week period.

83. Defendants' conduct and practices, as described above, was willful,

intentional, unreasonable, arbitrary and in bad faith.

84. By reason of the unlawful acts alleged herein, Defendants are liable

to Plaintiff for monetary damages, liquidated damages, costs, and a reasonable

attorney's fee provided by the AMWA for all violations which occurred within the

three (3) years prior to the filing of this Complaint, plus periods of equitable

tolling.

85. Alternatively, should the Court find that Defendants acted in good

faith in failing to pay Plaintiff as provided by the AMWA, Plaintiff is entitled to an

award of prejudgment interest at the applicable legal rate.

IX. PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, premises considered, Plaintiff Willie Walker, individually

and on behalf of all others similarly situated, respectfully prays that Defendants

be summoned to appear and to answer herein and for the following relief:

A. That Defendants be required to account to Plaintiff, the collective

members, and the Court for all of the hours worked by Plaintiff and the collective

and all monies paid to them;

B. A declaratory judgment that Defendants' practices alleged herein

violate the FLSA and attendant regulations at 29 C.F.R. § 516 et seq.;

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C. A declaratory judgment that Defendants' practices alleged herein

violate the AMWA and the related regulations;

D. Certification of, and proper notice to, together with an opportunity to

participate in the litigation, all qualifying current and former employees;

E. Judgment for damages for all unpaid minimum wage and overtime

compensation under the FLSA and attendant regulations at 29 C.F.R. §516 et

seq.;

F. Judgment for damages for all unpaid minimum wage and overtime

compensation under the AMWA and the related regulations;

G. Judgment for liquidated damages pursuant to the FLSA and

attendant regulations at 29 C.F.R. §516 et seg., in an amount equal to all unpaid

minimum wages and overtime compensation owed to Plaintiff and members of

the collective during the applicable statutory period;

H. Judgment for liquidated damages pursuant to the AMWA and the

relating regulations;

I. An order directing Defendants to pay Plaintiff and members of the

collective pre-judgment interest, reasonable attorney's fees and all costs

connected with this action; and

J. Such other and further relief as this Court may deem necessary,

just and proper.

Respectfully submitted,

WILLIE WALKER, Individually and on Behalf of All Others Similarly Situated, PLAINTIFF

SANFORD LAW FIRM, PLLC One Financial Center 650 South Shackleford, Suite 411 Little Rock, Arkansas 72211 Telephone: (501) 221-0088

Chris Burks

Ark Bar No. 2010207 chris@sanfordlawfjrm.com

Facsimile: (888) 787-2040

Josh Sanford

Ark. Bar No. 2001037 josh@sanfordlawfirm.com

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF ARKANSAS WESTERN DIVISION

WILLIE WALKER, Individually and on Behalf of All Others Similarly Situated

PLAINTIFF

VS.

No. 4:18-cv-<u>57/-sww</u>

EJ'S CLEANING SERVICES, INC.

DEFENDANT

CONSENT TO JOIN COLLECTIVE ACTION

I have been employed as a Janitor for EJ's Cleaning Services, Inc., during some of the three years prior to the signing of this document. I understand this lawsuit is being brought under the Fair Labor Standards Act for unpaid wages and other relief. I consent to becoming a party-plaintiff in this lawsuit, to be represented by Sanford Law Firm, PLLC, and to be bound by any settlement of this action or adjudication by the Court.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

WILLIE WALKER

Date: August 21, 2018

JS 44 (Rev. 06/17)

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.

purpose of initiating the civil do	ocket sheet. (SEE INSTRUC	TIONS ON NEXT PAGE C	OF THIS FO	RM.)		4:181	V571-511111								
I. (a) PLAINTIFFS WILLIE WALKER, Individually and on Behalf of All Others Similarly Situated (b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff Pulaski (EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)				DEFENDANTS											
				EJ'S CLEANING SERVICES, INC., and EDWIN JOHNSON											
				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, A Josh Sanford, SANFORD 650 South Shackleford, S 501-221-0088; josh@sar	D LAW FIRM, PLLC, C Suite 411, Little Rock,	one Financial Cente	er,	Attorneys (If Know	wn)		
								II. BASIS OF JURISDI	CTION (Place an "X" in O	ne Box Only)				AL PARTIES	(Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintiff
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IV. NATURE OF SUIT		,,					of Suit Code Descriptions.								
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VI. CAUSE OF ACTION	29 USC 201														
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VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:	UNDER RULE 2	IS A CLASS ACTIO	N D	EMAND \$		JURY DEMAND	y if demanded in complaint: P:								
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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>EJ's Cleaning Services Named in Unpaid Minimum Wage</u>, <u>Overtime Lawsuit</u>