UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

Robert Ward, on behalf of himself and all others similarly situated,	: Civil Action No.:
Plaintiff,	:
V.	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
Flagship Credit Acceptance LLC,	CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT
Defendant.	:
	_:

For his Class Action Complaint, Plaintiff, Robert Ward, by and through his undersigned counsel, pleading on his own behalf and on behalf of all others similarly situated, states as follows:

INTRODUCTION

1. Plaintiff, Robert Ward ("Plaintiff"), brings this class action for damages resulting from the illegal actions of Flagship Credit Acceptance LLC ("Flagship" or "Defendant"). Defendant negligently, knowingly, and/or willfully placed automated and prerecorded calls to Plaintiff's cellular phone in violation of the Telephone Consumer Protection Act, 47 U.S.C. § 227, *et seq.* (the "TCPA").

2. Flagship is an automobile loan financer which specializes in the acquisition, issuance and servicing of prime to subprime automotive retail installment contracts.

3. As part of its acquisition and servicing of automotive retail installment contracts, it uses robo-dialing systems to bombard unsuspecting consumers who have no relationship with it with robocalls and prerecorded messages.

4. Plaintiff is such a consumer. He is not a Flagship customer yet has been bombarded with autodialed and pre-corded calls made without his consent and over his

objection.

5. Plaintiff seeks relief for himself and all others similarly situated for Flagship's unlawful behavior.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

6. This Court has original jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331. *Mims v. Arrow Fin. Serv., LLC*, 132 S.Ct. 740, 751-53 (2012).

7. Jurisdiction in this District is proper pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1332(d)(2), as Plaintiff seeks up to \$500 in damages for each violation of the TCPA, which when aggregated among a proposed class numbering more than a thousand members, exceeds the \$5,000,000.00 threshold for federal court jurisdiction. Plaintiff also alleges a national class which will result in at least one class member residing in a different state.

8. Venue is proper in this District. Defendant is a foreign limited liability company headquartered in Chadds Ford Pennsylvania. Defendant regularly, and at all times relevant herein, conducted business in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and in Delaware County.

PARTIES

9. Plaintiff is, and at all times mentioned herein was, an adult individual residing in College Park, Georgia.

10. Flagship is a Delaware limited liability company with its principal place of business located at 3 Christy Drive, Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania, 19317.

11. Plaintiff has never had a business relationship with Flagship and never consented to be contacted by Flagship on his cellular telephone.

THE TELEPHONE CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT OF 1991

12. The TCPA regulates, among other things, the use of automated telephone dialing systems.

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13. 47 U.S.C. § 227(a)(1) defines an automatic telephone dialing system ("ATDS") as equipment having the capacity –

(A) to store or produce telephone numbers to be called, using a random or sequential number generator; and

(B) to dial such numbers.

14. Specifically, 47 U.S.C. § 227(1)(A)(iii) prohibits any call using an ATDS or an artificial or prerecorded voice to a cellular phone without prior express consent by the person being called, unless the call is for emergency purposes.

ALLEGATIONS APPLICABLE TO ALL COUNTS

15. Defendant has repeatedly placed automated calls using an ATDS to Plaintiff's cellular telephone (954) XXX-6926.

16. The telephone number that Defendant used to contact Plaintiff was and is assigned to a cellular telephone service provided by AT&T wireless as specified in 47 U.S.C.

§ 227(b)(1)(A)(iii).

17. Flagship calls Plaintiff suing a variety of outbound caller identifications, including 972-893-6001, 469-398-4035, 469-398-4031 and 888-696-5899, all of which are Flagship phone numbers.

18. For each call, the Defendant is looking for a person named "Charles Walker."

19. Plaintiff is not Charles Walker. Plaintiff does not know a Charles Walker.

20. Flagship uses a series automatic telephone dialing systems and hardware when calling Plaintiff.

21. At all times mentioned herein, Flagship called Plaintiff's cellular telephone using an "automatic telephone dialing system" ("autodialer") as defined by 47 U.S.C. § 227(a)(1).

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22. When Plaintiff answered the calls from Flagship, he heard an extended period of silence before the calls would be routed to a live agent. This is indicative of Flagship's use of a "predictive dialer," an autodialer under the TCPA.

23. The Federal Communications Commission has defined ATDS's, under the TCPA, to include "predictive dialers." *See In the Matter of Rules and Regulations Implementing the Telephone Consumer Protection Act of 1991*, 23 F.C.C.R. 559, at ¶ 12, 2008 WL 65485 (F.C.C.) (2008).

24. On other occasions, when Plaintiff answered the Flagship call the autodialer played a pre-recorded and/or artificial message which said "Please wait for the next available agent." After a period of time, the call was then routed to a live agent. This too is indicative of a predictive dialer which is waiting for a live agent to become available to whom the call can be routed.

25. And on other occasions, Flagship would leave a blended pre-recorded and artificial message on Plaintiff's cellular telephone voicemail. The messages set forth:

This message is from Flagship Credit Acceptance. It is very important that you return this call as soon as possible. Please call 800-327-8543. Again, that number is 800-327-8543. Thank you.

26. The autodialer used to call Plaintiff has the capacity to store or produce telephone numbers to be called, using a random or sequential number generator, or from a database of numbers, and to call thousands of such numbers without human intervention.

27. When Plaintiff did speak with a live Flagship agent, by waiting on the line after transfer to the agent, he advised the agent that he was not Charles Walker and did not know Charles Walker and asked that Flagship stop calling Plaintiff's number.

28. On multiple occasions the agent advised Plaintiff that no further calls would occur.

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29. However, automated calls, calls playing prerecorded messages and calls leaving prerecorded messages to Plaintiff did not cease and continued over Plaintiff's objection.

30. Defendant did not have Plaintiff's prior express consent to place automated calls to Plaintiff on his cellular telephone.

31. Defendant did not have Plaintiff's prior express consent to call Plaintiff using an artificial or prerecorded voice.

32. Defendant's calls to Plaintiff's cellular telephone were not for "emergency purposes."

CLASS ACTION ALLEGATIONS

A. The Class

33. Plaintiff brings this case as a class action pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 23 on behalf of himself and all others similarly situated.

34. Plaintiff represents, and is a member of the following class: of two classes:

Class A

All persons within the United States to whom Flagship or its agent/s and/or employee/s called said person's cellular telephone through the use of any automatic telephone dialing system within the four years prior to the filing of the Complaint.

Class B

All persons within the United States to whom Flagship or its agent/s and/or employee/s called said person's cellular telephone with an artificial or prerecorded voice within the four years prior to the filing of the Complaint.

35. Defendant and its employees or agents are excluded from the Class. Plaintiff does

not know the number of members in the Classes, but believes the Class members number in the

several thousands, if not more. Thus, this matter should be certified as a Class action to assist in

the expeditious litigation of this matter.

B. Numerosity

36. Upon information and belief, Defendant has placed automated and/or prerecorded message calls to cellular telephone numbers belonging to thousands of consumers throughout the United States without their prior express consent. The members of the Class, therefore, are believed to be so numerous that joinder of all members is impracticable.

37. The exact number and identities of the Class members are unknown at this time and can only be ascertained through discovery. Identification of the Class members is a matter capable of ministerial determination from Defendant's call records.

C. <u>Common Questions of Law and Fact</u>

38. There are questions of law and fact common to the Class that predominate over any questions affecting only individual Class members. These questions include:

- a. Whether Defendant made non-emergency calls to Plaintiff and Class members' cellular telephones using an ATDS;
- b. Whether Defendant made non-emergency calls to Plaintiff and Class members' cellular telephones using an artificial or prerecorded voice;
- c. Whether Defendant can meet its burden of showing it obtained prior express consent to make each call;
- d. Whether Defendant's conduct was knowing willful, and/or negligent;
- e. Whether Defendant is liable for damages, and the amount of such damages; and
- f. Whether Defendant should be enjoined from such conduct in the future.

39. The common questions in this case are capable of having common answers. If Plaintiff's claim that Defendant routinely places automated calls to telephone numbers assigned

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to cellular telephone services is accurate, Plaintiff and the Class members will have identical claims capable of being efficiently adjudicated and administered in this case.

D. <u>Typicality</u>

40. Plaintiff's claims are typical of the claims of the Class members, as they are all based on the same factual and legal theories.

E. Protecting the Interests of the Class Members

41. Plaintiff will fairly and adequately protect the interests of the Class and has retained counsel experienced in handling class actions and claims involving unlawful business practices. Neither Plaintiff nor his counsel has any interests which might cause them not to vigorously pursue this action.

F. Proceeding Via Class Action is Superior and Advisable

42. A class action is the superior method for the fair and efficient adjudication of this controversy. The interest of Class members in individually controlling the prosecutions of separate claims against Flagship is small because it is not economically feasible for Class members to bring individual actions.

43. Management of this class action is unlikely to present any difficulties. Several courts have certified classes in TCPA actions. These cases include, but are not limited to: *Mitchem v. Ill. Collection Serv.*, 271 F.R.D. 617 (N.D. Ill. 2011); *Sadowski v. Med1 Online, LLC*, 2008 WL 2224892 (N.D. Ill., May 27, 2008); *CE Design Ltd. V. Cy's Crabhouse North, Inc.*, 259 F.R.D. 135 (N.D. Ill. 2009); *Lo v. Oxnard European Motors, LLC*, 2012 WL 1932283 (S.D. Cal., May 29, 2012).

<u>COUNT I</u> <u>Negligent Violations of the Telephone Consumer Protection Act,</u> <u>47 U.S.C. § 227, et seq.</u>

44. Plaintiff repeats and realleges the above paragraphs of this Complaint and

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incorporates them herein by reference.

45. Defendant negligently placed multiple automated and prerecorded calls to cellular numbers belonging to Plaintiff and the other members of the Classes without their prior express consent.

46. Each of the aforementioned calls by Defendant constitutes a negligent violation of the TCPA.

47. Plaintiff and the Classes are entitled to an award of \$500.00 in statutory damages for each message sent in violation of the TCPA pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(3)(B).

48. Additionally, Plaintiff and the Classes are entitled to and seek injunctive relief prohibiting such conduct by Defendant in the future.

49. Plaintiff and the Classes are also entitled to and do seek a declaration that:

- a. Defendant violated the TCPA;
- b. Defendant placed telemarketing text messages; and
- c. Defendant placed text messages to the Plaintiff and the Classes without prior express written consent.

<u>COUNT II</u> <u>Knowing and/or Willful Violations of the Telephone Consumer Protection Act,</u> <u>47 U.S.C. § 227, et seq.</u>

50. Plaintiff repeats and realleges the above paragraphs of this Complaint and incorporates them herein by reference.

51. Defendant knowingly and/or willfully placed multiple automated calls to cellular numbers belonging to Plaintiff and the other members of the Class without their prior express consent.

52. Each of the aforementioned calls by Defendant constitutes a knowing and/or willful violation of the TCPA.

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53. As a result of Defendant's knowing and/or willful violations of the TCPA,

Plaintiff and the Class are entitled to an award of treble damages up to \$1,500.00 for each call in violation of the TCPA pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(3)(B) and 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(3)(C).

54. Additionally, Plaintiff and the Classes are entitled to and seek injunctive relief prohibiting such conduct by Defendant in the future.

55. Plaintiff and the Classes are also entitled to and do seek a declaration that:

- a. Defendant knowingly and/or willfully violated the TCPA;
- b. Defendant knowingly and/or willfully placed telemarketing text messages to Plaintiff and the Classes;
- c. Defendant knowingly and/or willfully obtained the telephone numbers of noncustomers;
- d. Defendant willfully placed telemarketing text messages to non-customers such as Plaintiff and the Classes, knowing it did not have prior express written consent to do so; and
- e. It is Defendant's practice and history to place telemarketing text messages to non-customers without their prior express consent.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays that the Court grant Plaintiff and the Class the following relief against Defendant:

- 1. Injunctive relief prohibiting such violations of the TCPA by Defendant in the future;
- 2. Declaratory relief as requested;
- 3. Statutory damages of \$500.00 for each and every call in violation of the TCPA

pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(3)(B);

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 Treble damages of up to \$1,500.00 for each and every call in violation of the TCPA pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(3)(C);

> Facsimile: (203) 653-3424 Attorneys for Plaintiff

- 5. An award of attorneys' fees and costs to counsel for Plaintiff; and
- 6. Such other relief as the Court deems just and proper.

TRIAL BY JURY DEMANDED ON ALL COUNTS

Dated: May 4, 2017

Respectfully submitted, By Sergei Lemberg LEMBERG LAW, L.L.C. 43 Danbury Road, 3rd Floor Wilton, CT 06897 Telephone: (203) 653-2250

-Case 2:17-cv-02069-MMB Document 1-1 Filed 05/05/17 Page 1 of 1 CIVIL COVER SHEET

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JS 44 (Rev 07/16)

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I. (a) PLAINTIFFS		DEFENDANT	8		
Robert Ward, on behalf c	of himself and all other	s similarly situated.	Flagship Credit A	cceptance LLC,	
(b) County of Residence c		State of Georgia	County of Residence	e of First Listed Defendant	County of Dauphin
(M.	XCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFIFC)	4.8653)	NOTE: IN LAND C THE TRAC	<i>(INULS, PLANTEFF CASES)</i> CONDEMNATION CASES, USE? T OF LAND INVOLVED	
(c) Altomeys (Firm Name,) Lemberg Law, LLC,	Address, and Felephone Munthe	(r)	Attorneys (IJ Kaanen	ł	
43 Danbury Road Wilton, Connecticut 0689	97 (203) 653-2250				
II. BASIS OF JURISDI	CTION (Place on "X" ind.	ne Box Only)	HI. CITIZENSHIP OF I		(Place on ^{Arie} in One Rax far Plainin and One Box for Defendant)
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2 U.S. Government Defendant	□ 4 Diversity (Indicate Citizensh	ip of Parties in hem 111)	Citizen of Another State	□ 2 □ 2 Incorporated and of Business.In	
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IV. NATURE OF SUIT		ily	FORFEITURE/PENALTY	BANKRUPTCY	OTHER STATUTES
 110 Insurance 120 Marine 130 Miller Act 140 Negotiable Instrument 150 Recovery of Overpayment & Enforcement of Judgment 151 Medicare Act 152 Recovery of Defaulted Student Leans (Excludes Veterans) 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits 160 Stockholders' Saits 190 Other Contract 195 Contract Product Liability 196 Franchise REAL PROPERTY 210 Forcelosure 230 Forcelosure 245 For Product Liability 245 For Product Liability 240 All Other Real Property 	PERSONAL INJURY 310 Airplane 313 Airplane Product Liability 320 Assault, Libel & 330 Federal Employers' Liability 340 Marine 345 Marine Product Liability 346 Marine Product Liability 350 Motor Vehicle Product Liability 360 Other Personal Injury 362 Personal Injury - Medical Malpractice CIVIL RIGHTS 440 Other Civil Rights 441 Voting 443 Honsing/ Accommodations L445 Amer, w/Disabilities - Einployment 446 Kducation	PERSONAL INJURY 965. Personal Injury - Product Liability 367. Health Care/ Plarmaceutical Personal Injury Product Liability 368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability PERSONAL PROPERT 370 Other Fraud 371 Truth in Lending 380 Other Personal Property Damage 385 Property Damage 1855 Property Damage 1985 Motions to Vacate Sentence 510 Motions to Vacate Source al 530 General 535 Death Penalty Other: 540 Mandamus & Other: 550 Civil Rights 555 Prison Condition. 560 Civil Detainee - Conditions of Confirmment	 ☐ 625 Drug Related Scizure of Property 21 USC 881 ☐ 690 Other ☐ 690 Other ☐ 710 Fair (abor Standards Act ☐ 720 Labor/Management Relations ☐ 740 Railway Labor Act ☐ 751 Family and Medical Leave Act ☐ 790 Other Labor Litigation 5 791 Employee Retirement Income Scentrity Act ☐ 791 Employee Retirement Income Scentrity Act ☐ 791 Employee Retirement Income Scentrity Act 	422 Appeal 28 USC 158 423 Withdrawal 28 USC 157 PROPERTY RIGHTS 820 Copyrights 830 Putem 840 Trademark SOCIAL SECURITY 861 HIA (13950) 862 Black Long (923) 863 DIWC/DIWW (405(g)) 864 SSD 101e XVI 865 RSI (405(g)) FEDERAL TAX SUITS 870 Taxes (U.S. Plaintiff or Defendint) r 871 IRS = United Party 26 USC 7609	 □ 375 False Claims Act □ 376 Qui Tam (3) USC 3729(a) □ 400 Sinte Reapportionment □ 410 Antifrust □ 410 Antifrust □ 430 Banks and Banking □ 450 Connerce □ 460 Deportation □ 470 Racketter Influenced and Compt Organizations □ 480 Cansumer Credit □ 480 Cansumer Credit □ 490 Cable/Sat FV □ 850 Securities/Commodities/ Exchange ■ 890 Other Statistory Actions □ 893 Environmental Mattets □ 895 Arbitration □ 899 Administrative Procedure Act/Review of Appeal of Agency Decision □ 950 Constitutionality of State Statutes
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	i milei description of ca	use: Felephone Consume	r Protection Act		
VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:	UNDER RULE 2	IS A CLASS ACTION 3, F.R.Cv.P.	DEMAND S 20,000,000.00	CHECK YES only JURY DEMAND	if domanded in complaint : X Yes 🗇 No
VIII. RELATED CASE IF ANY	V(S) (See instructions):	JUDGE		DOCKET NUMBER	
DATE		SIGNATURE OF ATTO	DRNEY OF RECORD		
05/04/2017 For office use only			4272		

FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA — DESIGNATION FOR assignment to appropriate calendar.	RM to be used by counsel to indicate the category of the case for the purpose of
Address of Plaintin 2591 Charlestown Drive College Park,	GA 30337
Address of Defendant: 3 Christy Drive, Chadds Ford, Pennsy	Ivania, 19317.
Place of Accident, Incident or Transaction: County of Dauphin	
	e For Additional Space)
Does this civil action involve a nongovernmental corporate party with any parent corpor (Attach two copies of the Disclosure Statement Form in accordance with Fed.R.Civ.P.	
Does this case involve multidistrict litigation possibilities?	Yes□ No⊠
RELATED CASE, IF ANY;	
Case Number: Judge	Date Terminated:
Civil cases are deemed related when yes is answered to any of the following questions:	
I is this case related to property included in an earlier numbered suit pending or within	one year previously terminated action in this court?
	Yes No X
2. Does this case involve the same issue of fact or grow out of the same transaction as a ration in this case. (0)	
action in this court?	Yes Not
3. Does this case involve the validity or infringement of a patent already in suit or any e	
terminated action in this court?	Yes□ No X
4. Is this case a second or successive habeas corpus, social security appeal, or pro se civ	
	Yes□ No⊠
CIVIL: (Place V In ONE CATEGORY ONLY)	
A. Federal Question Cases:	B. Diversity Jurisdiction Cases:
1. D Indemnity Contract, Marine Contract, and All Other Contracts	1. D Insurance Contract and Other Contracts
2. 🗆 FELA	2. 🗆 Airplane Personal Injury
3. 🗆 Jones Act-Personal Injury	3. 🗆 Assault, Defamation
4. □ Antitrust	4. 🗆 Marine Personal Injury
5. 🗆 Patent	5. 🗆 Motor Vehicle Personal Injury
6. 🗖 Labor-Management Relations	6. □ Other Personal Injury (Please specify)
7. D Civil Rights	7. D Products Liability
8. 🗆 Habeas Corpus	8. D Products Liability Asbestos
9. 🗆 Securities Act(s) Cases	9.
0. D Social Security Review Cases	(Please specify)
1. X All other Federal Question Cases (Please specify) Comsumer Credit	
ARBITRATION C	
, counsel of record do hereby	y certify:
 Pursuant to Local Civil Rule 53.2, Section 3(c)(2), that to the best of my knowledg 150,000.00 exclusive of interest and costs; Relief other than monetary damages is sought, 	ge and belief, the damages recoverable in this civil action case exceed the sum of
DATE: 05/04/2017	Bar No: 317359
A Algorite val-1 prov	Attorney I.D.#
NOTE: A trial de noto will be trial by jury only	if there has been compliance with F.R.C.P. 38.
	ng or within one year previously terminated action in this court

CIV.	609	(5/2012)	
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IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

CASE MANAGEMENT TRACK DESIGNATION FORM

Robert Ward, on behalf of himself and	:	CIVIL ACTION
all others similarly situated,	:	
V .	:	
Flagship Credit Acceptance LLC,	1	
· ···3-····· ··························		NO.

In accordance with the Civil Justice Expense and Delay Reduction Plan of this court, counsel for plaintiff shall complete a Case Management Track Designation Form in all civil cases at the time of filing the complaint and serve a copy on all defendants. (See § 1:03 of the plan set forth on the reverse side of this form.) In the event that a defendant does not agree with the plaintiff regarding said designation, that defendant shall, with its first appearance, submit to the clerk of court and serve on the plaintiff and all other parties, a Case Management Track Designation Form specifying the track to which that defendant believes the case should be assigned.

SELECT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CASE MANAGEMENT TRACKS:

(a) Habeas Corpus – Cases brought under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 through § 2255.	()
(b) Social Security – Cases requesting review of a decision of the Secretary of Health and Human Services denying plaintiff Social Security Benefits.	()
(c) Arbitration – Cases required to be designated for arbitration under Local Civil Rule 53.2	2. ()
(d) Asbestos – Cases involving claims for personal injury or property damage from exposure to asbestos.	()
(e) Special Management – Cases that do not fall into tracks (a) through (d) that are commonly referred to as complex and that need special or intense management by the court. (See reverse side of this form for a detailed explanation of special management cases.)	()
(f) Standard Management – Cases that do not fall into any one of the other tracks.	C	X)

Telephone	FAX Number	E-Mail Address
(203) 653-2250	(203) 653-3424	slemberg@lemberglaw.com
Date	Attorney at haw	Attorney for
05/04/2017		Plaintiff

(Civ. 660) 10/02

ClassAction.org

This complaint is part of ClassAction.org's searchable class action lawsuit database and can be found in this post: <u>Flagship Credit Acceptance Sued Over Prerecorded Calls</u>