| 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 | LAW OFFICE OF COLIN S. WELSH Colin S. Welsh SBN: 314103 4872 Topanga Canyon Blvd., #355 Woodland Hills, CA 91364 Tel: 747-244-5178 Fax: 213-289-2758 colinwelsh.esq@gmail.com BELL LAW, LLC Bryce B. Bell (pro hac vice forthcoming) Mark W. Schmitz (pro hac vice forthcoming) Jenilee Zentrich (pro hac vice forthcoming) 2600 Grand Blvd., Suite 580 Kansas City, Missouri 64108 T: 816-886-8209 F: 816-817-8500 bryce@belllawkc.com ms@belllawkc.com jz@belllawkc.com | E-FILED 5/27/2021 8:00 AM Superior Court of California County of Fresno By: I. Herrera, Deputy |
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| 13 | Attorneys for Plaintiff SUPERIOR COURT OF TH | E STATE OF CALIFORNIA |
| 14 | COUNTY OF FRESNO – 1 | |
| 15 | COUNTY OF FRESHO - | D.F. SISK COURTHOUSE |
| 16 | | |
| 17 | EVELYN JARAMILLO, | Case No. 21CECG01529 |
| 18 | Plaintiff, | |
| 19 | VS. | COMPLAINT |
| 20 | TITLEMAX of California, a California | NEGLIGENCE VIOLATION OF THE ROSENTHAL |
| 21 | corporation; MVCONNECT LLC dba MVTRAC, an Illinois limited liability | FAIR DEBT COLLECTION |
| 22 | company; PARAMOUNT RECOVERY SERVICE, a California corporation; and DOES | PRACTICES ACT 3. VIOLATION OF THE CONSUMERS |
| 23 | 1-75, inclusive. | LEGAL REMEDIES ACT 4. VIOLATION OF BUSINESS AND |
| 24 | | " VIOLITION OF BOOM (ESSITE) |
| 24 | | PROFESSIONS CODE § 17200 |
| 25 | Defendants. | 5. CONVERSION6. ALTERNATIVELY, TRESPASS TO |
| | Defendants. | 5. CONVERSION |
| 25 | Defendants. | 5. CONVERSION6. ALTERNATIVELY, TRESPASS TO CHATTEL |

in providing loans while taking security interests in vehicles to secure such loans throughout the State of California.

- 10. Defendant MVCONNECT, LLC is an Illinois limited liability company, that also does business as MVTRAC, neither of which is authorized to do business in the State of California, which, at all times relevant herein, was engaged in the aggregation and supplying of data to repossession agencies.
- 11. Defendant Paramount Recovery Service ("Paramount") is a California corporation and was, at all times relevant herein, doing business as a repossession agency and licensed by the California Bureau of Security and Investigative Services.
- 12. Plaintiff does not know the true names and capacities, whether corporate, partnership, associate, individual, or otherwise, of Defendants sued herein as Does 1 through 75, inclusive, and thus names them under the provisions of § 474 of the Code of Civil Procedure. Defendants Does 1 through 75, inclusive, are in some manner responsible for the acts, occurrences, and transactions set forth herein, and are legally liable to Plaintiff and/or they are the alter-ego of the Defendants named herein. Plaintiff will set forth the true names and capacities of the fictitiously-named Defendants together with appropriate charging allegations when ascertained.
- 13. All acts of the Defendants' employees, as hereinafter alleged, were authorized or ratified by Defendants' owner and/or managing agents.
- 14. Each Defendant, whether actually or fictitiously named herein, was the principal, agent (actual or ostensible), co-conspirator, or employee of each other Defendant and in acting as such principal or within the course and scope of such employment, agency, or conspiracy, took some part in the acts and omissions hereinafter set forth by reason of which each Defendant is liable to Plaintiff for the relief prayed for herein.
- 15. The violations of law hereinafter described have been committed in the State of California. Defendants regularly conduct business and provide services and products to buyers throughout this state and specifically within the County of Fresno, where any

| 1 | relevant contracts were entered into between Plaintiff and Defendants. Therefore, | | | |
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| 2 | jurisdiction and venue are proper within this Court. | | | |
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| 4 | | SUMMARY OF ALLEGATIONS | | |
| 5 | TitleMax's Lien | | | |
| 6 | 16. | In August 2018, a Mr. Ross purchased the Sequoia. | | |
| 7 | 17. | In October 2018, TitleMax filed a lien on the Sequoia granted by Mr. Ross with the | | |
| 8 | California Department of Motor Vehicles. A title to the Sequoia was issued to Mr. Ross reflecting | | | |
| 9 | TitleMax's 1 | ien. | | |
| 10 | 18. | Upon information and belief, on or about January 28, 2019, Sierra Towing towed | | |
| 11 | the Sequoia from an apartment complex named The Springs for a parking violation. | | | |
| 12 | 19. | After no one came forward to reclaim the Sequoia, Sierra Towing initiated the | | |
| 13 | process to sell the Sequoia by a lien sale. | | | |
| 14 | 20. | Upon information and belief, on or about February 7, 2019, a lien sale notice was | | |
| 15 | sent to TitleMax by the California Department of Motor Vehicles. | | | |
| 16 | Evelyn's Purchase of the Sequoia | | | |
| 17 | 21. | On or about March 11, 2019, Evelyn purchased the Sequoia from Sierra Towing. | | |
| 18 | 22. | Evelyn and Sierra Towing set up a payment plan to cover the cost of the purchase. | | |
| 19 | 23. | Between April 2019 and October 2019, Evelyn made a total of seven payments | | |
| 20 | towards the S | Sequoia, for a total purchase price of \$1,500.00. | | |
| 21 | 24. | On or about October 11, 2019, after all payments were made pursuant to the payment | | |
| 22 | plan, the Seq | uoia was conveyed to Evelyn. | | |
| 23 | 25. | On or about November 9, 2019, a clean and lien-free title was issued to Evelyn by | | |
| 24 | the Californi | a Department of Motor Vehicles. A copy of this title is attached hereto as "Exhibit A." | | |
| 25 | | TitleMax's Wrongful Repossession of the Sequoia | | |
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- 26. At around 3:00 AM, approximately seven (7) months after clear title to the Sequoia was provided to Evelyn by the DMV, a tow truck came to Evelyn's home on early morning with the intent to repossess the Sequoia.
- 27. Because she was administering medication to her son at that time, Evelyn was awake and noticed lights outside her home.
 - 28. Upon seeing the lights of the tow truck outside, Evelyn went outside to investigate.
 - 29. The tow truck driver was accompanied by another male driving a Toyota Prius.
- 30. The tow truck driver informed Evelyn that he was there to tow the Sequoia because there was an unpaid title loan on it, and he had been told to repossess it.
 - 31. At some point, Evelyn's husband joined her outside.
 - 32. The tow truck driver provided that he worked for Paramount Recovery.
- 33. The tow truck driver refused to show Evelyn and her husband any paperwork, much less any documentation authorizing or supporting a repossession of the Sequoia.
- 34. The tow truck driver's companion emerged from the Prius. He was wearing a dark colored hooded sweatshirt and bore no indicators that he had any official capacity.
- 35. Evelyn's husband informed the driver that he was not allowed to tow the Sequoia because they had a clear title to the Sequoia.
- 36. The tow truck driver told Evelyn and her husband that, if their claim of free and clear ownership of the Vehicle had any validity, they needed to straighten it out and that, otherwise, he would be returning the next day to effect the repossession.
- 37. After the tow truck driver and his companion departed, Evelyn and her husband were too distressed to go back to sleep.
- 38. As soon as it opened in the morning, Evelyn and her husband went to Sierra Towing, who had sold the Vehicle to her, in order to determine why someone was trying to repossess it. Sierra towing assured them that nothing was wrong with the sale.
- 39. Evelyn and her husband also called the Fresno Police Department to report the repossession attempt.

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SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION: VIOLATION OF THE ROSENTHAL FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT Against All Defendants

- 63. Plaintiff realleges and incorporates by reference each and every allegation set forth in the preceding paragraphs as though alleged in full herein.
- 64. The Rosenthal Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, Civil Code, § 1788 et seq. ("RFDCPA") was enacted in 1976 to ensure the integrity of our banking and credit industry. Civil Code, § 1788.1(b). The Legislature found that "unfair or deceptive debt collection practices undermine the public confidence which is essential to the continued functioning of the banking and credit system and sound extensions of credit to consumers." Civil Code, § 1788.1(a)(2).
- 65. Defendants are "debt collectors" within the meaning of Civil Code § 1788.2(d), in that they regularly and in the ordinary course of business, on behalf of themselves or others, engage in acts and practices in connection with the collection of consumer debts.
- 66. Plaintiff is a "debtor" within the meaning of Civil Code, § 1788.2(h), in that she is a natural person from whom the Defendants sought to collect a consumer debt alleged to be due and owing.
- 67. The purported debt which Defendants have attempted to collect from Plaintiff was a "consumer debt" within the meaning of Civil Code § 1788.2(f), in that it was incurred primarily for personal, family, or household purposes.
- 68. The representations by Defendants described above violate the RFDCPA. These violations include, but are not limited to, Collectors misrepresenting that Plaintiff and her interest in the Vehicle were subject to a lien, and that Defendants had the right to repossess the Vehicle, in violation of 15 U.S.C. § 1692e.
- 69. By violating the provisions of 15 U.S.C. 1692, Defendants have violated Civil Code § 1788.17.

- g. Representing that the subject of a transaction has been supplied in accordance with a previous representation when it has not; and
- h. Inserting an unconscionable provision in the contract
- 79. Defendants violated the CLRA by:
 - a. Failing to perform due diligence to ensure they had a valid, legal interest in the Sequoia;
 - b. Wrongfully repossessing the Sequoia with no valid, legal interest in the Sequoia; and
 - c. Failing to timely return the Sequoia after learning they had no valid, legal interest in the Sequoia.
- 80. On October 24, 2020, Plaintiff mailed CLRA demand letters via certified mail with return receipt requests to TitleMax, Paramount Recovery Services, and MVCONNECT. These CLRA letters alerted these parties of violations of Civil Code §§1770(a) subsections 2, 3, 5, 7, 14, 16, and 19. These letters served as notice to Defendants of their respective violations of the CLRA.
- 81. On November 2, 2020, Plaintiff mailed CLRA demand letters via certified mail with return receipt requests to Paramount Recovery Services, MVCONNECT, and Titlemax. These CLRA letters alerted these parties of violations of _Civil Code §§1770(a) subsections 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 14, 16, and 19. These letters served as notice to Defendants of their respective violations of the CLRA.
- 82. Defendants did not remedy the alleged violations within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the CLRA demand letter.
- 83. Therefore, Plaintiff seeks actual, statutory, general, incidental, and consequential damages.
- 84. Additionally, Plaintiff seeks punitive damages from Defendants for their malicious, oppressive, and fraudulent acts against Plaintiff.
- 85. Civil Code 1780(a)(2) of the CLRA provides that a consumer is entitled to an order enjoining unlawful methods, acts, or practices which violate the CLRA. Accordingly, Plaintiff seeks an order enjoining Defendants from the illegal acts, methods, and practices set forth in the petition.
- 86. Pursuant to Civil Code 1780(e) of the CLRA, a prevailing Plaintiff may also recover court costs and reasonable attorneys' fees according to proof at the time of trial.

FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION:

VIOLATION OF CALIFORNIA'S UNFAIR COMPETITION LAW Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 17200, et seq.

Against All Defendants

- 87. Plaintiff realleges and incorporates by reference each and every allegation set forth in the preceding paragraphs as though alleged in full herein.
- 88. Section 17200 of the California Business & Professions Code ("UCL") prohibits any unlawful, unfair, or fraudulent business practice.
- 89. Defendants committed an unlawful business practice by: (1) Failing to perform due diligence to ensure they had a valid, legal interest in the Sequoia; (2) Wrongfully repossessing the Sequoia with no valid, legal interest in the Sequoia; and (3) Failing to timely return the Sequoia after learning they had no valid, legal interest in the Sequoia.
- 90. Defendants' practices consequently constitute unfair business acts or practices within the meaning of Business and Professions Code 17200.
- 91. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' unlawful, unfair, and fraudulent conduct, Plaintiff lost money and property.
- 92. The harm to Plaintiff outweighs the utility of Defendants' practices, particularly considering the available alternatives, and Defendants' practices are immoral, unscrupulous, unethical, and against public policy.
- 93. Defendants' unlawful, unfair, and fraudulent business practices present a continuing threat to Plaintiff and others in that Defendants will continue utilizing similar policies and practices.
- 94. Section 17203 provides that Plaintiff is entitled to an order enjoining Defendants from engaging in acts or practices that violate Section 17200, as well as providing for equitable monetary relief.
- 95. Plaintiff seeks equitable monetary relief, and an order enjoining Defendants from engaging in the acts and practices set forth in this Petition.

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| 1 | 96. Pl | laintiff also seeks her reasonable attorneys' fees and costs pursuant to Code of Civil |
| 2 | Procedure § 1021 | 1.5. |
| 3 | | FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION: |
| 4 | | CONVERSION Against All Defendants |
| 5 | 97. Pl | laintiff realleges and incorporates by reference each and every allegation set forth |
| 6 | in the preceding | paragraphs as though alleged in full herein. |
| 7 | | t all times relevant herein, specifically including the date and time when |
| 8 | Paramount Reco | very towed the Sequoia, Plaintiff was the rightful owner of the Sequoia and had |
| 9 | legal right of pos | |
| 10 | 99. A | cting individually and as an agent of Defendant TitleMax, Defendant Paramount |
| 11 | Recovery took po | ossession of the Sequoia without authorization or right of ownership or possession. |
| 12 | 100. D | refendants TitleMax acted in conspiracy with Defendant Paramount Recovery to |
| 13 | take unauthorized | d possession of the Sequoia. |
| 14 | 101. D | efendants took possession of the Sequoia with the intent to exercise control and to |
| 15 | the exclusion of | Plaintiff's rights of ownership and possession. |
| 16 | 102. D | efendants did in fact exercise control over the Sequoia and Plaintiff was deprived |
| 17 | of possession, co | ontrol, and use of the Sequoia. |
| 18 | 103. D | efendants failed to yield possession of the Sequoia upon demand. |
| 19 | 104. A | s a result of Defendants' conduct as described herein, Plaintiff suffered damages, |
| 20 | including loss of | use of vehicle and emotional distress. |
| 21 | 105. TI | he conduct of Defendants showed reckless indifference to the rights of others and |
| 22 | they acted with m | nalice, oppression and fraud toward Plaintiff within the meaning of Civil Code § 3294 |
| 23 | and Plaintiff is, t | herefore, entitled to punitive damages. in an amount that will adequately punish |
| 24 | Defendant TitleN | Max and deter it and others from like conduct. |
| 25 | | SIXTH CAUSE OF ACTION |
| 26 | | ALTERNATIVE TO THE FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION TRESPASS TO CHATTEL |
| 27 | | Against All Defendants |
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Plaintiff realleges and incorporates by reference each and every allegation set forth

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106.

in the preceding paragraphs as though alleged in full herein.

| 1 | 1. For general damages according to proof at trial; |
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| 2 | 2. Three times actual damages as provided by Penal Code 496(c); |
| 3 | 3. For punitive damages according to proof at trial; |
| 4 | 4. For the equitable and injunctive relief permitted under Civil Code § 1780 and Business & |
| 5 | Professions Code § 17200; |
| 6 | 5. For pre-judgment interest at the legal rate; |
| 7 | 6. For reasonable attorneys' fees and costs of the suit as permitted by law including, but not |
| 8 | limited to, such provision at Code of Civil Procedure § 1021.5, Civil Code § 1780(e) and |
| 9 | 1788.30(c), and Penal Code § 496; and |
| 10 | 7. For such other and further relief as the Court deems just and proper under the circumstances. |
| 11 | Dated: May 26, 2021 |
| 12 | Jin John |
| 13 | Colin S. Welsh, Esq. Attorney for Plaintiff, |
| 14 | EVELYN JARAMILLO |
| 15 | |
| 16 | LAW OFFICE OF COLIN S. WELSH |
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| 26 | MS@BellLawKC.com JZ@BellLawKC.com |
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| 28 | Attorneys for Plaintiff Evelyn Jaramillo |

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| 3 | Declaration of Plaintiff's Counsel Re: Venue | |
| 4 | I, Colin S. Welsh, declare as follows: | |
| 5 | Pursuant to Civil Code § 1780(d) this action has been commenced in this county | |
| 6 | because as alleged in the complaint and incorporated herein, | |
| 7 | _x all or a substantial portion of the transaction occurred in this county; and/ or | |
| 8 | the defendant resides in this county; and/ or | |
| 9 | defendant's principal place of business is in the county; and/or | |
| 10 | _x the defendant is doing business in this county. | |
| 11 | | |
| 12 | I declare under penalty of perjury that the above is true and correct and that this | |
| 13 | declaration was executed on May 26, 2021, under the laws of California. | |
| 14 | By: | |
| 15 | Colin S. Welsh, Esq. | |
| 16 | Attorney for Plaintiff, EVELYN JARAMILLO | |
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