Case 3:17-cv-02529-DMS-WVG Document 1 Filed 12/18/17 PageID.1 Page 1 of 11

Plaintiff EUGENE CLARK alleges as follows:

INTRODUCTION

- 1. Plaintiff EUGENE CLARK (hereinafter referred to as "Plaintiff"), brings this lawsuit against SAN DIEGO ACCOUNTS SERVICE, a California Corporation d/b/a/ CALIFORNIA ACCOUNTS SERVICE (hereinafter "Defendant") for violations of the Federal Fair Debt Collection Practices Act ("FDCPA"), and Rosenthal Fair Debt Collections Practices Act ("Rosenthal FDCPA").
- 2. Plaintiff brings this action to seek actual damages, statutory damages, injunctive relief, attorneys' fees and costs, and other relief the Court deems appropriate.
- 3. Plaintiff alleges as follows, upon personal knowledge as to himself and his own acts and experiences, and, as to all other matters, upon information and belief, including investigation conducted by his attorneys.
- 4. Plaintiff makes these allegations on information and belief, with the exception of those allegations that pertain to Plaintiff, or to a Plaintiff's counsel, which Plaintiff alleges on personal knowledge.
- 5. While many violations are described below with specificity, this Complaint alleges violations of the statutes cited in their entirety.
- 6. Unless otherwise stated, Plaintiff alleges that any violations by Defendant were knowing and intentional, and that Defendant did not maintain procedures reasonably adapted to avoid any such violations.
- 7. Unless otherwise indicated, the use of Defendant in this Complaint includes all agents, employees, officers, members, directors, heirs, successors, assigns, principals, trustees, sureties, subrogees, representatives, and insurers of Defendant.

PARTIES

8. Plaintiff is, and at all times mentioned herein was, an individual, residing in the County of San Diego, State of California.

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- Plaintiff is a "consumer" as the term is defined by 15 U.S.C. section 9. 1692a(3) and a "debtor" as the term is defined by California Civil Code section 1788.2(h).
- 10. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereupon alleges, that Defendant is, and at all times mentioned herein was, a limited partnership who was conducting and engaging in business in the County of San Diego, State of California.
- Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereupon alleges, that Defendant uses an instrumentality of interstate commerce or the mails in a business the principal purpose of which is the collection of debts, or who regularly collects or attempts to collect, directly or indirectly, debts owed or due or asserted to be owed or due to another and is therefore a "debt collector" as the term is defined by 15 U.S.C. section 1692a(6).
- 12. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereupon alleges that Defendant is a "debt collector" as the term is defined by Civil Code section 1788.2(c).
- 13. Defendant attempted to collect a medical debt which is a "consumer debt" as the term is defined by the FDCPA and Rosenthal FDCPA.
- Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereupon alleges that at all times 14. herein mentioned each of the Defendants was the agent, servant, employee, or partner of each of the remaining defendants and, in committing the acts and omissions hereinafter alleged, was acting within the course and scope of such agency, employment, partnership, or other business relationship, and were each responsible for the acts and omissions alleged in this complaint.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- This Court has jurisdiction under 15 U.S.C. section 1692k(d), 28 U.S.C. 15. section 1331, and 28 U.S.C. section 1367 for supplemental state claims.
- This action arises out of violations of the FDCPA and Rosenthal 16. FDCPA. Because Defendant does business within the State of California, County of San Diego, personal jurisdiction is established.

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Venue is proper pursuant to 28 U.S.C. section 1391.

RELEVANT FACTS

- Sometime after April 27, 2017, Plaintiff received a collection letter 18. (hereinafter referred to as "Collection Notice"), dated April 27, 2017, from Defendant, attempting to collect a debt in the amount of \$77.49 from Plaintiff. copy of the Collection Notice is attached hereto as Exhibit 1, and is incorporated herein by reference.
- 19. Defendant's Collection Notice does not state that the \$77.49 debt is increasing due to accruing interest, late charges, or other fees. In fact, Defendant's Collection Notice is completely devoid of any language that would either confirm or deny the existence of acquiring interest, late charges, or other fees.
- Upon information and belief, Defendant was either charging daily 20. accruing interest, late charges, or other fees, which increased the total amount owed.
- 21. Upon information and belief, Defendant's debt collection practice is largely automated and utilizes standardized form letters or templates.

CLASS ALLEGATIONS

22. Plaintiff brings this action on his own behalf, and on behalf of all others similarly situated.

FDCPA CLASS

23. Plaintiff defines the FDCPA CLASS as follows:

> All persons located in the State of California to whom Defendant sent, within one year before the date of this complaint and in connection with the collection of a consumer debt, an initial written communication that is substantially similar or materially identical to Defendant's Collection Notice which was not returned undelivered by the United States Postal Service, in which Defendant did not include language that the amount of the debt was subject to increase due to accruing interest, late charges, or other fees.

A PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION 11251 RANCHO CARMEL DR. # 500694 348-4939

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ROSENTHAL FDCPA CLASS

- 24. Plaintiff defines the ROSENTHAL FDCPA CLASS as follows:
 - All persons located in the State of California to whom Defendant sent, within one year before the date of this complaint and in connection with the collection of a consumer debt, an initial written communication that is substantially similar or materially identical to Defendant's Collection Notice which was not returned undelivered by the United States Postal Service, in which Defendant did not include language that the amount of the debt was subject to increase due to accruing interest, late charges, or other fees.
- 25. The FDCPA Class and the Rosenthal FDCPA Class shall be referred to jointly as "The Classes."
 - 26. Defendant and its employees or agents are excluded from the Classes.
- 27. Plaintiff does not know the exact number of persons in the Classes, but believes them to be in the several hundreds, if not thousands, making joinder of all these actions impracticable.
- 28. The identity of the individual members is ascertainable through Defendant's and/or Defendant's agents' records or by public notice.
- 29. There is a well-defined community of interest in the questions of law and fact involved affecting the members of the Classes. The questions of law and fact common to the Classes predominate over questions affecting only individual class members, and include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a) Whether Defendant violated the FDCPA by sending a written communication substantially in the form of Exhibit 1 to the members of the Classes;
 - b) Whether Defendant violated the Rosenthal FDCPA by sending using a written communication substantially in the form of Exhibit 1 to the members of the Classes;
 - c) Whether members of the Classes are entitled to the remedies under the FDCPA;

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- d) Whether members of the Classes are entitled to the remedies under the Rosenthal FDCPA;
- Whether members of the Classes are entitled to declaratory relief; e)
- Whether members of the Classes are entitled to an award of reasonable f) attorneys' fees and costs of suit pursuant to the FDCPA;
- Whether members of the Classes are entitled to an award of reasonable g) attorneys' fees and costs of suit pursuant to the Rosenthal FDCPA.
- Plaintiff will fairly and adequately protect the interest of the Classes. 30.
- 31. Plaintiff has retained counsel experienced in consumer class action litigation and in handling claims involving unlawful debt collection practices.
- 32. Plaintiff's claims are typical of the claims of the Classes, which all arise from the same operative facts involving unlawful collection practices.
- 33. A class action is a superior method for the fair and efficient adjudication of this controversy.
- 34. Class-wide damages are essential to induce Defendant to comply with the Federal and State laws alleged in the Complaint.
- 35. The interests of class members in individually controlling the prosecution of separate claims against Defendant is small because the maximum statutory damages in an individual action under the FDCPA or Rosenthal FDCPA is \$1,000. Management of these claims is likely to present significantly fewer difficulties than those presented in many class claims, e.g. securities fraud.
- 36. Defendant has acted on grounds generally applicable to the Classes, thereby making appropriate final declaratory relief with respect to the class as a whole.
- 37. Plaintiff contemplates providing notice to the putative class members by direct mail in the form of a postcard and via Internet website.
 - 38. Plaintiff requests certification of a hybrid class combining the elements

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of Fed. R. Civ. P. 23(b)(3) for monetary damages and Fed. R. Civ. P. 23(b)(2) for equitable relief.

FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION (Violation of the FDCPA)

- 39. Plaintiff re-alleges all paragraphs above, as if fully set forth herein.
- 40. Defendant violated 15 U.S.C. sections 1692e, 1692e(2)(A), and 1692e(10) because its Collection Notice failed to disclose that the debt is subject to daily accrual of interest, late charges, or other charges, which makes the Collection Notice deceptive, confusing, and misleading. See Avila v. Riexinger & Assocs., LLC, 817 F.3d 72 (2d Cir. 2016). In Avila, the Second Circuit stated the following:

"A reasonable consumer could read the notice and be misled into believing that she could pay her debt in full by paying the amount listed on the notice. In fact, however, if interest is accruing daily, or if there are undisclosed late fees, a consumer who pays the "current balance" stated on the notice will not know whether the debt has been paid in full. The debt collector could still seek the interest and fees that accumulated after the notice was sent but before the balance was paid, or sell the consumer's debt to a third party, which itself could seek the interest and fees from the consumer.

Because the statement of an amount due, without notice that the amount is already increasing due to accruing interest or other charges, can mislead the least sophisticated consumer into believing that payment of the amount stated will clear her account, we hold that the FDCPA requires debt collectors, when they notify consumers of their account balance, to disclose that the balance may increase due to interest and fees

See Avila, 817 F.3d at p. 76; also see Dragon, 483 F.Supp.3d 198, 201-203; Marucci v. Cawley & Bergmann LLP., 2014 WL 7140496 (D. N.J. 2014); Michalek v. ARS Nat. Sys., Inc. 2011 WL 6180498 at *3-5 (M.D. Pa. 2011); Smith v. Lyons, Doughty & Veldhuius, P.C. 2008 WL2885887 at *7 (D. N.J. 2008); Akram v. California Business Bureau Inc., 2016 WL 7029262 (S.D. Cal. Oct. 3, 2016); Chuway v. National Action Financial Services, Inc., 362 F.3d 944, 949 (7th Cir. 2004); Miller v. McCalla, Raymer, Padrick, Cobb, Nichols, & Clark, L.L.C., 214 F.3d 872, 876 (7th Cir. 2000); Dragon v. I.C. System, Inc., 483 F.Supp.3d 198, 203 (D. Conn. 2007).

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41.	As a result of each and every violation of the FDCPA, as alleged herein,
Plaintiff h	as suffered actual damages and harm resulting from Defendant's actions as
heretofore	alleged, including but not limited to worry, emotional distress, anxiety, and
humiliatio	n, the exact amount of which is to be proven at trial.

- 42. As a result of each and every violation of the FDCPA, as alleged herein, Plaintiff incurred additional actual damages including, but not limited to, transportation and gasoline costs to the law firm, telephone call charges, copies, postage, and other damages.
- 43. As a result of each and every violation of the FDCPA, as alleged herein, Plaintiff is entitled to actual damages pursuant to 15 U.S.C. section 1692k(a)(1); statutory damages in an amount up to \$1,000.00 pursuant to 15 U.S.C. section 1692k(a)(2)(A); and reasonably attorneys' fees and costs pursuant to 15 U.S.C. section 1692k(a)(3).

SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION (Violation of the Rosenthal FDCPA)

- Plaintiff re-alleges all paragraphs above, as if fully set forth herein. 44.
- Any violation of the FDCPA is a violation of California Civil Code 45. section 1788.17, also known as the Rosenthal FDCPA, because section 1788.17 incorporates the FDCPA.
- 46. Defendant violated Civil Code section 1788.17 because it violated 15 U.S.C. sections 1692e, 1692e(2)(A) and 1692e(10), as discussed above.
- 47. The Ninth Circuit has ruled that the Rosenthal FDCPA incorporates the FDCPA's class action damages provision in 15 U.S.C. section 1692k(a)(2)(B) via California Civil Code section 1788.17. See Gonzales v. Arrow Fin. Servs., LLC, 660 F.3d 1055, 1066 (9th Cir. 2011)
- 48. As a result of each and every violation of the Rosenthal FDCPA, Plaintiff has suffered actual damages and harm resulting from Defendant's actions as heretofore alleged, including but not limited to worry, emotional distress, anxiety, and

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humiliation, the exact amount of which is to be proven at trial.

- As a result of each and every violation of the Rosenthal FDCPA, Plaintiff incurred additional actual damages including, but not limited to, transportation and gasoline costs to the law firm, telephone call charges, copies, postage, and other damages.
- As a result of each and every violation of the Rosenthal FDCPA, 50. Plaintiff is entitled to actual damages pursuant to California Civil Code section 1788.30(a); statutory damages under 1692k(a)(2)(A) which is incorporated by California Civil Code section 1788.17; statutory damages for a knowing or willful violation in the amount of up to \$1,000.00 pursuant to California Civil Code section 1788.30(b); and reasonable attorney's fees and costs pursuant to California Civil Code section 1788.30(c).

REQUEST FOR PRESERVATION OF EVIDENCE

- 1. Preserve all forms of electronic data, regardless of where the data exists, without modification to or deletion of any potentially discoverable data;
 - 2. Suspend all procedures that may alter or delete computer data;
 - 3. Prevent deleting, overwriting, defragmenting, or compressing the data;
- 4. Preserve all archived back-up tapes and ensure that (a) if archive tapes are rotated, the relevant tapes are removed from the rotation; (b) if backups are made to hard drives, preserve the hard drive as well;
- 5. Preserve the contents of all hard drives, network drives, tape drives, optical drives, floppy disks, CD and DVD drives, and all other types of drives or storage media that are within the possession, custody or control of all people who have knowledge of relevant facts and those who work with them, such as assistants;
- 6. Preserve the contents of all information on portable computers—such as laptops and palmtops—used by those people as well as home computers, if these are used for work purposed;

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7. Preserve the contents of all data on computers that were used since the limitations period on the lawsuit began (for example; one year prior to filing) but that are no longer in use.

REQUEST FOR JURY TRIAL

As declared by the seventh amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America, Plaintiff is entitled to, and demands, a trial by jury.

PRAYER FOR DAMAGES AND OTHER REMEDIES

- 1. An order certifying the Class as requested herein;
- An order appointing the Plaintiff as the representative of the Class; 2.
- 3. An order certifying Plaintiff's counsel as Class Counsel;
- 4. An order requiring Defendant, at its own cost, to notify all members of the Classes of the unlawful acts discussed herein;
- Injunctive relief requiring Defendant to disclose, in its Collection Notice, 5. that the debt is subject to daily accrual of interest, late charges, or other charges;
- 6. An award of statutory damages in the amount of \$1,000.00, pursuant to 15 U.S.C. section 1692k(a)(2)(A), for each plaintiff and putative class member;
- An award of statutory damages in the amount of \$1,000.00, pursuant to 7. California Civil Code section 1788.17, for each plaintiff and putative class member;
- An award of statutory damages in the amount of \$1,000.00, pursuant to 8. California Civil Code section 1788.30(b), for each plaintiff and putative class member;
- An award of costs of litigation and reasonable attorney's fees, pursuant 9. to 15 U.S.C. section 1692k(a)(3);
- An award of costs of litigation and reasonable attorney's fees, pursuant 10. to California Civil Code section 1788.30(c);
 - 11. An award of interest as permitted by law; and
 - Any and all other relief that this Court deems just and proper. 12.

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JS 44 (Rev. 12/12)

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. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS EUGENE CLARK			SAN DIEGO ACC	DEFENDANTS SAN DIEGO ACCOUNTS SERVICE, a California Corporation, doing business as CALIFORNIA ACCOUNTS SERVICE						
(b) County of Residence of	First Listed Plaintiff S	an Diego, California	County of Residence of First Listed Defendant							
***	XCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CA		(IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY)							
				ONDEMNATION CASES, USE TO OF LAND INVOLVED.	HE LOCATION OF					
(c) Attorneys (Firm Name,			Attorneys (If Known)							
MASHIRI LAW FIRM, A I 11251 Rancho Carmel D Tel: 858 348-4938				<u>'17C</u>	V2529 DMS WVG					
II. BASIS OF JURISDI	CTION (Place an "X" in C	(II) (II) (II) (II) (II) (II) (II) (II)		RINCIPAL PARTIES	(Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintiff					
☐ 1 U.S. Government	3 Federal Question ■ 3		(For Diversity Cases Only)	TF DEF	and One Box for Defendant) PTF DEF					
Plaintiff	(U.S. Government	Not a Party)		1	rincipal Place 🗇 4 🗇 4					
O 2 U.S. Government Defendant	☐ 4 Diversity (Indicate Citizensh	ip of Parties in Item III)	Citizen of Another State							
			Citizen or Subject of a Foreign Country	3 D 3 Foreign Nation	□ 6 □ 6					
IV. NATURE OF SUIT										
CONTRACT		DETECNIAL INCOME	FORFEITURE/PENALTY	BANKRUPTCY	OTHER STATUTES					
☐ 110 Insurance ☐ 120 Marine	PERSONAL INJURY 310 Airplane	PERSONAL INJURY ☐ 365 Personal Injury -	☐ 625 Drug Related Seizure of Property 21 USC 881	☐ 422 Appeal 28 USC 158 ☐ 423 Withdrawal	☐ 375 False Claims Act ☐ 400 State Reapportionment					
☐ 130 Miller Act	315 Airplane Product	Product Liability	☐ 690 Other	28 USC 157	☐ 410 Antitrust ☐ 430 Banks and Banking ☐ 450 Commerce					
 ☐ 140 Negotiable Instrument ☐ 150 Recovery of Overpayment 	Liability 320 Assault, Libel &	☐ 367 Health Care/ Pharmaceutical		PROPERTY RIGHTS						
& Enforcement of Judgment	Slander	Personal Injury		☐ 820 Copyrights	☐ 460 Deportation					
☐ 151 Medicare Act	330 Federal Employers'	Product Liability		3830 Patent B40 Trademark	☐ 470 Racketeer Influenced and					
☐ 152 Recovery of Defaulted Student Loans	Liability 340 Marine	☐ 368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product		D 840 Frademark	Corrupt Organizations 3 480 Consumer Credit					
(Excludes Veterans)	☐ 345 Marine Product	Liability	LABOR	SOCIAL SECURITY	☐ 490 Cable/Sat TV					
☐ 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits	Liability	PERSONAL PROPERTY		☐ 861 HIA (1395ff)	☐ 850 Securities/Commodities/					
☐ 160 Stockholders' Suits	☐ 350 Motor Vehicle ☐ 355 Motor Vehicle	370 Other Fraud 371 Truth in Lending	Act 720 Labor/Management	☐ 862 Black Lung (923) ☐ 863 DIWC/DIWW (405(g))	Exchange 890 Other Statutory Actions					
☐ 190 Other Contract	Product Liability	380 Other Personal	Relations	☐ 864 SSID Title XVI	☐ 891 Agricultural Acts					
195 Contract Product Liability	360 Other Personal	Property Damage	740 Railway Labor Act	☐ 865 RSI (405(g))	☐ 893 Environmental Matters					
☐ 196 Franchise	Injury 362 Personal Injury -	☐ 385 Property Damage Product Liability	☐ 751 Family and Medical Leave Act		☐ 895 Freedom of Information Act					
	Medical Malpractice	CORDO-DATA NOT PORTE	790 Other Labor Litigation		☐ 896 Arbitration					
REAL PROPERTY ☐ 210 Land Condemnation	CIVIL RIGHTS	PRISONER PETITIONS	791 Employee Retirement	FEDERAL TAX SUITS	☐ 899 Administrative Procedure					
210 Land Condemnation 220 Foreclosure	☐ 440 Other Civil Rights ☐ 441 Voting	Habeas Corpus: 463 Alien Detainee	Income Security Act	☐ 870 Taxes (U.S. Plaintiff or Defendant)	Act/Review or Appeal of Agency Decision					
230 Rent Lease & Ejectment	O 442 Employment	☐ 510 Motions to Vacate		☐ 871 IRS—Third Party	☐ 950 Constitutionality of					
1 240 Torts to Land	1 443 Housing/	Sentence		26 USC 7609	State Statutes					
☐ 245 Tort Product Liability ☐ 290 All Other Real Property	Accommodations 445 Amer, w/Disabilities -	530 General 535 Death Penalty	IMMIGRATION	1						
	Employment	Other:	☐ 462 Naturalization Application	1						
	☐ 446 Amer. w/Disabilities -	The state of the s	1 465 Other Immigration		1					
	Other 448 Education	550 Civil Rights 555 Prison Condition	Actions							
	5 440 Education	560 Civil Detainee -								
		Conditions of Confinement								
V. ORIGIN (Place an "X" is	n One Box Only)	Continuent								
	moved from 3 3	Remanded from Appellate Court	4 Reinstated or	er District Litigation						
Harris Commission of the Commi	Cite the U.S. Civil Sta 15 U.S.C. section	atute under which you are f	iling (Do not cite jurisdictional sta	tutes unless diversity):						
VI. CAUSE OF ACTION	Brief description of ca		t Collection Laws							
VII. REQUESTED IN	Listen and the second s	IS A CLASS ACTION	DEMAND S	CHECK YES only	if demanded in complaint:					
COMPLAINT:	UNDER RULE 2		500,000.00	마스트 (BANG) 100 HONE (BANG)						
VIII. RELATED CASI										
IF ANY	(See instructions):	JUDGE		DOCKET NUMBER						
DATE		SIGNATURE OF ATTOR	RNEY OF RECORD							
12/18/2017		s/ Alex Asil Mash								
FOR OFFICE USE ONLY										
RECEIPT # AM	MOUNT	APPLYING IFP	JUDGE	MAG. JUI	DGE					

EXHIBIT 1

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329 VAN HOÛTÊN AVE. EL CAJON, CA 92022 (619)444-6116

APR 27, 2017

EUGENE CLARK 12480 JULIAN AVE

LAKESIDE, CA 92040

RE:

LARRY J MARSHALL MD

\$77.49

TOTAL:

\$77.49

This has been sent to you by a debt collector. This is an attempt to collect a debt and any information obtained will be used for that purpose.

We have tried repeatedly with various correspondence and telephone messages to reach an equitable solution to the above mentioned debt. Obviously we have been unsuccessful and the balance is still outstanding.

This account is currently being reported on your credit history as an unpaid collection account. If you contact our office to resolve this unpaid account, we will report to the credit repositories that the matter has been resolved and therefore may help your credit score.

 No,	I	do	not	intend	to	pay	this	b111.	I	would	like	this	to
remain on my			credit	10	report.								

Yes, please contact me to resolve this matter. My phone number is _______

To make a payment online, go to www.pdcpay.com and use

Access Code: CASPAY Account #: 453695 Pin #: 17896

ClassAction.org

This complaint is part of ClassAction.org's searchable class action lawsuit database and can be found in this post: <u>California Accounts Service Facing FDCPA Suit Over Allegedly Incomplete Collection Letter</u>