

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF FLORIDA  
TAMPA DIVISION**

**BARNARD STOKES, on behalf of  
himself and others similarly situated,**

**Plaintiff,**

**CASE NO.:**

**v.**

**THE HEMBREE GROUP, INC. and  
GREGORY HEMBREE, individually.**

**Defendant.**

\_\_\_\_\_ /

**COMPLAINT AND DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL**

Plaintiff, BARNARD STOKES (“Plaintiff”), on behalf of himself and other similarly situated employees, brings this action for unpaid overtime compensation, and other relief under the Fair Labor Standards Act, as amended, 29 U.S.C. §216(b) (the “FLSA”) against THE HEMBREE GROUP, INC., (“Hembree Group”) and GREGORY HEMBREE individually, (“Mr. Hembree”) (collectively “Defendants”).

**JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

1. This is an action for damages and for declaratory relief, under the Fair Labor Standards Act, as amended (29 U.S.C. §201, et seq., hereinafter called the “FLSA”) to recover unpaid overtime wages, an additional equal amount as liquidated damages, obtain declaratory relief, and reasonable attorney’s fees and costs and relief as available under Florida common law.

2. The jurisdiction of the Court over this controversy is pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §1331 and the FLSA and supplemental jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §1367.

3. Venue is proper in this Court because the violations of the FLSA occurred in this Judicial District.

### **PARTIES**

4. Plaintiff was employed as a painter from December 2015 through December, 2016, and performed related activities for Defendants in Pinellas County, Florida.

5. Defendant THE HEMBREE GROUP, INC. is a Florida for Profit Corporation that operates and conducts business in, among others, Pinellas County, Florida, and is therefore within the jurisdiction of this Court.

6. Defendant GREGORY HEMBREE is the owner of The Hembree Group, Inc.

### **STATEMENT OF FACTS**

7. This action is brought under the FLSA to recover from Defendants overtime compensation, liquidated damages, and reasonable attorneys' fees and costs.

8. This court has jurisdiction over Plaintiff's claims pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §1337 and the FLSA.

9. At all material times relevant to this action, Defendant Hembree Group was an enterprise covered by the FLSA, as defined by 29 U.S.C. §§203(r) and 203(s). Defendant Hembree Group had gross revenues of at least \$500,000.00 and employees engaged in commerce. Defendants' employees handle and use products that have been moved in or produced in commerce, such as paint and tools.

10. Defendant Hembree Group is a company authorized and doing business in this Judicial District.

11. Defendant Mr. Hembree directed the activities of Plaintiff, created and implemented

the unlawful pay practices, and oversaw the day-to-day operations of the business.

12. Defendants are an employer as defined by the laws under which this action is brought and employs the required number of employees.

13. As a painter, Plaintiff was not exempt from the overtime requirements of the FLSA.

14. At all times relevant to this action, Defendants failed to comply with 29 U.S.C. §§201-209, because Defendants did not pay Plaintiff overtime wages for those hours worked in excess of forty (40) within a work week.

15. During his employment with Defendants, Plaintiff was not paid time and one-half his regular rate of pay for all hours worked in excess of forty (40) within a work week during one or more weeks of employment.

16. Upon information and belief, the records, to the extent that any exist, concerning the number of hours worked and amounts paid to Plaintiff are in the possession, custody and control of the Defendant.

17. By Plaintiff's estimates, he routinely worked a minimum of 5 hours of overtime per week, and often more, for which he was not paid at one and one half times his regular rate of pay for all hours worked over 40.

18. Upon information and belief, Defendants did not rely on and Department of Labor Wage and Hour Opinions or the advice of an attorney in creating its pay policies.

19. Defendants have the resources to ensure compliance with the FLSA. Therefore, Defendants knew or should have known with reasonable diligence that their conduct violated the Fair Labor Standards Act.

**COUNT I**  
**RECOVERY OF OVERTIME COMPENSATION**

20. Plaintiff reincorporates and readopts all allegations contained within Paragraphs 1-19 above.

21. Plaintiff was entitled to be paid time and one-half his regular rate of pay for each hour worked in excess of forty (40) per work week.

22. During his employment with Defendants, Plaintiff regularly worked overtime hours but was not paid time and one-half compensation for the same.

23. As a result of Defendants' intentional, willful, and unlawful acts in refusing to pay Plaintiff time and one-half his regular rate of pay for each hour worked in excess of forty (40) per work week in one or more work weeks, Plaintiff has suffered damages and is incurring reasonable attorneys' fees and costs.

24. Defendants were aware Plaintiff performed non-exempt job duties but still refused to pay Plaintiff overtime for hours worked over forty (40).

25. Defendants did not maintain and keep accurate time records as required by the FLSA for Plaintiff.

26. Defendants failed to post required FLSA informational listings as required by the FLSA.

27. Defendants' conduct was in reckless disregard of the overtime requirements of the FLSA.

28. Defendants willfully violated the FLSA.

29. Plaintiff is entitled to liquidated damages.

30. Plaintiff demands a trial by jury.

**WHEREFORE**, Plaintiff demands judgment against Defendants for the payment of all overtime hours at one and one-half the regular rate of pay for the hours worked by him for which Defendants did not properly compensate him, liquidated damages, reasonable attorneys' fees and costs incurred in this action, and all further relief that this Court deems to be just and appropriate.

**COUNT II**  
**COLLECTIVE ACTION, VIOLATION OF FLSA**  
**(FAILURE TO PAY OVERTIME)**

31. Plaintiff reincorporates and readopts all allegations contained within Paragraphs 1-19 above.

32. At all times material, Defendants employed numerous other non-exempt employees who worked as painters, performed similar job duties, were subject to the same unlawful pay practices, and who worked a substantial number of hours in excess of forty (40) per week.

33. Defendants failed to pay individuals similarly situated to Plaintiff one and one half times their regular hourly rate, for all hours worked in excess of forty (40) in each week, in violation of the FLSA.

34. Defendants' failure to pay such similarly situated individuals the required overtime rate was willful and in reckless disregard of the FLSA.

35. As a direct and legal consequence of Defendants' unlawful acts, individuals similarly situated to Plaintiff have suffered damages and have incurred, or will incur, costs and attorneys' fees in the prosecution of this matter.

**WHEREFORE**, Plaintiff demands that similarly situated employees have judgment entered against Defendant for the payment of all overtime hours at one and one-half the regular rate of pay for the hours worked over forty for which Defendants did not properly them, liquidated damages, reasonable attorneys' fees and costs incurred in this action, and all further relief that this Court deems to be just and appropriate.

**JURY DEMAND**

Plaintiff demands trial by jury on all issues so triable as a matter of right by jury.

Dated this 11<sup>th</sup> day of May 2017.

Respectfully submitted,

**MORGAN & MORGAN, P.A.**

**/s/ Marc R. Edelman**

MARC R. EDELMAN, ESQ.

Fla. Bar No. 0096342

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*Attorney for Plaintiff*

JS 44 (Rev. 11/15)

**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**

BARNARD STOKES, on behalf of himself and others similarly situated,

(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff **Pinellas County**  
(EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)

(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, Address, and Telephone Number)  
Marc. R. Edelman, Esq.- Morgan & Morgan, P.A.  
201 North Franklin Street, Suite 700 - Tampa, FL 33602  
Tel: 813-223-5505

**DEFENDANTS**

THE HEMBREE GROUP, INC. and GREGORY HEMBREE, individually,

County of Residence of First Listed Defendant **Pinellas County**  
(IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY)

NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED.

Attorneys (If Known)

**II. BASIS OF JURISDICTION** (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

- 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff
- 3 Federal Question (U.S. Government Not a Party)
- 2 U.S. Government Defendant
- 4 Diversity (Indicate Citizenship of Parties in Item III)

**III. CITIZENSHIP OF PRINCIPAL PARTIES** (Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintiff and One Box for Defendant)

- |   |                                       |                            |   |                            |                            |
|---|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|
|   | PTF                                   | DEF                        |   | PTF                        | DEF                        |
| Citizen of This State                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | Incorporated or Principal Place of Business In This State     | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| Citizen of Another State                | <input type="checkbox"/> 2            | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | Incorporated and Principal Place of Business In Another State | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| Citizen or Subject of a Foreign Country | <input type="checkbox"/> 3            | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | Foreign Nation  | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |

**IV. NATURE OF SUIT** (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

CONTRACT	PERSONAL INJURY	PERSONAL INJURY	LABOR	BANKRUPTCY	OTHER STATUTES
<input type="checkbox"/> 110 Insurance <input type="checkbox"/> 120 Marine <input type="checkbox"/> 130 Miller Act <input type="checkbox"/> 140 Negotiable Instrument <input type="checkbox"/> 150 Recovery of Overpayment & Enforcement of Judgment <input type="checkbox"/> 151 Medicare Act <input type="checkbox"/> 152 Recovery of Defaulted Student Loans (Excludes Veterans) <input type="checkbox"/> 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits <input type="checkbox"/> 160 Stockholders' Suits <input type="checkbox"/> 190 Other Contract <input type="checkbox"/> 195 Contract Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 196 Franchise	<b>PERSONAL INJURY</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 310 Airplane <input type="checkbox"/> 315 Airplane Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 320 Assault, Libel & Slander <input type="checkbox"/> 330 Federal Employers' Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 340 Marine <input type="checkbox"/> 345 Marine Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 350 Motor Vehicle <input type="checkbox"/> 355 Motor Vehicle Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 360 Other Personal Injury <input type="checkbox"/> 362 Personal Injury - Medical Malpractice	<b>PERSONAL INJURY</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 365 Personal Injury - Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 367 Health Care/Pharmaceutical Personal Injury Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability <b>PERSONAL PROPERTY</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 370 Other Fraud <input type="checkbox"/> 371 Truth in Lending <input type="checkbox"/> 380 Other Personal Property Damage <input type="checkbox"/> 385 Property Damage Product Liability	<input type="checkbox"/> 625 Drug Related Seizure of Property 21 USC 881 <input type="checkbox"/> 690 Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 710 Fair Labor Standards Act <input type="checkbox"/> 720 Labor/Management Relations <input type="checkbox"/> 740 Railway Labor Act <input type="checkbox"/> 751 Family and Medical Leave Act <input type="checkbox"/> 790 Other Labor Litigation <input type="checkbox"/> 791 Employee Retirement Income Security Act	<input type="checkbox"/> 422 Appeal 28 USC 158 <input type="checkbox"/> 423 Withdrawal 28 USC 157 <input type="checkbox"/> 820 Copyrights <input type="checkbox"/> 830 Patent <input type="checkbox"/> 840 Trademark <b>SOCIAL SECURITY</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 861 HIA (1395ff) <input type="checkbox"/> 862 Black Lung (923) <input type="checkbox"/> 863 DIWC/DIWW (405(g)) <input type="checkbox"/> 864 SSID Title XVI <input type="checkbox"/> 865 RSI (405(g))	<input type="checkbox"/> 375 False Claims Act <input type="checkbox"/> 376 Qui Tam (31 USC 3729(a)) <input type="checkbox"/> 400 State Reapportionment <input type="checkbox"/> 410 Antitrust <input type="checkbox"/> 430 Banks and Banking <input type="checkbox"/> 450 Commerce <input type="checkbox"/> 460 Deportation <input type="checkbox"/> 470 Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations <input type="checkbox"/> 480 Consumer Credit <input type="checkbox"/> 490 Cable/Sat TV <input type="checkbox"/> 850 Securities/Commodities/Exchange <input type="checkbox"/> 890 Other Statutory Actions <input type="checkbox"/> 891 Agricultural Acts <input type="checkbox"/> 893 Environmental Matters <input type="checkbox"/> 895 Freedom of Information Act <input type="checkbox"/> 896 Arbitration <input type="checkbox"/> 899 Administrative Procedure Act/Review or Appeal of Agency Decision <input type="checkbox"/> 950 Constitutionality of State Statutes
REAL PROPERTY	CIVIL RIGHTS	PRISONER PETITIONS	IMMIGRATION	FEDERAL TAXES	
<input type="checkbox"/> 210 Land Condemnation <input type="checkbox"/> 220 Foreclosure <input type="checkbox"/> 230 Rent Lease & Ejectment <input type="checkbox"/> 240 Torts to Land <input type="checkbox"/> 245 Tort Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 290 All Other Real Property	<input type="checkbox"/> 440 Other Civil Rights <input type="checkbox"/> 441 Voting <input type="checkbox"/> 442 Employment <input type="checkbox"/> 443 Housing/Accommodations <input type="checkbox"/> 445 Amer. w/Disabilities - Employment <input type="checkbox"/> 446 Amer. w/Disabilities - Other <input type="checkbox"/> 448 Education	<b>Habeas Corpus:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 463 Alien Detainee <input type="checkbox"/> 510 Motions to Vacate Sentence <input type="checkbox"/> 530 General <input type="checkbox"/> 535 Death Penalty <b>Other:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 540 Mandamus & Other <input type="checkbox"/> 550 Civil Rights <input type="checkbox"/> 555 Prison Condition <input type="checkbox"/> 560 Civil Detainee - Conditions of Confinement	<input type="checkbox"/> 462 Naturalization Application <input type="checkbox"/> 465 Other Immigration Actions	<input type="checkbox"/> 870 Taxes (U.S. Plaintiff or Defendant) <input type="checkbox"/> 871 IRS—Third Party 26 USC 7609	

**V. ORIGIN** (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

- 1 Original Proceeding
- 2 Removed from State Court
- 3 Remanded from Appellate Court
- 4 Reinstated or Reopened
- 5 Transferred from Another District (specify)
- 6 Multidistrict Litigation

**VI. CAUSE OF ACTION**

Cite the U.S. Civil Statute under which you are filing (Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity):  
Fair Labor Standards Act

Brief description of cause:  
Non-Payment Of Overtime and Unpaid Wages

**VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:**

CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION UNDER RULE 23, F.R.Cv.P.

DEMAND \$

CHECK YES only if demanded in complaint:  
JURY DEMAND:  Yes  No

**VIII. RELATED CASE(S) IF ANY**

(See instructions):

JUDGE

DOCKET NUMBER

DATE 5-11-17 SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY OF RECORD 

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY**

RECEIPT # \_\_\_\_\_ AMOUNT \_\_\_\_\_ APPLYING IFP \_\_\_\_\_ JUDGE \_\_\_\_\_ MAG. JUDGE \_\_\_\_\_

# ClassAction.org

This complaint is part of ClassAction.org's searchable class action lawsuit database and can be found in this post: [Former Employee Files Unpaid OT Suit Against The Hembree Group](#)

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