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2	Email: markp@punzalanlaw.com Heidi Kim (SBN: 247699)	SAN MATEO COUNTY		
3	Email: heidik@punzalanlaw.com PUNZALAN LAW, P.C.			
4	600 Allerton St., Suite 200	FEB 1 6 2016		
5	Redwood City, CA 94063 Telephone: 650-362-4150	Clerit of the Superior Court		
6	Facsimile: 650-362-4151	SERVING CHIK		
7	Todd G. Cole (to be admitted <i>pro hac vice</i>) COLE LAW GROUP, PC			
8	750 Old Hickory Blvd.			
9	Building Two, Suite 202 Brentwood, TN 37027			
10	Telephone: 615-490-6020 Facsimile: 615-942-5914			
11				
12	Counsel for Plaintiffs Jason Cross, a/k/a Mikel 1203 Entertainment, LLC, and	Knight,		
13	MDRST Marketing/Promotions, LLC			
14	SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA			
15	FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO			
16	(Unlimited Jurisdiction)			
17	JASON CROSS a/k/a MIKEL KNIGHT;	No. C1V537384		
18	1203 ENTERTAINMENT, LLC; and MDRST Marketing/Promotions, LLC;	VERIFIED COMPLAINT FOR:		
19	Plaintiffs,	1. Breach of Written Contract;		
20	VS.	2. Negligent Misrepresentation;3. Negligent Interference with		
21	FACEBOOK, INC., and DOES ONE through	Prospective Economic Relations; 4. Violation of California Civil Code §		
22	FIFTH, inclusive,	3344; and 5. Violation of Rights of Publicity,		
23	Defendants,	California Common Law 6. Unlawful and Unfair Business		
24 25		Practices in Violation of California Business & Professions Code § 17200		
26		JURY TRIAL DEMANDED		
27				
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- 7. As part of their marketing efforts, Knight and his record label, 1203 Entertainment, have promoted and marketed Knight's music and other 1203 Entertainment artists by selling music directly to consumers. Toward this end, 1203 Entertainment, through its subsidiary now known as MDRST, hired independent contractors to travel across the country to sell Knight's compact discs and merchandise to the public. These independent contractors sell merchandise from vans distinctly emblazoned with the name and logo of the "Maverick Dirt Road Street Team," a reference to one of Knight's stage names "The Maverick."
- 8. On or around June 9, 2014, in Daggett County, Utah, one of 1203 Entertainment's MDRST vans was involved in an accident. The van's driver, an independent contractor for 1203 Entertainment, purportedly fell asleep while driving and crashed into a tree. The passenger, who was also an independent contractor for 1203 Entertainment, sustained significant injuries.
- 9. One week later, on June 16, 2014, another 1203 Entertainment van was involved in an accident in Texas. Similar to the June 9th accident, the van's driver, also an independent contractor for 1203 Entertainment, fell asleep while driving, which led to accident in which the vehicle rolled over. The two passengers, both of whom were also MDRST independent contractors, were killed.
- 10. Although Knight was not present at the site of the June 2014 accidents, in June 2015, several relatives of the persons that died in these accidents filed lawsuits against Knight in Tennessee state court. These lawsuits were later removed to the Middle District of Tennessee and are currently pending.

Users Create Facebook Pages Inciting Violence Against Knight

- 11. Shortly after the June 2014 accidents, without Mikel Knight's consent or authorization, a Facebook group page using Mikel Knight's name and likeness was created entitled "Families Against Mikel Knight." This page was entirely separate from Mikel Knight's official Facebook page, which 1203 Entertainment created in August 2010.
- 12. Based on information and belief, this unauthorized Facebook page was created by persons related to the injured and deceased independent contractors in the June 9th and June 16th accidents discussed above. The creators of the unauthorized Facebook page used the page as a

forum to post comments inciting violence and death threats against Knight and members of 1203 Entertainment. While many statements contained threats of physical violence, some statements rose to the level of death threats. For example, one commenter on the Facebook page stated that Knight needed to be "Took out," apparently a slang term for being murdered. One commenter also posted that if Knight came to her state (North Carolina), "they would be done." Another commenter stated that Knight "needs to be shot." Attached hereto as Exhibit A is an example of the comments posted on the unauthorized Facebook page (the names and pictures of the commenters have been redacted).

- 13. In addition to the threats, many of the comments posted on the unauthorized Facebook page contained false and derogatory statements about Knight and 1203 Entertainment. For instance, commenters falsely claimed that Knight and 1203 Entertainment's treatment of independent contractors amounted to "human trafficking." The commenters also attacked a non-profit organization to which Knight donated as accepting "blood money" and falsely accused Knight of exploiting "young kids."
- 14. As a direct result of the violent threats and false accusations on the unauthorized Facebook page, MDRST independent contractors driving the MDRST vans across the country have not only been verbally threatened but also physically assaulted.
- 15. For example, on June 22, 2015, in Mobile County, Alabama, Jason Richardson, a 1203 Entertainment independent contractor was working in a van emblazoned with the MDRST logo. At approximately 11:00 pm that evening, a group of people began rocking the MDRST van and yelled at the persons inside the van. Persons within the mob of people asked Richardson if he "wanted to fight" and stated that MDRST was "doing stuff to kids" and that they "heard about it on Facebook."
- 16. In another incident on June 25, 2015, Mark Pena, another 1203 Entertainment independent contractor in a MDRST van, was accosted at a gas station in Meridian, Mississippi by a group of people in three trucks. The men yelled at Mr. Pena to get out of town within ten minutes and called Pena and the other MDRST independent contractors "human traffickers" based on information they "heard on Facebook." Mr. Pena also saw that one of the drivers had a pistol

on his lap. These were just two of the many examples of the assaults and threats encountered by MDRST independent contractors.

The Unauthorized Facebook Page Hampers Knight's Business Deals

- 17. In addition to these threats, the unauthorized Facebook page also severely impacted Knight and 1203 Entertainment's business deals. As one of the pioneers in the Country Rap / Urban Country music genre, Knight created MDRST to market and promote Knight's music. MDRST has secured a number of lucrative business deals on behalf of Knight. The marketing and promotions plan executed by MDRST was designed to build on its previous successes. Knight laid down the foundation for MDRST to visit potential sales markets by performing 256 shows in 26 months. He then created the MDRST sales and marketing team, which sold an average of 40,000 CDs during each 26-day sales cycle and was the quarterly average for the first three quarters of 2015. In 2014 and 2015, Knight was in negotiations with numerous companies to sign lucrative business deals involving his music.
- 18. However, a number of those companies halted business discussions with Knight after viewing the false information on the unauthorized Facebook page. In November 2014, 1203 Entertainment began negotiating with Nielsen SoundScan ("SoundScan") to track Mikel Knight's record sales. SoundScan is one of the leading information and sales tracking companies for music and music video products in the United States. Also, because SoundScan is the sales source for the Billboard music charts, SoundScan is the largest source of sales records in the music industry.
- 19. SoundScan had been involved discussions with Knight and 1203 Entertainment to buy a mobile application from 1203 Entertainment that could track sales from Knight's mobile record stores. After significant negotiations lasting months, SoundScan pulled out of the deal and specifically stated that it could not do business with Knight because of the allegations on the unauthorized Facebook page. Because SoundScan would not do any business with Knight, Knight's music stayed off the Billboard charts for an entire year. Had it not been for the allegations on the unauthorized Facebook page, Knight's music would have placed in the Top Ten on the Hip Hop and Country charts and appeared in Billboard magazine. Instead, Knight's music was denied this prestigious recognition, resulting in the loss of publicity and sales.

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20. Moreover, in December 2014, Knight was in the negotiations with the Dallas Cowboys, the National Football League team, to play Knight's hit song "Cowboy Way" at the Cowboys' home games. As part of this deal, Knight would also give out 50,000 iTunes cards to Cowboys fans to download "Cowboy Way" for free. However, based on information and belief, the Cowboys viewed the unauthorized Facebook page during negotiations and decided to halt further negotiations. One person from the Cowboys organization also specifically told Knight and stated, "We don't want to business with people like you," and instructed Knight to not call the Cowboys again.

- 21. Additionally, the unauthorized Facebook pages contained comments inviting people to look out for the MDRST vans by falsely claiming the vans were involved in apparent kidnapping attempts. For example, in one post, a commenter posted a picture of an MDRST van and informed the public to call the police because persons in the van were "taking snatching [sic] people up." As a result of these false comments, numerous MDRST vans, because of their distinctive branding, were stopped by law enforcement in numerous states, including Georgia, Michigan, and Alabama. Although none of the MDRST independent contractors were involved in any wrongdoing, law enforcement expressed their anger with MDRST independent contractors with the number of calls. In one incident in Alabama, one police officer angrily told a 1203 Entertainment that "if we get another call, we will take you straight to jail."
- 22. Moreover, numerous police departments were forced to issue warnings on social media (including Facebook) that the kidnapping accusations were false and for citizens not to call 911. In Nahunta, Georgia, the Brantley County police instructed people to not call 911 because "the Facebook warning that is circulating about this van involved in a kidnapping is false." See Exhibit B.
- Facebook Refuses to Disable the Unauthorized Mikel Knight Page In Violation of Its **Terms of Service**
- 23. In August 2010, Knight created his own authorized Facebook page. When he created his page, Knight accepted Facebook's Terms of Service, which specifically prohibit the type of harassing and violent speech Knight encountered. Specifically, the Terms of Service state:

(hereinafter, the "Petition") in the Circuit Court of Davidson County, Tennessee, to obtain information about the individuals that had incited violence against Plaintiffs.

- 28. On June 30, 2015, Facebook responded to Plaintiff's June 5th letter and stated that it was "not in a position to act on the reported content," and refused to remove the page. In response, Plaintiffs sent a response to Facebook providing affidavits and evidence detailing the physical harm faced by Knight and MDRST independent contractors.
- 29. On July 8, 2015, Facebook told Plaintiffs that the unauthorized Facebook page "had already been removed from Facebook." However, this was entirely false. As of July 9, 2015, the unauthorized Facebook page was not removed from Facebook and was completely available for public access, even to persons without a Facebook account.
- 30. On July 15, 2015, Facebook sent another letter informing Plaintiffs that it should seek recourse against the parties that posted the comments inciting violence. However, Facebook would not provide the names of the perpetrators. Again, Facebook refused to take down the unauthorized Facebook page.
- 31. By December 2015, it appeared that Facebook had disabled the original unauthorized Facebook page. However, as of the filing of this Complaint, Facebook two unauthorized Facebook pages using Knight's likeness continue to be accessible to the public:

"Jason cross aka mikel knight" https://www.facebook.com/pages/Jason-cross-aka-mikel-knight/806397209385065

"Prove yourself Jason Cross aka Mikel Knight" https://www.facebook.com/pages/Prove-yourself-Jason-Cross-aka-Mikel-Knight/1510278499186306

32. In comparison, other social media sites have taken down content that has harassed or incited violence against Knight. For example, on June 5, 2015, Plaintiffs also requested that Pinterest, an interactive computer service (like Facebook), take down similarly violent threats to Knight. On June 24, 2015, Pinterest removed this content. Plaintiffs alerted Pinterest on August 4, 2015, that additional violent comments were posted to Pinterest, and Pinterest immediately removed the new content on August 11, 2015.

- 33. By refusing to disable the unauthorized Facebook pages, Facebook has engaged in conduct that has and will continue to cause significant physical harm to Knight and MDRST independent contractors. Indeed, Plaintiffs have informed Facebook with affidavits stating the level of physical harm. But by refusing to disable the pages, Facebook acted with a willful and conscious disregard for the safety of Knight and MDRST independent contractors.
- 34. Moreover, it appears that Facebook has refused to take down the unauthorized Facebook pages because of the potential loss of advertising revenue. Facebook generates approximately 80% of its revenue from advertising, and in 2014, Facebook generated \$10 billion in advertising revenue. Because Facebook continues to place ads on all the unauthorized Facebook pages, Facebook has refused to disable the unauthorized Facebook pages to continue generating revenue at the expense of Knight's likeness.

FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION (Breach of Written Contract by Plaintiff Knight)

- 35. Plaintiffs reallege and incorporate by reference all paragraphs above, as though fully set forth in this cause of action.
- 36. In exchange for Knight signing up with Facebook, Knight and Facebook entered into a contract as a Facebook user and accepted Facebook's Terms of Service. These Terms of Service provided numerous prohibitions to protect and benefit Knight, other Facebook users, and others who interacted with Facebook. These prohibitions included, among other things:
 - a. The bullying, intimidation, and harassment of other users;
 - b. Hate speech, or other speech that would invite violence;
 - c. Actions that are unlawful, misleading, or malicious;
 - d. The infringement or violation of someone else's rights or otherwise violates the law; and
 - e. The infringement of other people's intellectual property rights.
- 37. The Terms of Service also specifically incorporate supplemental terms by which Facebook expressly promised Plaintiff to remove content and disable accounts where there is a

1	55.	Facebook's failure to act with reasonable care disrupted Knight and 1203	
2	Entertainment's business relationships.		
3	56.	Plaintiffs were harmed.	
4	57.	Facebook's wrongful conduct was a substantial factor in causing Plaintiffs' harm.	
5 6		FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION (Deprivation of Rights of Publicity Violation of California Civil Code § 3344 by Plaintiff Knight)	
7 8	58.	Plaintiffs reallege and incorporate by reference all paragraphs above, as though	
9	fully set forth in this cause of action.		
10	59.	Facebook has knowingly and intentionally utilized Knight's likeness on the	
11	unauthorized Facebook pages without Knight's consent.		
12	60.	Facebook has used Knight's name and likeness for the purpose of advertising on	
13	the unauthorized Facebook pages.		
14	61.	As a result of Facebook's misappropriation of Knight's publicity rights, Knight has	
15	ben injured.		
16 17		FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION (Violation of Rights of Publicity, California Common Law by Plaintiff Knight)	
18	62.	Plaintiffs reallege and incorporate by reference all paragraphs above, as though	
19	fully set forth in this cause of action.		
20	63.	Facebook has utilized and continues to utilize the names, likeness and identity of	
21	Knight in the unauthorized Facebook pages without Knight's consent and for Facebook's own		
22	commercial advantage.		
23		SIXTH CAUSE OF ACTION	
2425	(Unlawful a	and Unfair Business Practices in Violation of California Business & Professions Code § 17200 by Both Plaintiffs)	
26	64.	Plaintiffs reallege and incorporate by reference all paragraphs above, as though	
27	fully set forth in this cause of action.		
28			

- 65. The Unfair Competition Act (UCA), Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 17200 et seq., prohibits any "unlawful, unfair or fraudulent business practice..." Section 17203 provides that "[a]ny person who engages, has engaged or proposes to engage in unfair competition may be enjoined in any court of competent jurisdiction."
- 66. By these actions described herein, Defendant engaged in unfair competition in violation of the statutory law of the state of California, Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code §§ 17200 and 17500, et seq. As a result, Plaintiffs have suffered and will continue to suffer damage to its business, reputation, and goodwill.
- 67. Defendant has engaged in unlawful and unfair business practices within the meaning of California Business & Professions Code § 17200, et seq. by virtue of the misconduct alleged herein. As a result of Defendant's actions and omissions, Plaintiff has suffered injury-infact and has lost money or property.
 - 68. Defendant's unlawful and unfair practices include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Breach of Contract;
 - b. Negligent Misrepresentation;
 - c. Negligent Interference with Prospective Economic Relations;
 - d. Violation of California Civil Code § 3344;
 - e. Violation of the Knight's Rights of Publicity under California Common Law.
- 69. Defendant's business practices are unfair because they offend established public policy and/or are immoral, unethical, oppressive, unscrupulous and or substantially injurious to Plaintiffs. The justification for Defendant's conduct is outweighed by the gravity of the consequences to Plaintiff. Defendant can provide no adequate justification for its wrongful conduct.
- 70. Pursuant to Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 17203, Knight seeks equitable and injunctive relief and disgorgement of all ill-gotten gains as set forth herein.

1	PRAYER FOR RELIEF		
2	WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs pray for relief and judgment against Defendant as follows:		
3	A.	For damages	
4	В.	For the restitution and disgorgement of monies unjustly retained by Defendant in	
5	the amount;		
6	C.	For punitive damages;	
7	D.	For preliminary and permanent injunctive relief;	
8	E.	For attorneys' fees and expenses pursuant to all applicable laws;	
9	F.	For prejudgment interest; and	
10	G.	For such other and further relief as the Court may deem just and proper.	
11	DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL		
12	Plaintiffs hereby demand a jury trial on all claims.		
13	Dated: February 16, 2016 PUNZALAN LAW, P.C.		
14		1/0.1	
15			
16		Mark Runzalan	
17		Todd G. Cole (to be admitted <i>pro hac vice</i>) COLE LAW GROUP, PC	
18			
19 20		Counsel for Plaintiffs Jason Cross, a/k/a Mikel Knight, 1203 Entertainment, LLC, and	
21	!	MDRST Marketing/Promotions, LLC	
22			
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EXHIBIT A

Exhibit A Page 1 of 4

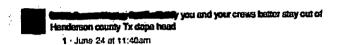
• "This Guy [Knight] Needs to be Took [sic] Out[.]" (June 29, 2015)



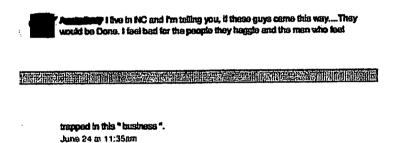
• "Someone needs to give him [Knight] a [sic] old fashion <expletive deleted> whipping." (June 27, 2015)



• "[Y]ou and your crews better stay out of Henderson county Tx dope head[.]" (June 24, 2015)

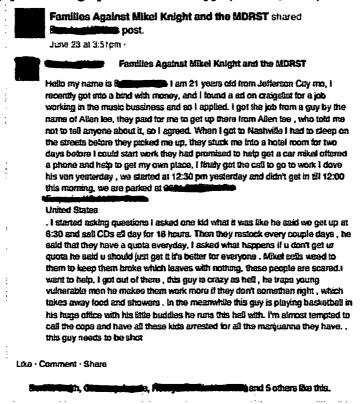


• "I live in NC and I'm telling you, if these guys came this way....They would be Done." (June 24, 2015)

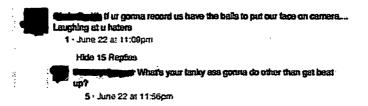


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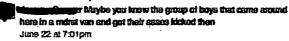
• "[T]his guy [Mikel Knight] needs to be shot[.]" (June 23, 2015)



• "What's your lanky <expletive deleted> gonna do other than get beat up?" (June 22, 2015, in response to a statement made by a MDRST member)



 "Maybe you know the group of boys that came around here in a mdrst van and got their <expletive deleted> kicked then[.]" (June 22, 2015, in response to a comment made by a girlfriend of a MDRST member)



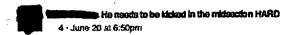
"John cross .Jason cross whatever he's a punk cowboy wanna be.who needs to be put in his place.but he's a scared little <expletive deleted> who won't come out of the bus he has his pic plastered all over it.when they came to neosho mo.a couple of his boy wanted to fight at

Casey's so I obliged them.one of me and ten of them but no mikel night they ran like scared rabbits when the cops came to escort them out of town .come on back y'all and bring mikel with you and koolwhip or donut or whatever your dumb <expletive deleted> names are .this the show me state <expletive deleted> we will be waiting[.]" (June 20, 2015)

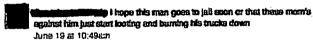
John cross Jason cross whatever he's a punk coverboy wanna be who needs to be put in his place but he's a scared little blich who want come out of the bus he has his pio plastered all over it when they came to need no couple of his boy wanted to light at Casey's so I obliged them one of me and ten of them but no milet night they ran like scared rabbits when the cope came of them but no out of town .come on back y'all and bring mikel with you and kooleight or donat or whatever your dumb ase names are the show me state blich we will be waiting

16 · June 20 at 7:40pm

• "He [Knight] needs to be kicked in the midsection HARD[.]" (June 20, 2015)



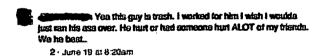
• "I hope this man goes to jail soon or that these mom's against him just start looting and burning his trucks down[.]" (June 19, 2015)



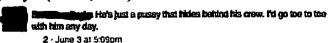
• "In North West Arkansas we should start a "Woop MK <expletive deleted> Street Team[.]" (June 19, 2015)



• "Yea this guy [Knight] is trash. I worked for him I wish I would just ran his <expletive deleted> over." (June 19, 2015)



• "He's [Mikel Knight] just a <expletive deleted> that hides behind his crew. I'd go toe to toe with him any day." (June 3, 2015)



• "He [Mikel Knight] threatens the boys and there family's so they are scared. I'd like to meet him and show him how a real man whoops <expletive deleted>[.]" (June 3, 2015)

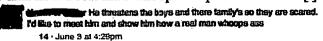


Exhibit A Page 4 of 4

• "We are doing our best to keep up with his vans and keep them ran out of Arkansas!" (June 2, 2015)

the p them ran out of Artamaas!

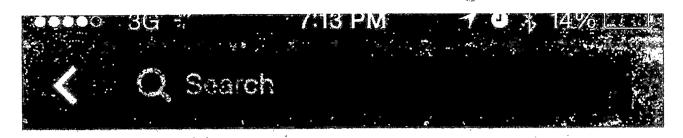
1 June 2 at 7:56pm

• "That's what I am thinking y don't someone just give them a good <expletive deleted> kicking[.]" (May 21, 2015)

Commence That's what I am thinking y don't someone just give them a good ass kicking. These guys were in the town ware I work today at the truck stop in Commission Nebresia. I saw them when I was getting fixel cops got rid of thom thank god

2 · May 21 at 6:14pm







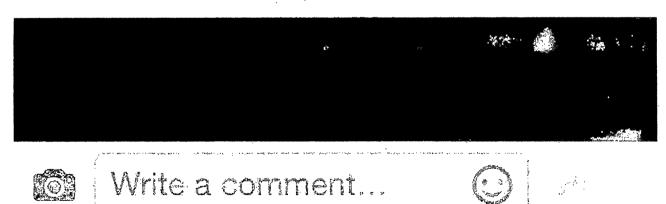
Brantley Beacon

2 hrs · Nahunta, GA · @

ATTENTION:

Brantley County 911 office would like to notify the public that the Facebook warning that is circulating about this van involved in a kidnapping is false.

"We understand everyone is concerned, but we want everyone to know that this is false and there is no need to call 911" stated a spokesperson for Brantley County 911. " Again, the reports are false about this van, but please call 911 if you have an emergency."











2000 (2000) *CONTRACTOR (2000)

VERIFICATION OF JASON CROSS I, the undersigned, certify and declare that I have read the foregoing Complaint and know its contents. Fam informed and believe and on that ground allege that the matters stated in the foregoing document are true. Executed on February \underline{q} , 2016, at Heritage, Tennessee. I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct. 11,

VERIFICATION OF 1203 ENTERTAINMENT, LLC

I, the undersigned, certify and declare that I have read the foregoing Complaint and know its contents. I am the President of 1203 Entertainment, LLC, a Tennessee limited liability company, am authorized to make this verification for and on its own behalf, and I make this verification for that reason. I am informed and believe and on that ground allege that the matters stated in the foregoing document are true.

Executed on February 9, 2016, at Hermitage, Tennessee.

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

Jason Richardson

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VERIFICATION OF MDRST MARKETING/PROMOTIONS, LLC

I, the undersigned, certify and declare that I have read the foregoing Complaint and know its contents. I am the Senior Vice President of MDRST Marketing/Promotions, LLC, a Tennessee limited liability company, both parties to this action, am authorized to make this verification for and on its behalf, and I make this verification for that reason. I am informed and believe and on that ground allege that the matters stated in the foregoing document are true.

Executed on February 4, 2016, at Hermitage, Tennessee.

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

Thomas Hairston

COMPLAINT

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