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*(pro hac vice to be filed)*

Attorneys for Plaintiff

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

KEVIN BRANCA, individually and on )  
behalf of all others similarly situated, )

Plaintiff, )

vs. )

NORDSTROM, INC., )

Defendant. )

Case No. '14 CV2062 MMAJMA

**CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT**  
**DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL**

- 1. Violation of the "Unfair" Prong of the UCL
- 2. Violation of the "Fraudulent" Prong of the UCL
- 3. Violation of the "Unlawful" Prong of the UCL
- 4. Violation of the California False Advertising Law, California Business & Professions Code Sections 17500, *et seq.*
- 5. Violation of the Consumers Legal Remedies Act, California Civil Code Sections 1750, *et seq.*: Injunctive Relief

**CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT**

1  
2 Plaintiff, KEVIN BRANCA (“Plaintiff”), on behalf of himself and all others  
3 similarly situated, alleges the following based upon personal knowledge as to  
4 allegations regarding Plaintiff and on information and belief as to other allegations:  
5

**INTRODUCTION**

6  
7 1. This is a civil class action seeking monetary damages, restitution,  
8 injunctive and declaratory relief from Defendant, Nordstrom, Inc. (“Nordstrom”),  
9 arising from its deceptive and misleading labeling and marketing of merchandise it  
10 sells at its company-owned Nordstrom Rack stores.  
11

12 2. During the Class Period (defined below), Nordstrom misrepresented the  
13 existence, nature, and amount of price discounts on products: (a) manufactured  
14 exclusively for Nordstrom Rack and sold at Nordstrom Rack; and (b) manufactured by  
15 other brands and sold at Nordstrom Rack (collectively “Nordstrom Rack Products”)  
16 by purporting to offer discounts off of fabricated former prices. The term “Nordstrom  
17 Rack Products” expressly excludes products sold at Nordstrom Rack stores that were  
18 actually previously offered for sale at Nordstrom main line retail stores.  
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22 3. Specifically, Nordstrom represented—on the price tags of its Nordstrom  
23 Rack Products—“Compare At” prices that were overstated and did not represent a  
24 bona fide price at which Nordstrom formerly sold Nordstrom Rack Products. Nor  
25 were the advertised “Compare At” prices prevailing market retail prices within three  
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1 months immediately preceding the publication of the advertised former prices, as  
2 required by California law.

3 4. Having touted false “Compare At” prices, Nordstrom then offered, on the  
4 same sales tags, to sell Nordstrom Rack Products for prices that supposedly  
5 represented a deep percentage discount off of the false “Compare At” prices.  
6

7 5. But the “Compare At” prices used by Nordstrom were a sham. In fact,  
8 Nordstrom sells certain goods manufactured by third-party designers for *exclusive sale*  
9 at its Nordstrom Rack stores and other outlet stores, which means that such items were  
10 never sold—or even intended to be sold—at the “Compare At” prices advertised on  
11 the price tags. Nordstrom Rack Products were never offered for sale in Nordstrom’s  
12 main line retail stores in California, or in any other state. Nordstrom Rack’s website,  
13 however, falsely suggests that the Nordstrom Rack Products are equivalent to the  
14 products sold at Nordstrom’s main line retail stores: “Why Shop the Rack? Because  
15 we have the most current trends and the brands you love for 30-70% off original  
16 prices—each and every day.” The truth is that the Nordstrom Rack Products are not  
17 discounted off “original prices.” The Nordstrom Rack Products are *never* offered for  
18 sale at the Nordstrom main line retail stores and are typically of lesser quality.  
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23 6. The “Compare At” prices listed on Nordstrom Rack Products’ tags did  
24 not represent a former price at all—much less a former price in the preceding three  
25 months. They are fictional amounts intentionally selected so that Nordstrom Rack  
26 could advertise phantom markdowns. The entire price tag – indeed the entire “outlet  
27  
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1 store” motif – is designed to falsely convince consumers that they are buying main  
2 line retail designer brand products at reduced prices. In fact, consumers are buying  
3 lower quality goods that were never offered or sold as genuine quality designer brand  
4 clothing and accessories.

6 7. The Federal Trade Commission (“FTC”) explicitly describes the  
7 fictitious pricing scheme employed at Nordstrom Rack stores as deceptive:

9 (a) One of the most commonly used forms of bargain advertising is to  
10 offer a reduction from the advertiser's own former price for an  
11 article. If the former price is the actual, bona fide price at which  
12 the article was offered to the public on a regular basis for a  
13 reasonably substantial period of time, it provides a legitimate basis  
14 for the advertising of a price comparison. Where the former price  
15 is genuine, the bargain being advertised is a true one. If, on the  
16 other hand, the former price being advertised is not bona fide but  
17 fictitious -- for example, where an artificial, inflated price was  
18 established for the purpose of enabling the subsequent offer of a  
19 large reduction -- the “bargain” being advertised is a false one; the  
20 purchaser is not receiving the unusual value he expects. In such a  
21 case, the “reduced” price is, in reality, probably just the seller's  
22 regular price.

18 16 C.F.R. § 233.1.

20 8. Similarly, California statutory and regulatory law expressly prohibits  
21 false pricing schemes. *Business & Professions Code* § 17501, entitled “*Value*  
22 *determinations; Former price advertisements,*” states:

24 For the purpose of this article the worth or value of anything advertised is  
25 the prevailing market price, wholesale if the offer is at wholesale, retail if  
26 the offer at retail, at the time of publication of such advertisement in the  
27 locality wherein the advertisement is published.

28 *No price shall be advertised as a former price of any advertised thing,  
unless the alleged former price was the prevailing market price as above  
defined within three months next immediately preceding the publication*

1            *of the advertisement* or unless the date when the alleged former price did  
2            prevail is clearly, exactly and conspicuously stated in the advertisement.  
3            (emphasis added).

4            9.        The Nordstrom Rack pricing scheme was prominently displayed on all  
5            products available for sale at Nordstrom Rack stores in California. To illustrate, a  
6            merchandise price tag for an item sold at Nordstrom Rack is pictured below:



16            10.        Upon information and belief, thousands of California consumers were  
17            victims of Nordstrom’s deceptive, misleading, and unlawful false pricing scheme and  
18            thousands more will be deceived if the practices continue.

19  
20            11.        Nordstrom fraudulently concealed from, and intentionally failed to  
21            disclose to, Plaintiff, and others similarly situated, the truth about its “Compare At”  
22            prices and advertised price discounts from those supposedly former prices.

23  
24            12.        Nordstrom’s false representations of original prices and false  
25            representations of purported savings, discounts, and bargains are objectively material  
26            to a reasonable consumer.  
27  
28

1           13. Plaintiff relied upon such false representations of “Compare At” prices  
2 and discounts when purchasing apparel from a Nordstrom Rack store in California.  
3 Plaintiff would not have made such purchase, or would not have paid the amount he  
4 did, but for Nordstrom’s false representations of the former price of the items he  
5 purchased, as compared to the supposedly discounted “Compare At” price and  
6 corresponding “savings” at which Nordstrom Rack offered the items for sale.  
7

8  
9           14. Plaintiff, in short, believed the truth of the price tags attached to the  
10 products he purchased at Nordstrom Rack, which expressly advertised that he was  
11 getting a significant discount on his purchase. In fact, he was not getting a bargain at  
12 all.  
13

14           15. Through its false and deceptive marketing, advertising, and pricing  
15 scheme, Nordstrom violated (and continues to violate) California law prohibiting  
16 advertising goods for sale as discounted from former prices which are false, and  
17 prohibiting misleading statements about the existence and amount of price reductions.  
18 Specifically, Nordstrom violated (and continues to violate) California’s *Business &*  
19 *Professions Code* §§ 17200, *et seq.* (the “UCL”), California’s *Business and*  
20 *Professions Code* §§ 17500, *et seq.* (the “FAL”), the California Consumers’ Legal  
21 Remedies Act, *Civil Code* §§1750, *et seq.* (the “CLRA”), and the Federal Trade  
22 Commission Act (“FTCA”), which prohibits “unfair or deceptive acts or practices in  
23 or affecting commerce” and specifically prohibits false advertisements. 15 U.S.C. §§  
24 52(a) and 15 U.S.C. § 45(a)(1).  
25  
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1 outlet stores to sell made-for-outlet goods that are never intended to be sold at non-  
2 outlet stores.

3         25. The very term “outlet” conveys to reasonable consumers that products  
4 are comprised of merchandise formerly offered for sale at full-price retail locations.  
5 Similarly, the Nordstrom Rack name connotes a store selling discounted outlet  
6 clothing. Indeed, Nordstrom Rack’s website describes Nordstrom Rack as “the off-  
7 price retail division of Nordstrom Inc., which was founded in 1901 in Seattle,  
8 Washington by John W. Nordstrom.”  
9

10         26. Instead, retailers like Nordstrom create the illusion of traditional outlet  
11 discounts and bargains by offering the made-for-outlet goods at prices reduced from  
12 fabricated, arbitrary, and false prices. In short, outlet stores such as Nordstrom Rack  
13 are using false and fraudulent price comparison tactics. See  
14 [http://www.buzzfeed.com/sapna/customers-finally-aware-that-most-outlet-](http://www.buzzfeed.com/sapna/customers-finally-aware-that-most-outlet-merchandise-is-now)  
15 [merchandise-is-now](http://www.buzzfeed.com/sapna/customers-finally-aware-that-most-outlet-merchandise-is-now) (last visited August 11, 2014) (“While price tags on outlet goods  
16 may list a manufacturer-suggested retail price (known as an MSRP) or, a ‘valued at’  
17 price, that’s little more than a number ascribed by the retailer and doesn’t mean it was  
18 ever sold for such a sum in an actual full-price retail location. (Giant discounters like  
19 T.J. Maxx and Nordstrom Rack also label prices this way.)”).  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24

25         27. The intentional use of false and fraudulent price comparison tactics is  
26 increasingly deceiving consumers in the market. To illustrate, on January 30, 2014,  
27 four Members of Congress demanded an FTC investigation of misleading marketing  
28

1 practices by outlet stores across the United States. The four Members of Congress  
2 described a pricing scheme similar to the one implemented at Nordstrom Rack stores  
3 and stated, “[i]t is a common practice at outlet stores to advertise a retail price  
4 alongside the outlet store price—even on made-for-outlet merchandise that does not  
5 sell at regular retail locations. Since the item was never sold in the regular retail store  
6 or at the retail price, the retail price is impossible to substantiate. We believe this  
7 practice may be a violation of the FTC’s Guides Against Deceptive Pricing (16 CFR  
8 233).” See [http://www.whitehouse.senate.gov/news/release/sens-and-rep-to-ftc-outlet-](http://www.whitehouse.senate.gov/news/release/sens-and-rep-to-ftc-outlet-stores-may-be-misleading-consumers)  
9 [stores-may-be-misleading-consumers](http://www.whitehouse.senate.gov/news/release/sens-and-rep-to-ftc-outlet-stores-may-be-misleading-consumers) (last visited August 11, 2014).

10  
11  
12  
13 28. This is precisely the practice used by Nordstrom in its Nordstrom Rack  
14 stores.

### 15 **Plaintiff’s Purchase**

16  
17 29. On July 12, 2013, Plaintiff entered the Nordstrom Rack located in San  
18 Marcos, California. He observed that merchandise was advertised with price tags that  
19 represented “Compare At” prices that were directly on top of prices significantly  
20 reduced by a percentage amount. Enticed by the idea of paying significantly less than  
21 the “Compare At” price charged outside of Nordstrom Rack, Plaintiff was induced to  
22 purchase one pair of cargo shorts with a “Compare At” price of \$49.50 and an actual  
23 price of \$29.97.  
24

25  
26 30. By purchasing the cargo shorts for the \$29.97 instead of the “Compare  
27 At” price of \$49.50, Plaintiff was led to believe that he saved at least 60% on his  
28

1 purchase. In reality, Nordstrom never intended, nor did it ever, sell the cargo shorts at  
2 the represented “Compare At” price. Thus, Plaintiff was deceived by the false price  
3 comparison into making a full retail purchase with no discount.  
4

5 31. On the same date, Plaintiff made two other purchases at Nordstrom Rack.  
6 Again, enticed by the idea of paying significantly less than the “Compare At” price  
7 charged outside of Nordstrom Rack, Plaintiff was induced to purchase a hooded  
8 sweatshirt with a “Compare At” price of \$65.00 and an actual price of \$29.97, as well  
9 as one pair of pants with a “Compare At” price of \$150.00 and an actual price of  
10 \$79.97.  
11

12 32. By purchasing the hooded sweatshirt for the \$29.97 instead of the  
13 “Compare At” price of \$65.00, Plaintiff was led to believe that he saved at least 46%  
14 on his purchase. In reality, Nordstrom never intended, nor did it ever, sell the hooded  
15 sweatshirt at the represented “Compare At” price. Thus, Plaintiff was deceived by the  
16 false price comparison into making a full retail purchase with no discount.  
17

18 33. By purchasing the pants for the \$79.97 instead of the “Compare At”  
19 price of \$150.00, Plaintiff was led to believe that he saved at least 53% on his  
20 purchase. In reality, Nordstrom never intended, nor did it ever, sell the pants at the  
21 represented “Compare At” price. Thus, Plaintiff was deceived by the false price  
22 comparison into making a full retail purchase with no discount.  
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1 34. Plaintiff's and class members' reliance on Nordstrom's false price  
2 comparison advertising was reasonable. In fact, empirical marketing studies provide  
3 an incentive for retailers to engage in this false and fraudulent behavior:  
4

5 [c]omparative price advertising offers consumers a basis for comparing  
6 the relative value of the product offering by suggesting a monetary worth  
7 of the product and any potential savings...[A] comparative price  
8 advertisement can be construed as deceptive if it makes any  
9 representation,... or involves any practice that may materially mislead a  
10 reasonable consumer.

11 *Comparative Price Advertising: Informative or Deceptive?*, Dhruv Grewal and Larry  
12 D. Compeau, *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, Vol. 11, No. 1, at 52 (Spring  
13 1992). In short:

14 [b]y creating an impression of savings, the presence of a higher reference  
15 price enhances subjects' perceived value and willingness to buy the  
16 product...Thus, if the reference price is not truthful, a consumer may be  
17 encouraged to purchase as a result of a false sense of value.

18 *Id.* at 55, 56.

19 35. Despite the "Compare At" scheme used at Nordstrom Rack stores,  
20 Plaintiff would purchase Nordstrom Rack Products in the future from Nordstrom Rack  
21 stores and/or other retail establishments, if price tags accurately reflect "former"  
22 prices and discounts. Currently, however, Plaintiff and California consumers have no  
23 realistic way to know which—if any—of Nordstrom Rack price tag comparisons are  
24 not false or deceptive. If the Court were to issue an injunction ordering Nordstrom to  
25 comply with California's comparative price advertising laws, and prohibiting  
26  
27  
28

1 Nordstrom's use of the deceptive practices discussed herein, Plaintiff would likely  
2 shop for Nordstrom Rack Products again in the near future at Nordstrom Rack stores.

3  
4 **CLASS ALLEGATIONS**

5 36. Plaintiff incorporates and realleges by reference each and every  
6 allegation contained in the preceding paragraphs as if set forth herein in full.

7 37. Plaintiff brings this action on behalf of himself and the members of the  
8 proposed Class. The proposed Class consists of:  
9

10 All individuals residing in the State of California who, within the  
11 applicable statute of limitations preceding the filing of this action,  
12 purchased Nordstrom Rack Products.

13 38. Excluded from the Class are Nordstrom, its parents, subsidiaries,  
14 affiliates, officers and directors, any entity in which Nordstrom has a controlling  
15 interest, all customers who make a timely election to be excluded, governmental  
16 entities, and all judges assigned to hear any aspect of this litigation, as well as their  
17 immediate family members.  
18

19 39. The members of the Class are so numerous that joinder is impractical.  
20 The Class consists of thousands of members, the precise number which is within the  
21 knowledge of and can be ascertained only by resort to Nordstrom's records.  
22

23 40. There are numerous questions of law and fact common to the Class  
24 which predominate over any questions affecting only individual members of the Class.  
25 Among the questions of law and fact common to the Class are:  
26  
27  
28

- 1 (a) Whether, during the Class Period, Nordstrom used false price  
2 representations and falsely advertised price discounts on Nordstrom Rack  
3 Products;  
4
- 5 (b) Whether, during the Class Period, the “Compare At” prices advertised by  
6 Nordstrom were the prevailing market prices for the Nordstrom Rack  
7 Products during the three month periods preceding the dissemination  
8 and/or publication of the advertised former prices;  
9
- 10 (c) Whether Nordstrom’s use of false or deceptive price advertising  
11 constituted false advertising under California Law;  
12
- 13 (d) Whether Nordstrom engaged in unfair, unlawful and/or fraudulent  
14 business practices under California law;  
15
- 16 (e) Whether Nordstrom misrepresented and/or failed to disclose material  
17 facts about its product pricing and discounts.  
18
- 19 (f) Whether Nordstrom made false or misleading statements of fact  
20 concerning the reasons for, existence of, or amounts of price reductions;  
21
- 22 (g) Whether Nordstrom’s conduct, as alleged herein, was intentional and  
23 knowing;  
24
- 25 (h) Whether Class members are entitled to damages and/or restitution, and in  
26 what amount;  
27
- 28 (i) Whether Nordstrom is likely to continue using false, misleading or illegal  
price comparisons such that an injunction is necessary; and

1 (j) Whether Plaintiff and Class members are entitled to an award of  
2 reasonable attorneys' fees, pre-judgment interest and costs of suit.

3 41. Plaintiff's claims are typical of the claims of the members of the Class  
4 and, like all members of the Class, purchased goods from a Nordstrom Rack store that  
5 falsely conveyed a "Compare At" price and a fictitious discount. Accordingly,  
6 Plaintiff has no interests antagonistic to the interests of any other member of the Class.  
7

8 42. Plaintiff is a representative who will fully and adequately assert and  
9 protect the interests of the Class, and has retained counsel who is experienced in  
10 prosecuting class actions. Accordingly, Plaintiff is an adequate representative and will  
11 fairly and adequately protect the interests of the Class.  
12

13 43. A class action is superior to all other available methods for the fair and  
14 efficient adjudication of this lawsuit, because individual litigation of the claims of all  
15 members of the Class is economically unfeasible and procedurally impracticable.  
16 While the aggregate damages sustained by the Class are in the millions of dollars, the  
17 individual damages incurred by each member of the Class resulting from Nordstrom's  
18 wrongful conduct are too small to warrant the expense of individual lawsuits. The  
19 likelihood of individual Class members prosecuting their own separate claims is  
20 remote, and, even if every member of the Class could afford individual litigation, the  
21 court system would be unduly burdened by individual litigation of such cases.  
22

23 44. The prosecution of separate actions by members of the Class would  
24 create a risk of establishing inconsistent rulings and/or incompatible standards of  
25  
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1 conduct for Nordstrom. For example, one court might enjoin Nordstrom from  
2 performing the challenged acts, whereas another might not. Additionally, individual  
3 actions may be dispositive of the interests of the Class, although certain class  
4 members are not parties to such actions.  
5

6 45. The conduct of Nordstrom is generally applicable to the Class as a whole  
7 and Plaintiff seeks, *inter alia*, equitable remedies with respect to the Class as a whole.  
8 As such, the systematic policies and practices of Nordstrom make declaratory relief  
9 with respect to the Nordstrom California class as a whole appropriate.  
10

11 **COUNT I**  
12 **(Violation of the “Unfair” Prong of the UCL)**

13 46. Plaintiff incorporates and realleges by reference each and every  
14 allegation contained in the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.  
15

16 47. The UCL defines unfair business competition to include any “unlawful,  
17 unfair or fraudulent” act or practice, as well as any “unfair, deceptive, untrue or  
18 misleading” advertising. *Business & Professions Code* § 17200.  
19

20 48. A business act or practice is “unfair” under the UCL if the reasons,  
21 justifications and motives of the alleged wrongdoer are outweighed by the gravity of  
22 the harm to the alleged victims.  
23

24 49. Nordstrom has violated the “unfair” prong of the UCL by representing a  
25 false “Compare At” price and corresponding percentage discount price for Nordstrom  
26 Rack Products. As a result, the inflated “Compare At” price and corresponding  
27  
28



1 percentage discount price was nothing more than a false, misleading and deceptive  
2 illusion of a discount.

3         50. These acts and practices are unfair because they caused Plaintiff, and are  
4 likely to cause consumers, to falsely believe that Nordstrom Rack is offering value,  
5 discounts or bargains from the prevailing market worth of the products sold that did  
6 not, in fact, exist. As a result, purchasers, including Plaintiff, reasonably perceived  
7 that they were receiving products that regularly sold in the non-outlet retail  
8 marketplace at substantially higher prices (and were, therefore, worth more) than what  
9 they paid. This perception has induced reasonable purchasers, including Plaintiff, to  
10 buy Nordstrom Rack Products, which they otherwise would not have purchased.

11         51. The gravity of the harm to members of the Class resulting from these  
12 unfair acts and practices outweighed any conceivable reasons, justifications and/or  
13 motives of Nordstrom Rack for engaging in such deceptive acts and practices. By  
14 committing the acts and practices alleged above, Nordstrom engages in unfair  
15 business practices within the meaning of California Business & Professions Code §§  
16 17200, *et seq.*

17         52. Through its unfair acts and practices, Nordstrom has improperly obtained  
18 money from Plaintiff and the Class. As such, Plaintiff requests that this court cause  
19 Nordstrom to restore this money to Plaintiff and all Class members, and to enjoin  
20 Nordstrom from continuing to violate the UCL as discussed herein and/or from  
21 violating the UCL in the future. Otherwise, Plaintiff and the Class may be irreparably

1 harmed and/or denied an effective and complete remedy if such an order is not  
2 granted.

3  
4 **COUNT II**  
**(Violation of the “Fraudulent” Prong of the UCL)**

5 53. Plaintiff incorporates and realleges by reference each and every  
6 allegation contained in the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

7  
8 54. The UCL defines unfair business competition to include any “unlawful,  
9 unfair or fraudulent” act or practice, as well as any “unfair, deceptive, untrue or  
10 misleading” advertising. Cal. Bus. & Pro. Code § 17200.

11  
12 55. A business act or practice is “fraudulent” under the UCL if it is likely to  
13 deceive members of the consuming public.

14  
15 56. The labels on the Nordstrom Rack Products and advertising materials  
16 concerning false former prices were fraudulent within the meaning of the UCL  
17 because they deceived Plaintiff, and were likely to deceive members of the class, into  
18 believing that Nordstrom was offering value, discounts or bargains at Nordstrom Rack  
19 stores from the prevailing market value or worth of the products sold that did not, in  
20 fact, exist.

21  
22 57. Nordstrom deceived consumers into believing that it was offering value,  
23 discounts or bargains at Nordstrom Rack stores from the prevailing market value or  
24 worth of the Nordstrom Rack products sold that did not, in fact, exist.

25  
26 58. As a result, purchasers, including Plaintiff, reasonably perceived that they  
27 were receiving products that regularly sold in the main line retail marketplace at  
28

1 substantially higher prices (and were, therefore, worth more) than what they paid.  
2 This perception induced reasonable purchasers, including Plaintiff, to buy Nordstrom  
3 Rack Products, which they otherwise would not have purchased.  
4

5 59. Nordstrom's acts and practices as described herein have deceived  
6 Plaintiff and were highly likely to deceive members of the consuming public.  
7 Specifically, in deciding to purchase Nordstrom Rack Products, Plaintiff relied on  
8 Nordstrom's misleading and deceptive representations regarding its "Compare At"  
9 and percentage discounted prices. Each of these factors played a substantial role in  
10 Plaintiff's decision to purchase those products, and Plaintiff would not have purchased  
11 those items in the absence of Nordstrom's misrepresentations. Accordingly, Plaintiff  
12 suffered monetary loss as a direct result of Nordstrom's pricing practices described  
13 herein.  
14  
15  
16

17 60. As a result of the conduct described above, Nordstrom has been unjustly  
18 enriched at the expense of Plaintiff and members of the proposed Class. Specifically,  
19 Nordstrom has been unjustly enriched by obtaining revenues and profits that it would  
20 not otherwise have obtained absent its false, misleading and deceptive conduct.  
21

22 61. Through its unfair acts and practices, Nordstrom has improperly obtained  
23 money from Plaintiff and the Class. As such, Plaintiff requests that this court cause  
24 Nordstrom to restore this money to Plaintiff and all Class members, and to enjoin  
25 Nordstrom from continuing to violate the UCL as discussed herein and/or from  
26 violating the UCL in the future. Otherwise, Plaintiff and the Class may be irreparably  
27  
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1 harmed and/or denied an effective and complete remedy if such an order is not  
2 granted.

3 **COUNT III**  
4 **(Violation of the “Unlawful” Prong of the UCL)**

5 62. Plaintiff incorporates and realleges by reference each and every  
6 allegation contained in the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

7 63. The UCL defines unfair business competition to include any “unlawful,  
8 unfair or fraudulent” act or practice, as well as any “unfair, deceptive, untrue or  
9 misleading” advertising. *Business & Professions Code* § 17200.

10 64. A business act or practice is “unlawful” under the UCL if it violates any  
11 other law or regulation.

12 65. California statutory and regulatory law also expressly prohibits false  
13 former pricing schemes. *Business & Professions Code* § 17501, entitled “*Value*  
14 *determinations; Former price advertisements,*” states:

15 For the purpose of this article the worth or value of anything advertised is  
16 the prevailing market price, wholesale if the offer is at wholesale, retail if  
17 the offer at retail, at the time of publication of such advertisement in the  
18 locality wherein the advertisement is published.

19 *No price shall be advertised as a former price of any advertised thing,*  
20 *unless the alleged former price was the prevailing market price as above*  
21 *defined within three months next immediately preceding the publication*  
22 *of the advertisement or unless the date when the alleged former price did*  
23 *prevail is clearly, exactly and conspicuously stated in the advertisement.*  
24 [Emphasis added.]

25 66. *Civil Code* § 1770, subsection (a)(9), prohibits a business from  
26 “[a]dvertising goods or services with intent not to sell them as advertised,” and  
27  
28

1 subsection (a)(13) prohibits a business from “[m]aking false or misleading statements  
2 of fact concerning reasons for, existence of, or amounts of price reductions.”

3 67. Nordstrom also violated and continues to violate *Business & Professions*  
4 *Code* § 17501, and *Civil Code* § 1770, sections (a)(9) and (a)(13) by advertising false  
5 discounts from purported former prices that were, in fact, not the prevailing market  
6 prices within three months next preceding the publication and dissemination of  
7 advertisements containing the false former prices.  
8  
9

10 68. The FTCA prohibits “unfair or deceptive acts or practices in or affecting  
11 commerce” and specifically prohibits false advertisements. (15 U.S.C. § 45(a)(1) and  
12 15 U.S.C. § 52(a)). The FTC has established guidelines which prohibit false pricing  
13 schemes, similar to Nordstrom’s “Compare At” scheme in material respects, as  
14 deceptive practices that would violate the FTCA:  
15  
16

17 (a) One of the most commonly used forms of bargain advertising is to  
18 offer a reduction from the advertiser's own former price for an article.  
19 If the former price is the actual, bona fide price at which the article  
20 was offered to the public on a regular basis for a reasonably  
21 substantial period of time, it provides a legitimate basis for the  
22 advertising of a price comparison. Where the former price is genuine,  
23 the bargain being advertised is a true one. If, on the other hand, the  
24 former price being advertised is not bona fide but fictitious -- for  
25 example, where an artificial, inflated price was established for the  
purpose of enabling the subsequent offer of a large reduction -- the  
“bargain” being advertised is a false one; the purchaser is not  
receiving the unusual value he expects. In such a case, the “reduced”  
price is, in reality, probably just the seller's regular price.

26 16 C.F.R. § 233.1.

27 69. Nordstrom’s use of and reference to a materially false “Compare At”  
28 price in connection with its marketing and advertisements concerning the Nordstrom

1 Rack Products violated and continues to violate the FTCA, 15 U.S.C. § 45(a)(1) and  
2 15 U.S.C. § 52(a), as well as FTC Guidelines published at 16 C.F.R. § 233.

3 70. As a result of the conduct described above, Nordstrom has been unjustly  
4 enriched at the expense of Plaintiff and members of the proposed Class. Specifically,  
5 Nordstrom has been unjustly enriched by obtaining revenues and profits that it would  
6 not otherwise have obtained absent its false, misleading and deceptive conduct.  
7

8 71. Through its unlawful acts and practices, Nordstrom has improperly  
9 obtained money from Plaintiff and the Class. As such, Plaintiff requests that this  
10 court cause Nordstrom to restore this money to Plaintiff and all Class members, and to  
11 enjoin Nordstrom from continuing to violate the UCL as discussed herein and/or from  
12 violating the UCL in the future. Otherwise, Plaintiff and the Class may be irreparably  
13 harmed and/or denied an effective and complete remedy if such an order is not  
14 granted.  
15  
16  
17

18 **COUNT IV**  
19 **(Violation of the California False Advertising Law,  
20 California Business & Professions Code Sections 17500, *et seq.*)**

21 72. Plaintiff incorporates and realleges by reference each and every  
22 allegation contained in the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

23 73. California's *Business and Professions Code* §§ 17500, *et seq.* prohibits  
24 unfair, deceptive, untrue, or misleading advertising, including, but not limited to, false  
25 statements as to worth, value and former price.  
26

27 74. Nordstrom's practice of advertising "Compare At" prices on price tags on  
28 Nordstrom Rack Products, which were materially greater than the actual prices of

1 those products was an unfair, deceptive and misleading advertising practice because it  
2 gave the false impression that the Nordstrom Rack Products were regularly sold in the  
3 main line retail marketplace at substantially higher prices (and were, therefore, worth  
4 more) than they actually were. In fact, the exclusive, Nordstrom Rack Products did  
5 not have a prevailing market price anywhere close to the “Compare At” price  
6 advertised because the merchandise was always sold under the percentage discounted  
7 price when placed on sale at the Nordstrom Rack stores.  
8  
9

10 75. Through its unfair acts and practices, Nordstrom has improperly obtained  
11 money from Plaintiff and the Class. As such, Plaintiff requests that this court cause  
12 Nordstrom to restore this money to Plaintiff and all Class members, and to enjoin  
13 Nordstrom from continuing to violate the FAL as discussed herein and/or from  
14 violating the FAL in the future. Otherwise, Plaintiff and the Class may be irreparably  
15 harmed and/or denied an effective and complete remedy if such an order is not  
16 granted.  
17  
18

19 **COUNT V**  
20 **(Violation of the Consumers Legal Remedies Act,**  
21 **California Civil Code Sections 1750, et seq.: Injunctive Relief)**

22 76. Plaintiff incorporates and realleges by reference each and every  
23 allegation contained in the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

24 77. This cause of action is brought pursuant to the CLRA.

25 78. Plaintiff and each member of the proposed class are “consumers” within  
26 the meaning of California Civil Code § 1761(d).  
27  
28

1 79. Nordstrom’s selling of Nordstrom Rack Products to Plaintiff and the  
2 Class were “transactions” within the meaning of California *Civil Code* § 1761(e). The  
3 Nordstrom Rack Products purchased by Plaintiff and the Class are “goods” within the  
4 meaning of *Civil Code* §1761(a).

5  
6 80. As described herein, Nordstrom violated the CLRA by falsely  
7 representing the nature, existence and amount of price discounts by fabricating  
8 inflated labeled “Compare At” prices. Such a pricing scheme is in violation of *Civ.*  
9 *Code* § 1770, subsection (a)(9) (“[a]dvertising goods or services with intent not to sell  
10 them as advertised”) and subsection (a)(13) (“[m]aking false or misleading statements  
11 of fact concerning reasons for, existence of, or amounts of price reductions”).  
12

13  
14 81. Plaintiff relied on Nordstrom’s false representations in deciding to  
15 purchase Nordstrom Rack Products. Plaintiff would not have purchased Nordstrom  
16 Rack Products absent Nordstrom’s unlawful conduct.  
17

18 82. Plaintiff requests this Court enjoin Nordstrom from continuing to violate  
19 the CLRA as discussed herein and/or from violating the UCL in the future.  
20 Otherwise, Plaintiff, the Class and members of the general public may be irreparably  
21 harmed and/or denied effective and complete remedy if such an order is not granted.  
22

23 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

24 WHEREFORE, Plaintiff and the members of the Class demand a jury trial on  
25 all claims so triable and judgment against Defendant, Nordstrom, Inc., as follows:  
26  
27  
28



1 A. An order certifying that this action may be maintained as a class action,  
2 that Plaintiff be appointed Class Representative and Plaintiff's counsel be appointed  
3 Class Counsel;

4 B. Pursuant to Plaintiff's first four causes of action, a judgment awarding  
5 Plaintiff and all members of the Class restitution and/or other equitable relief,  
6 including, without limitation, restitutionary disgorgement of all profits and unjust  
7 enrichment that Nordstrom obtained from Plaintiff and the Class as a result of its  
8 unlawful, unfair and fraudulent business practices described herein;

9 C. An order enjoining Nordstrom from continuing to violate the UCL, False  
10 Advertising Law and CLRA as described herein.

11 D. A judgment awarding Plaintiff his costs of suit; including reasonable  
12 attorneys' fees pursuant to California Civil Code § 1780(d), Code of Civil Procedure §  
13 1021.5 and as otherwise permitted by statute; and pre and post-judgment interest; and

14 E. Such other and further relief as may be deemed necessary or appropriate.

15 DATED: September 2, 2014

LAW OFFICES OF WAYNE S. KREGER,  
P.A.

16 By: 

17 Wayne S. Kreger  
18 Attorneys for Plaintiff

**JURY TRIAL DEMANDED**

PLAINTIFF demands a jury trial on all triable issues.

DATED: September 2, 2014

LAW OFFICES OF WAYNE S. KREGER,  
P.A.

By:   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Wayne S. Kreger  
Attorneys for Plaintiff

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**CIVIL COVER SHEET**

JS 44 (Rev. 12/12)

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**

KEVIN BRANCA

(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CA  
*(EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)*

(c) *Attorneys (Give Name, Address and Telephone Number)*  
WAYNE S. KREGER, ESQ., LAW OFFICES OF WAYNE KREGER, P.A.  
100 WILSHIRE BOULEVARD, SUITE 940, SANTA MONICA, CA 90401  
310-917-1083 TEL / 310-917-1001 FAX / wayne@kregerlaw.com

**DEFENDANTS**

NORDSTROM, INC.

County of Residence of First Listed Defendant KING COUNTY, WA  
*(IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY)*

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

Attorneys (If Known)  
N/A

**'14CV2062 MMAJMA**

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

- 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff
- 2 U.S. Government Defendant
- 3 Federal Question *(U.S. Government Not a Party)*
- 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 checked="" 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	TORTS	FORFEITURE/PENALTY	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	<input type="checkbox"/> 625 Drug Related Seizure of Property 21 USC 881 <input type="checkbox"/> 690 Other	<input type="checkbox"/> 422 Appeal 28 USC 158 <input type="checkbox"/> 423 Withdrawal 28 USC 157	<input type="checkbox"/> 375 False Claims Act <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	
<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	<b>PERSONAL INJURY</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 365 Personal Injury - Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 367 Health Care <input type="checkbox"/> 368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability <b>PERSONAL PROPERTY</b> <input checked="" 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	<b>LABOR</b> <input 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	<b>PROPERTY RIGHTS</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 820 Copyrights <input type="checkbox"/> 830 Patent <input type="checkbox"/> 840 Trademark		
	<b>CIVIL RIGHTS</b> <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>PRISONER PETITIONS</b> <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	<b>SOCIAL SECURITY</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 861 HIA (1595ft) <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))	<b>FEDERAL TAX SUITS</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 870 Taxes (U.S. Plaintiff or Defendant) <input type="checkbox"/> 871 IRS—Third Party 26 USC 7609	
		<b>IMMIGRATION</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 462 Naturalization Application <input type="checkbox"/> 465 Other Immigration Actions			

**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)*:  
28 U.S.C. 1332 (D)(2) & (6)

Brief description of cause:  
FALSE AND DECEPTIVE MARKETING, ADVERTISING AND PRICING SCHEME

**VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:**

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

DEMANDS 5,000,000.00

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

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

JUDGE \_\_\_\_\_ DOCKET NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

DATE 09/02/2014 SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY OF RECORD \_\_\_\_\_

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

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