UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

THEDA JACKSON-MAU, on behalf of herself and all others similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

vs.

WALGREEN CO.,

Defendant.

Civil Action No.: 1:18-cv-4868

CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

Plaintiff, Theda Jackson-Mau ("Plaintiff"), by her attorneys, alleges the following upon information and belief, except for those allegations that pertain to Plaintiff, which are based on Plaintiff's personal knowledge, against Walgreen Co. ("Walgreens" or "Defendant"):

NATURE OF THE ACTION

1. Consumers across the country purchased more than \$130 billion of dietary supplements in 2016. One of the most popular dietary supplements is glucosamine, which some marketers believe will grow to a market of more than \$750 million by 2022. Many people take glucosamine who suffer osteoarthritis or joint pain.

2. Glucosamine is commonly sold in two formulations: glucosamine sulfate ("Glucosamine Sulfate"), which is combined with potassium chloride [$(C_6H_{14}NO_5)_2SO_4$ 2KCl]; and glucosamine hydrochloride ("Glucosamine Hydrochloride") [$2(C_6H_{14}NO_5)Cl + K_2SO_4$].

3. Many consumers prefer Glucosamine Sulfate because it is believed to be the more effective version of glucosamine. It also commands premium prices compared to Glucosamine Hydrochloride.

4. Plaintiff purchased a bottle of Finest Nutrition brand glucosamine sulfate, which states in large font on the label that each serving contains 1000 mg of glucosamine sulfate ("Finest

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Nutrition Glucosamine Sulfate"). However, laboratory testing confirms that the product actually contains Glucosamine Hydrochloride and does not contain any Glucosamine Sulfate. Walgreens is selling a dietary supplement that simply is not what it claims to be.

5. Plaintiff brings this class action on behalf of purchasers of Finest Nutrition Glucosamine Sulfate in New York for violation of New York GBL § 349. Plaintiff also brings this class action on behalf of purchasers of Finest Nutrition Glucosamine Sulfate nationwide because Walgreens negligently misrepresented the product, breached the contract, and was unjustly enriched when it sold a product that it labelled Glucosamine Sulfate when, in fact, it was Glucosamine Hydrochloride.

PARTIES

6. Plaintiff Theda Jackson-Mau is a citizen of New York. Ms. Jackson-Mau resides in Brooklyn, New York.

7. Defendant Walgreens is incorporated in Delaware with its principal executive offices in Deerfield, Illinois. It is the largest retail pharmacy company in the United States and Europe, operating as Walgreens, Duane Reade, Boots, and Alliance Healthcare. It also sells a portfolio of its own brands of products, including Finest Nutrition brand dietary supplements.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

8. This Court has original jurisdiction over this action, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1332(d), in that the matter in controversy exceeds the sum or value of \$5 million, exclusive of interest and costs, and is a class action of more than 100 potential Class members in which Plaintiff is a citizen of New York while Defendant is a citizen of a different state.

9. Venue properly lies in this district pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(a) because Plaintiff resides in and Defendant has transacted substantial business within this District within the meaning

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of 28 U.S.C. § 1391(a) as defined in 28 U.S.C. § 1391(c), and because a substantial part of the events giving rise to the claims alleged herein occurred in this District.

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

Glucosamine Sulfate and Glucosamine Hydrochloride

10. The dietary supplement market is a large and growing market in the United States. In fact, the National Institute of Health reports that the majority of adults in the United States take one or more dietary supplements at least occasionally.

11. Glucosamine is one of the most common dietary supplements available. It is a natural substance that is found in the cartilage in joints. Consumers take glucosamine supplements in order to help treat the symptoms of joint pain, osteoarthritis, and rheumatoid arthritis.

12. As discussed above, there are two commercially available forms of glucosamine: Glucosamine Sulfate and Glucosamine Hydrochloride.

13. The common perception of Glucosamine Sulfate is that it performs better than Glucosamine Hydrochloride. The National Institute of Health advises that there "are several kinds of glucosamine products. The most research showing benefit is for products that contain glucosamine sulfate. Products that contain glucosamine hydrochloride do not seem to work as well." "Glucosamine Sulfate," MedinePlus, https://medlineplus.gov/druginfo/natural/807.html (last visited Aug. 27, 2018). Similarly, the Mayo Clinic notes that Glucosamine Sulfate has been studied for treatment of arthritis while there is no clinical evidence to show that another form (N-acetyl glucosamine) is useful. "Glucosamine," Mayo Clinic, https://www.mayoclinic.org/drugs-supplements-glucosamine/art-20362874 (last visited Aug. 27, 2018). The different forms of the supplement "are not considered interchangeable." *Id.*

14. Private companies have picked up this message and promote Glucosamine Sulfate over Glucosamine Hydrochloride. *See, e.g.*, "Glucosamine Sulfate vs. Glucosamine

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Hydrochloride—What You Need To Know," Flexcin, https://flexcin.com/glucosamine-sulfate-vsglucosamine-hydrochloride-what-you-need-to-know/ ("As a result, many times people pick up a 'glucosamine supplement,' but it's not the right kind of glucosamine and the results are sub-par. If you're looking for a supplement with glucosamine, we highly recommend getting a supplement with glucosamine sulfate potassium.") (last visited Aug. 27, 2018).

Plaintiff's Experience with Defendant's Product

15. One of the many products that Walgreens manufactures and sells under its own brand is Finest Nutrition Glucosamine Sulfate. The words "GLUCOSAMINE SULFATE" are the largest words on the front label of the package, and the label also advertises that it contains "1000 mg per caplet." The front label looks like this:



16. The back of the bottle includes a Nutrition Facts panel, which states that each caplet (one serving) contains "Glucosamine Sulfate Potassium Chloride 1000 mg (1 g)." In no place does the label suggest that it contains Glucosamine Hydrochloride.

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17. A reasonable person would believe that the caplets contain Glucosamine Sulfate.

18. In March 2018, Plaintiff purchased a bottle of Finest Nutrition Glucosamine Sulfate at a Walgreens in Brooklyn.

19. She purchased this bottle for her joint pain. She specifically chose the version of glucosamine that contained Glucosamine Sulfate instead of Glucosamine Hydrochloride. After researching on the internet, Plaintiff came to believe that Glucosamine Sulfate was more effective than Glucosamine Hydrochloride.

20. Plaintiff brought the pills from the bottle she purchased to her counsel, who then sent the contents to a laboratory for analysis. The lab's report concluded that the pills contain Glucosamine Hydrochloride, and did not detect the presence of Glucosamine Sulfate.

21. The lab test, which used Fourier-transform infrared spectroscopy, did not simply show that there was less Glucosamine Sulfate than the label claimed—the test showed that there was *no* Glucosamine Sulfate in the pills that were tested. It is implausible to consider that this is the result of simple manufacturing variance.

22. Other tests that could be used to detect the presence or amount of glucosamine, such as High-Performance Liquid Chromatography with FMOC-Su Derivatization, are not appropriate or reliable because they do not distinguish between Glucosamine Sulfate and Glucosamine Hydrochloride.

23. It is not feasible for consumers to determine the provenance of each bottle of Glucosamine Sulfate, particularly the individual lot that the bottle came from.

24. Plaintiff was damaged by Walgreens' misrepresentations because she would not have purchased the product if it had truthfully disclosed that it did not contain Glucosamine Sulfate. Furthermore, products containing Glucosamine Sulfate are more expensive than those

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with Glucosamine Hydrochloride.

25. Plaintiff would purchase Finest Nutrition Glucosamine Sulfate again if she could be sure that the bottle actually contains what it is supposed to contain. Defendant continues to sell Glucosamine Sulfate with substantially the same label. Plaintiff continues to be harmed because she has no means of knowing if Walgreens is telling the truth without conducting laboratory testing after buying the product, and this uncertainty has prevented her from making additional purchases.

CLASS ALLEGATIONS

26. Plaintiff brings this suit as a class action on behalf of herself and all others similarly situated pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 23(a), 23(b)(2), and/or 23(b)(3).

27. Plaintiff seeks to represent a class (the "Class") that consists of:

All persons in the United States who purchased a dietary supplement labelled Glucosamine Sulfate from Defendant other than for purposes of resale within the applicable statute of limitations.

28. Plaintiff also seeks to represent a subclass (the "New York Class") that consists of:

All citizens of New York who purchased a dietary supplement labelled Glucosamine Sulfate from Defendant other than for purposes of resale within the applicable statute of limitations.

29. Upon completion of discovery with respect to the scope of the Class, Plaintiff reserves the right to amend the Class definition. Excluded from the Class are Defendant, its parents, subsidiaries and affiliates, directors and officers, and members of their immediate families.

30. The members of the Class are so numerous that joinder is impracticable. At a minimum, thousands of persons in New York purchased Finest Nutrition Glucosamine Sulfate during the Class Period. Moreover, thousands more will continue to purchase the product if Defendant's practices are not stopped. The precise number of Class members and their identities

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are unknown to Plaintiff at this time but may be determined through discovery. Class members may be notified of the pendency of this action by mail, email, and/or publication through the distribution records of Defendant (and, to the extent applicable, third party retailers and vendors).

31. Plaintiff's respective claims are typical of the claims of the Class and the New York Class, as she purchased Finest Nutrition Glucosamine Sulfate during the Class Period and sustained damages as a result of Defendant's conduct.

32. Plaintiff will fairly and adequately represent and protect the interests of the other Class members for purposes of Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 23(a)(4). Plaintiff has no interests antagonistic to those of other Class members. Plaintiff is committed to the vigorous prosecution of this action and has retained counsel experienced in litigation of this nature.

33. Common questions of law and fact exist as to all members of the Class and predominate over any questions affecting only individual members of the Class, including, but not limited to:

- a) whether Finest Nutrition Glucosamine Sulfate contains Glucosamine Sulfate or Glucosamine Hydrochloride;
- b) whether Defendant warranted that its Finest Nutrition Glucosamine Sulfate contained 1,000 mg of Glucosamine Sulfate;
- c) whether Defendant's acts and practices in connection with the promotion and sale of its Finest Nutrition Glucosamine Sulfate violated the NYGBL;
- d) whether Defendant warranted that its Finest Nutrition Glucosamine Sulfate is legal for sale in the United States and, if so, whether Defendant breached such warranties;
- e) whether Defendant's conduct, as set forth herein, damaged members of the Class and, if so, the measure of those damages;

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- f) whether Defendant's acts and practices in connection with the promotion and sale of its Finest Nutrition Glucosamine Sulfate should be enjoined; and
- g) whether the NYGBL should apply to all respective New York Class members.

34. A class action is superior to other available methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of this controversy. Since the damages suffered by individual Class members may be relatively small, the expense and burden of individual litigation make it virtually impossible for the Class members to seek redress for the wrongful conduct alleged. Plaintiff knows of no difficulty which will be encountered in the management of this litigation which would preclude its maintenance as a class action.

35. Class certification is also appropriate under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 23(b)(2) because the Defendant has acted on grounds that apply generally to the Class, so that final injunctive relief or corresponding declaratory relief is appropriate respecting the Class as a whole.

36. Class members have suffered and will suffer irreparable harm and damages as a result of Defendant's wrongful conduct.

FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION

Violation of New York General Business Law § 349 On Behalf of the New York Class

37. Plaintiff hereby incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 to 36.

 Plaintiff brings this claim individually and on behalf of the members of the New York Class against Defendant.

39. New York General Business Law § 349 provides: "Deceptive acts or practices in the conduct of any business, trade or commerce or in the furnishing of any service in this state are hereby declared unlawful."

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40. Defendant's representations on its Finest Nutrition Glucosamine Sulfate are consumer oriented. As alleged fully above, Defendant engaged in deceptive acts and practices within the meaning of NYGBL § 349.

41. As detailed herein, Defendant's conduct with respect to its promotion, marketing and sale of its Finest Nutrition Glucosamine Sulfate constitutes unconscionable commercial practices, deceptions, frauds, false promises or misrepresentations of material facts, including representing and suggesting to consumers that its Finest Nutrition Glucosamine Sulfate contains Glucosamine Sulfate when it actually contains Glucosamine Hydrochloride.

42. As an actual and proximate result of Defendant's misconduct, Plaintiff and the New York Class have suffered damages in that they purchased a product and received less than what was promised, and they are entitled to receive an amount necessary to fulfill their expectation of the promised product or statutory damages.

SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION

Negligent Misrepresentation On Behalf of the Class.

43. Plaintiff hereby incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 to 36.

44. Plaintiff brings this claim individually and on behalf of the members of the Class against Defendant.

45. Defendant, directly or through its agents and employees, made false representations to Plaintiff and members of the Class.

46. Defendant owed a duty to Plaintiff and members of the Class to disclose the material facts about Finest Nutrition Glucosamine Sulfate.

47. In making the representations, and in doing the acts alleged above, Defendant acted

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without any reasonable grounds for believing the representations were true, and intended by said representations to induce the reliance of Plaintiff and members of the Class.

48. Plaintiff and members of the Class reasonably and justifiably relied on Defendant's misrepresentations when purchasing the Finest Nutrition Glucosamine Sulfate, were unaware of the existence of facts that Defendant suppressed and failed to disclose and, had the facts been known, would not have purchased the Products and/or purchased them at the price at which they were offered.

49. As a direct and proximate result of these misrepresentations, Plaintiff and members of the Class have suffered and continue to suffer economic losses and other general and specific damages, including but not limited to the amounts paid for the Finest Nutrition Glucosamine Sulfate, and any interest that would have accrued on those monies, all in an amount to be proven at trial.

THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION

Breach of Contract On Behalf of the Class

50. Plaintiff hereby incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 to 36.

51. Plaintiff and members of the Class had a valid contract, supported by sufficient consideration, pursuant to which Defendant was obligated to provide dietary supplements which, in fact, contained Glucosamine Sulfate, as represented by Defendant.

52. Defendant materially breached its contract with Plaintiff and members of the Class by providing Finest Nutrition Glucosamine Sulfate that did not contain Glucosamine Sulfate.

53. As a result of Defendant's breach, Plaintiff and members the Class were damaged in that they received a product with less value than the amount paid.

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54. Moreover, Plaintiff and members of the Class have suffered and continue to suffer economic losses and other general and specific damages, including but not limited to the amounts paid for the Finest Nutrition Glucosamine Sulfate, and any interest that would have accrued on those monies, all in an amount to be proven at trial.

FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION

Unjust Enrichment On Behalf of the Class

55. Plaintiff hereby incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 to 36.

56. Plaintiff brings this claim individually and on behalf of the members of the Class against Defendant.

57. Plaintiff alleges that Finest Nutrition Glucosamine Sulfate does not contain Glucosamine Sulfate, and instead contains Glucosamine Hydrochloride.

58. By means of Defendant's wrongful conduct alleged herein, Defendant knowingly sold dietary supplements that were mislabeled in a manner that was unfair, unconscionable, and oppressive.

59. Defendant knowingly received and retained wrongful benefits and funds from Plaintiff and members of the Class. Therefore, Defendant acted with conscious disregard for the rights of Plaintiff and members of the Class.

60. As a result of Defendant's wrongful conduct as alleged herein, Defendant has been unjustly enriched at the expense of, and to the detriment of, Plaintiff and members of the Class.

61. Defendant's unjust enrichment is traceable to, and resulted directly and proximately from, the conduct alleged herein.

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62. Under the common law doctrine of unjust enrichment, it is inequitable for Defendant to be permitted to retain the benefits it received, and is still receiving, without justification, from the imposition of fees and rates on Plaintiff and members of the Class in an unfair, unconscionable, and oppressive manner. Defendant's retention of such funds under circumstances making it inequitable to do so constitutes unjust enrichment.

63. The financial benefits derived by Defendant rightfully belong to Plaintiff and members of the Class. Defendant should be compelled to disgorge in a common fund for the benefit of Plaintiff and members of the classes all wrongful or inequitable proceeds received by them. A constructive trust should be imposed upon all wrongful or inequitable proceeds received by Defendant traceable to Plaintiff and members of the Class.

64. Plaintiff and members of the Class have no adequate remedy at law.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff, on behalf of herself and all others similarly situated, pray for judgment against Defendant as follows:

- a) determining that this action is properly brought as a class action and certifying Plaintiff as the representative of the Class and the New York Class and their counsel as Class counsel;
- b) awarding Plaintiff and the proposed Class members their actual damages and statutory damages;
- c) awarding preliminary and permanent injunctive relief restraining Defendant from continuing the unlawful practices set forth herein;
- awarding attorneys' fees and costs and expert fees and reimbursement of costs and expenses expended in litigating this action; and

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e) granting such other and further relief as the Court may deem just and proper.

JURY DEMAND

Plaintiff demands a trial by jury for all claims so triable.

DATED: August 27, 2018

WOLF POPPER LLP

<u>/s/ Carl L. Stine</u> Carl L. Stine Matthew Insley-Pruitt 845 Third Avenue New York, New York 10022 (212) 759-4600

Counsel for Plaintiff and the Class

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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 (b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff (EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES) (c) Attorneys (Firm Name, Address, and Telephone Number)				DEFENDANTS						
				County of Residence of First Listed Defendant (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 JURISDI	CTION (Place an "X" in O	ne Box Only)	III. CI	TIZENSHIP OF I	PRINCIPA	AL PARTIES	(Place an "X" in	ı One Box fe	or Plaintiff	
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2 U.S. Government Defendant	 4 Diversity (Indicate Citizenship of Parties in Item III) 					Incorporated <i>and</i> F of Business In A Foreign Nation		□ 5 □ 6	□ 5 □ 6	
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VI. CAUSE OF ACTIO		tute under which you ar	re filing (1	Do not cite jurisdictional st	atutes unless di	iversity):				
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: Image: Provide the second						
VIII. RELATED CASE(S) IF ANY (See instructions): JUDGE					DOCKE	ET NUMBER				
DATE SIGNATURE OF ATT			FORNEY (OF RECORD	2 0014					
FOR OFFICE USE ONLY										
	MOUNT	APPLYING IFP		JUDGE		MAG. JUD	DGE			

Case 1:18-cv-04505 EDOCUMENT P-1 ARBITRATION ELIGIBILITY ageID #: 15 Local Arbitration Rule 83.10 provides that with certain exceptions, actions seeking money damages only in an amount not in excess of \$150,000;

exclusive of interest and costs, are eligible for compulsory arbitration. The amount of damages is presumed to be below the threshold amount unless a certification to the contrary is filed.

Case is Eligible for Arbitration

I, _____, counsel for _____, do hereby certify that the above captioned civil action is ineligible for

compulsory arbitration for the following reason(s):

monetary damages sought are in excess of \$150,000, exclusive of interest and costs,

the complaint seeks injunctive relief,

the matter is otherwise ineligible for the following reason

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT - FEDERAL RULES CIVIL PROCEDURE 7.1

Identify any parent corporation and any publicly held corporation that owns 10% or more or its stocks:

RELATED CASE STATEMENT (Section VIII on the Front of this Form)

Please list all cases that are arguably related pursuant to Division of Business Rule 50.3.1 in Section VIII on the front of this form. Rule 50.3.1 (a) provides that "A civil case is "related" to another civil case for purposes of this guideline when, because of the similarity of facts and legal issues or because the cases arise from the same transactions or events, a substantial saving of judicial resources is likely to result from assigning both cases to the same judge and magistrate judge." Rule 50.3.1 (b) provides that "A civil case shall not be deemed "related" to another civil case merely because the civil case: (A) involves identical legal issues, or (B) involves the same parties." Rule 50.3.1 (c) further provides that "Presumptively, and subject to the power of a judge to determine otherwise pursuant to paragraph (d), civil cases shall not be deemed to be "related" unless both cases are still pending before the court."

NY-E DIVISION OF BUSINESS RULE 50.1(d)(2)

- 1.) Is the civil action being filed in the Eastern District removed from a New York State Court located in Nassau or Suffolk County? Yes No
- 2.) If you answered "no" above:
 - a) Did the events or omissions giving rise to the claim or claims, or a substantial part thereof, occur in Nassau or Suffolk County? Yes No

b) Did the events or omissions giving rise to the claim or claims, or a substantial part thereof, occur in the Eastern District? Yes No

c) If this is a Fair Debt Collection Practice Act case, specify the County in which the offending communication was received:______.

If your answer to question 2 (b) is "No," does the defendant (or a majority of the defendants, if there is more than one) reside in Nassau or Suffolk County, or, in an interpleader action, does the claimant (or a majority of the claimants, if there is more than one) reside in Nassau or Suffolk County?_____Yes_____No_____

(Note: A corporation shall be considered a resident of the County in which it has the most significant contacts).

BAR ADMISSION

I am currently admitted in the Eastern District of New York and currently a member in good standing of the bar of this court.

Yes

No

Are you currently the subject of any disciplinary action (s) in this or any other state or federal court?

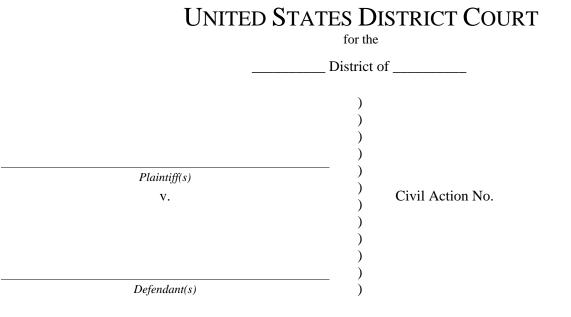
Yes (If yes, please explain No

I certify the accuracy of all information provided above.

Signature: Carl Stie

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AO 440 (Rev. 06/12) Summons in a Civil Action



SUMMONS IN A CIVIL ACTION

To: (Defendant's name and address)

A lawsuit has been filed against you.

Within 21 days after service of this summons on you (not counting the day you received it) — or 60 days if you are the United States or a United States agency, or an officer or employee of the United States described in Fed. R. Civ. P. 12 (a)(2) or (3) — you must serve on the plaintiff an answer to the attached complaint or a motion under Rule 12 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. The answer or motion must be served on the plaintiff or plaintiff's attorney, whose name and address are:

If you fail to respond, judgment by default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint. You also must file your answer or motion with the court.

DOUGLAS C. PALMER CLERK OF COURT

Date:

Signature of Clerk or Deputy Clerk

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AO 440 (Rev. 06/12) Summons in a Civil Action (Page 2)

Civil Action No.

PROOF OF SERVICE

(This section should not be filed with the court unless required by Fed. R. Civ. P. 4 (l))

	This summons for (nam	ne of individual and title, if any)								
was re	ceived by me on (date)	·								
	□ I personally served	the summons on the individua	l at (place)							
			on (date)	; or						
	I left the summons at the individual's residence or usual place of abode with (name)									
	, a person of suitable age and discretion who resides there,									
	on (<i>date</i>), and mailed a copy to the individual's last known address; or									
	□ I served the summo	ns on (name of individual)		, w	ho is					
	designated by law to accept service of process on behalf of (name of organization)									
	on (date)									
	\Box I returned the summ	nons unexecuted because			; or					
	□ Other (<i>specify</i>):									
	My fees are \$	for travel and \$	for services, for a total of \$							
	I declare under penalty of perjury that this information is true.									
Date:										
			Server's signature							
			Printed name and title							

Server's address

Additional information regarding attempted service, etc: