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#### I. INTRODUCTION

On April 26, 2010, Plaintiff Federal Trade Commission ("FTC") filed its Notice of Motion and Motion for Summary Judgment, Dkt. #141 ("Motion"), seeking summary judgment under Fed. R. Civ. P. 56(c) against Defendants LucasLawCenter "incorporated" ("Lucas Law Center"), Future Financial Services, LLC ("FFS"), Paul Jeffrey Lucas ("Lucas"), Christopher Francis Betts ("Betts"), and Frank Sullivan ("Sullivan") (collectively, "Defendants"). In support of its Motion, the FTC filed its Memorandum of Points and Authorities in Support of Plaintiff's Motion for Summary Judgment, Dkt. #142 ("FTC's Memo."); its Statement of Uncontroverted Facts & Conclusions of Law in Support of Plaintiff's Motion for Summary Judgment, Dkt. #143 ("Uncontroverted Facts")¹; the transcripts of five consumer depositions, Dkt. #145-149; and numerous exhibits comprised of Defendants' business records, Dkt. #151. The FTC also supported its Motion with stipulations, consumer declarations, consumer complaints, the Receiver's reports, and other evidence previously filed with the Court in this case.

In response to the FTC's Motion, on May 3, 2010, Defendants filed two documents: (1) Defendants' Opposition to Motion for Summary Judgment, Dkt. #153 ("Opp. to MSJ"); and (2) Defendants' Opposition to State of Uncontroverted Facts & Conclusions of Law, Dkt. #153-1 ("Opp. to UF&CL") (collectively, "Oppositions"). These documents, at best, merely reiterate Defendants' denials of the FTC's allegations, and they fail to dispute the FTC's uncontroverted facts with any specific, admissible evidence. In stark contrast, the FTC has amassed overwhelming, uncontroverted evidence in support of its Motion, which should now be granted.

Citations in this Reply to the separately-numbered uncontroverted facts are abbreviated as "UF #".

#### II. DEFENDANTS FAILED TO MEET THEIR BURDEN FOR SURVIVING SUMMARY JUDGMENT

A. Defendants' Burden in Responding to Summary Judgment

Defendants' Oppositions fail to properly respond to the FTC's Motion. Under Fed. R. Civ. P. 56(e)(2):

When a motion for summary judgment is properly made and supported, an opposing party may not rely merely on allegations or denials in its own pleading; rather, its response must—by affidavits or as otherwise provided in this rule—set out specific facts showing a genuine issue for trial. If the opposing party does not so respond, summary judgment should, if appropriate, be entered against that party.<sup>2</sup>

The Supreme Court has held that "[t]he mere existence of a scintilla of evidence . . . will be insufficient; there must be evidence on which the jury could reasonably find for [the opposing party]." *Anderson v. Liberty Lobby, Inc.*, 477 U.S. 242, 252, 106 S. Ct. 2505, 2512, 91 L. Ed. 2d 202, 214, *quoted and followed in Maceachern v. City of Manhattan Beach*, 623 F. Supp. 2d 1092, 1097 (C.D. Cal. 2009). As this Court has held, the opponent cannot rest on its pleadings: "There must be specific, admissible evidence identifying the basis for the dispute." *Maceachern*, 623 F. Supp. 2d at 1097 (citing *S.A. Empresa de Viacao Aerea Rio Grandense v. Walter Kidde & Co.*, 690 F.2d 1235, 1238 (9th Cir. 1982)); *see also SEC v. Murphy*, 626

In determining any motion for summary judgment, the Court will assume that the material facts as claimed and adequately supported by the moving party are admitted to exist without controversy except to the extent that such material facts are (a) included in the "Statement of Genuine Issues" [required by L.R. 56-2] and (b) controverted by declaration or other written evidence filed in opposition to the motion.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Similarly, Local Rule 56-3 states:

F.2d 633, 640 (9th Cir. 1980). Thus, any opposition to the FTC's Motion must set forth admissible evidence that is significantly probative, and not merely colorable, of any fact that is claimed to be disputed. *Murphy*, 626 F.2d at 640.

#### B. Defendants Failed to Meet Their Burden

Defendants have failed to put forth any specific, admissible, and significantly probative evidence that disputes the FTC's Uncontroverted Facts. Defendants' "object" to the 153 uncontroverted facts that the FTC filed in support of its Motion, yet provide no evidence to support their objections. In fact, Defendants already admitted or stipulated to 60 of the FTC's uncontroverted facts. Defendants invoked the Fifth Amendment privilege against self incrimination as to an additional 70 of the FTC's uncontroverted facts, all of which are corroborated by independent evidence. Another eight of the FTC's uncontroverted facts are supported by Defendants' own business records, which Defendants stipulated may be admitted into evidence. Defendants have produced no evidence disputing those

See Opp. to UF&CL at 1. In this Reply, citations to page numbers within Defendants' Oppositions will correspond to the page numbers created by the Court ECF system at the top of each document.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> See UF #1-15, 17, 19-20, 22-28, 30-32, 34-39, 41-46, 56-59, 60 (in part), 68-84, 118-19, 140.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> See UF #16, 18, 21, 29, 33, 47, 50-53, 55, 60 (in part), 64-66, 85-99, 101, 103-07, 109, 111-14, 116-17, 120-23, 124 (in part), 125-39, 142-45, 147-48, 150, 152.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> See UF #40, 48, 49, 61-63, 67, 153.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> See Deposition of Paul J. Lucas as Rule 30(b)(6) Designee for Defendant LucasLawCenter "incorporated", March 22-23, 2010, Dkt. #150-1, at 45:4-25, 48:4-12.

facts. Defendants have also produced no evidence disputing the few remaining uncontroverted facts.<sup>8</sup>

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Instead of disputing the FTC's Uncontroverted Facts with specific, admissible, and significantly probative evidence, Defendants resort to making numerous irrelevant arguments that serve only as red herrings with no relation to the FTC's Motion. Defendants also inappropriately claim that this Court's standard motion practice is "harassing and burdensome." Opp. to UF&CL at 1, 5; see Opp. to MSJ at 1-2. On the contrary, Defendants had ample notice of the deadline to file responses to motions. Instead of seeking relief from these well-

<sup>8</sup> See UF #54, 100, 102, 108, 110, 115, 124 (in part), 141, 146, 149, 151.

These include Defendants' discussions of the FTC's pending motion to strike their expert designation, see Opp. to MSJ at 1-2, Ex. A at 5-9; Opp. to UF&CL at 2, Ex. A at 7-11, and Defendants' misleading allegation that the FTC "shopped" this case to criminal authorities, see Opp. to UF&CL at 4. The FTC objects to these extraneous arguments. Another red herring is Defendants' claim that Lucas Law Center's employees were the same "sincere and motivated" employees of two corporate defendants in another FTC case in this district before Judge Stotler. See Opp. to UF&CL at 3-4; FTC v. Data Med. Capital, Inc., 2010 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 3344, at \*19 ¶ 39, \*21 ¶ 43, 2010-1 Trade Cas. (CCH) ¶ 76,885 (C.D. Cal. Jan. 15, 2010). Defendants provide no evidentiary support for this claim. Regardless, the subjective intent of Defendants' employees in making misrepresentations is not an element of deception under the FTC Act. FTC v. Bay Area Bus. Council, Inc., 423 F.3d 627, 635 (7th Cir. 2005) (citations omitted). Notably, Judge Stotler has already found, by clear and convincing evidence, that the corporate defendants in Data *Medical* were in contempt of a prior FTC order by misrepresenting their mortgage loan modification services. See 2010 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 3344, at \*71 ¶ 47.

Defense counsel should have been aware that the Court imposes a deadline to file responses to motions. *See* Local Rules 6-1 and 7-9. This was reiterated in the Court's Scheduling Order, Dkt. #107, at 3. Defense counsel was given 24 days' notice that the FTC would file its Motion. FTC's Motion at 4. At that time, defense counsel also was notified of, and did not oppose, the FTC's intention to seek leave to exceed the page limitation for the FTC's Memo. Plaintiff's Unopposed *Ex Parte* Motion for Leave to Exceed Page Limitation, Dkt. #134, at 4.

known deadlines, Defendants object to them now as "harassing and burdensome." This objection should bear no weight in the Court's determination of the FTC's Motion.

Importantly, Defendants' Oppositions fail to dispute the FTC's uncontroverted facts. The FTC has established that there are no triable issues as to the following: (1) Defendants violated Section 5 of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 45, by engaging in a pattern or practice of misrepresenting that Defendants could obtain loan modifications for consumers and that consumers would receive refunds if Defendants were unable to modify consumers loans; (2) the corporate Defendants are jointly and severally liable as a common enterprise; (3) each individual Defendant participated in, had the authority to control, and had knowledge of the deceptive activities, subjecting each of them to liability for injunctive and monetary relief; and (4) the FTC's proposed Final Order, Dkt. #141-1, is appropriate to enter against Defendants. Because none of these facts are disputed by Defendants' Oppositions, as more fully discussed below, the FTC is entitled to summary judgment as a matter of law on all counts of its Complaint, and it is entitled to the requested monetary and injunctive relief.

#### III. SECTION 5 OF THE FTC ACT

### A. The FTC Act Was Properly Enacted by Congress and Is Constitutional

Contrary to the unsupported claims in Defendants' Oppositions,<sup>11</sup> the FTC was properly constituted and empowered by Congress. *FTC v. Am. Nat'l Cellular, Inc.*, 810 F.2d 1511, 1513-14 (9th Cir. 1987) (discussing, *inter alia, Humphrey's Ex'r v. United States*, 295 U.S. 602, 55 S. Ct. 869, 79 L. Ed. 1611 (1935)); see

See Opp. to MSJ, at 3; Opp. to UF&CL, at 2. Defendants' claims that the FTC and the FTC Act are unconstitutional are particularly puzzling (and untimely) considering that Defendants previously admitted and stipulated to these matters in this case. See UF #5, 8.

Federal Trade Commission Act, 63 Cong. Ch. 311, 38 Stat. 717 (1914) (codified as amended at 15 U.S.C. §§ 41-58). In 1938, the Section 5(a) of the FTC Act was amended by Congress to declare unlawful "unfair or deceptive acts or practices in commerce." Act of Mar. 21, 1938, 75 Cong. Ch. 49, 52 Stat. 111 (codified as amended at 15 U.S.C. § 45(a)).

#### B. Defendants Fail to Dispute the Standard for Deception

While claiming that Section 5(a) of the FTC Act is "vague," Defendants fail to cite any authority that disputes the clearly articulated standards for deception discussed by the FTC. See FTC's Memo. at 16-17.

#### C. The Court May Infer a Widespread Pattern of Deception from a Small Number of Consumers

Defendants' Oppositions also fail to cite any authority that disputes the overwhelming case law, including Ninth Circuit precedent, holding that the FTC is not required to show reliance by each deceived consumer, and holding that the court can infer a pattern or practice of deceptive behavior based on a small number of consumers. *See* FTC's Memo. at 17-19. Furthermore, Defendants cite to no authority disputing the admissibility of the consumer declarations and consumer complaints discussed by the FTC. *See* FTC's Memo. at 18-19.

### IV. UNCONTROVERTED FACTS ESTABLISH DEFENDANTS' VIOLATIONS OF THE FTC ACT

## A. Defendants Fail to Dispute the Overwhelming Evidence Establishing Their Violations of the FTC Act

In their Oppositions, Defendants claim that the FTC's allegations are only supported by fewer than ten consumers.<sup>13</sup> Defendants curiously (and conveniently)

See Opp. to UF&CL at 4. This claim is also puzzling (and untimely) considering Defendants' previous admissions and stipulations. See supra n.11.

See Opp. to MSJ at 2-3; Opp. to UF&CL at 3.

ignore the fact that the FTC's Motion is supported by the deposition testimony of five consumers, by sworn declarations from nine consumers, and by complaints sent to the FTC, the BBB, and State Bar of California from more than 100 additional consumers. The FTC's Motion is further supported, among other evidence, by Defendants' own admissions, stipulations, and business records, and by the corroborated adverse inferences the Court may draw from the individual Defendants' invocation of the Fifth Amendment privilege against self-incrimination. Furthermore, the Receiver's reports have corroborated the FTC's overwhelming evidence. Courts have relied on far less evidence in previous cases. 15

The overwhelming evidence amassed by the FTC establishes the uncontroverted facts necessary to find violations of Section 5 of the FTC Act. Uncontroverted facts show that Lucas Law Center representatives represented that Lucas Law Center's efforts would result in a satisfactory loan modification, often claiming high success rates and specific results, typically within three months. UF #85-92; FTC's Memo. at 10.16 Uncontroverted facts show that these

More than 200 additional consumer complaints alleging misrepresentations against Defendants are being filed concurrently with this Reply in the Fifth Declaration of FTC Investigator Brent D. McPeek.

See, e.g., FTC v. Jordan Ashley, Inc., 1994 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 7494, at \*5-9, 1994-1 Trade Cas. (CCH) ¶ 70,570 (S.D. Fla. Apr. 5, 1994) (finding misrepresentations based on the testimony of only four consumers); FTC v. Kitco of Nev., Inc., 612 F. Supp. 1282, 1294 (D. Minn. 1985) (inferring "widespread" misrepresentations from the testimony of only eight consumers and contracts from 17 non-witnesses).

To bolster these claims, Lucas Law Center's Web sites and representatives touted the experience and expertise of the purported "law firm" and the advantages of using attorneys to negotiate directly with the people at the lenders who decided whether to modify consumers' mortgage loans. *See* UF #74-83, 93-97; FTC's Memo. at 9-11.

representations were false. *See* UF #123-25; FTC's Memo. at 13-14. Uncontroverted facts also show that Lucas Law Center's Web sites, its contracts, and its representatives represented that Lucas Law Center offered a money-back guarantee if it could not obtain a loan modification for the consumer. UF #84, 103-04; FTC's Memo. at 10-12. Uncontroverted facts show that these representations were false. *See* UF #129, 132-37; FTC's Memo. at 14-15. These uncontroverted facts establish that Defendants, by and through Lucas Law Center,

engaged in a widespread pattern of making material misrepresentations in violation

## B. Contractual Disclaimers and Refunds Do Not Cure Defendants' Deception

Defendants attempt to excuse their deception by pointing to Lucas Law Center's retainer agreements and to the amount of refunds they paid.<sup>17</sup> This misguided attempt ignores, and fails to cite any authority to dispute, the well settled case law cited by the FTC holding that contractual disclaimers and refunds are no cure for deception. *See* FTC Memo. at 20 n.28.<sup>18</sup>

## C. Purported Evidence of Allegedly Satisfied Consumers Is Irrelevant to Disproving Defendants' Deception

Defendants attempt to create a triable issue about the number of modifications allegedly obtained.<sup>19</sup> This attempt is also misguided. As fully discussed by the FTC, the number of allegedly obtained modifications is irrelevant to disproving their deception. *See* FTC's Memo. at 23-24 & n.34. Defendants do

of Section 5 of the FTC Act.

See Opp. to MSJ at 2; Opp. to UF&CL at 3-4.

Defendants' argument also ignores the uncontroverted fact that frequently consumers did not receive the retainer agreements until after paying Defendants' fee, in whole or in part. *See* UF #101.

See Opp. to MSJ at 2.

not cite to any authority disputing the well settled law cited by the FTC. *See id*. That Defendants allegedly obtained some modifications has no bearing on the uncontroverted facts showing that they failed to obtain the promised modifications for other consumers.<sup>20</sup>

In support of their misguided attempt to create a triable issue, Defendants cite to what they purport to be a list of the names of clients who received loan modifications ("Defendants' Exhibit B"). See Opp. to UF&CL, at 3, Ex. B at 12-20. Insofar as Defendants' Exhibit B purports to be evidence of "satisfied" consumers, it is irrelevant to disproving Defendants' deception. See discussion supra pp. 8-9 & n.20. Furthermore, Defendants fail to authenticate Defendants' Exhibit B, fail to provide any explanation for its origins, and fail to provide any substantiation for the alleged "modifications" it purports to show.<sup>21</sup> Defendants'

See Basic Books, Inc. v. FTC, 276 F.2d 718, 721 (7th Cir. 1960) ("That a person or corporation, through its agents, may have made correct statements in one instance has no bearing on the fact that they made misrepresentations in other instances.").

Notably, this list of 545 allegedly completed "modifications" contains 60 duplicate names and another 119 names with no explanation as to what "modification" was allegedly obtained. Another 17 entries indicate that a "modification" was obtained through a government program, including Making Home Affordable. Any indications that Defendants' Exhibit B is reliable is belied by the very first entry, which claims that consumer Carolyn Adkins received a "mod" for 12 months that "can bew [sic] revisited then." Opp. to UF&CL, Ex. B at 13. This plainly states that the "modification" was only temporary. Furthermore, Ms. Adkins' deposition testimony shows that the temporary "modification" she received was for her second mortgage only and was not the promised interest rate and monthly payment reductions in a fixed consolidation of her two mortgages. Adkins Depo., Dkt. #145-1, at 16:7-17, 26:21-27:13. Another 67 entries in Defendants' Exhibit B plainly state that they are only temporary, not permanent modifications. Defendants fail to substantiate that any of the remaining 279 alleged "modifications" in Defendants' Exhibit B were as promised or otherwise beneficial to the consumers.

Exhibit B should be disregarded by the Court as inadmissible under Fed. R. Evid. 402, 802, and 901.

#### V. DEFENDANTS ARE JOINTLY AND SEVERALLY LIABLE

Defendants' Oppositions claim that the FTC's Motion improperly refers to all five Defendants collectively, and that Defendant Sullivan is only an employee.<sup>22</sup> However, the FTC's Uncontroverted Facts establish that all Defendants meet the requisite standards for joint and several liability, as discussed below.

## A. Uncontroverted Facts Establish that the Corporate Defendants Are Jointly and Severally Liable as a Common Enterprise

Defendants do not dispute the legal standards cited by the FTC for holding corporate defendants jointly and severally liable as a common enterprise. *See* FTC's Memo. at 25-26. Defendants provide no evidence to dispute the uncontroverted facts establishing that the corporate Defendants acted as a common enterprise.<sup>23</sup>

# B. Uncontroverted Facts Establish that Each Individual Defendant Is Liable for Injunctive and Monetary Relief

Defendants also do not dispute the legal standards cited by the FTC for holding individual defendants liable for injunctive and monetary relief. *See* FTC's Memo. at 28-29. Defendants provide no evidence to dispute the uncontroverted facts establishing that Defendants Lucas and Betts participated in, had the authority to control, and had sufficient knowledge of the deceptive activities. <sup>24</sup> Defendants also provide no authority, or evidentiary support, for their contention that Defendant Sullivan's status as a non-owner renders him not liable for the deceptive activities. On the contrary, the uncontroverted facts establish that he participated

See Opp. to MSJ at 2; Opp. to UF&CL at 2-3.

See UF #12-21, 25-26, 45-49, 139; FTC's Memo. at 26-28.

See UF #18, 20-21, 30-35, 45-49; FTC's Memo. at 29-30.

in, had the authority to control, and had sufficient knowledge of the deceptive activities.<sup>25</sup>

## VI. DEFENDANTS FAIL TO DISPUTE THE APPROPRIATENESS OF THE FTC'S REQUESTED RELIEF

## A. Uncontroverted Facts Establish Defendants' Liability for Over\$6 Million in Consumer Injury

Defendants' bare allegation that the Receiver caused consumer injury is unsupported by any evidence.<sup>26</sup> Clearly, being unable to dispute the FTC's overwhelming evidence in support of its Motion, Defendants seek to place the blame for their deception elsewhere. This argument does not refute the authority cited by the FTC or the uncontroverted facts showing that Defendants are liable for over \$6 million in consumer injury. *See* FTC's Memo. at 39-41.

## B. Defendants Fail to Dispute the Appropriateness of the FTC's Requested Injunctive Relief

In opposing the FTC's Motion, Defendants discuss the imposition of "language that reads like a statute." If Defendants intended this discussion to relate to the injunctive terms of the FTC's proposed Final Order, Dkt. #141-1, then Defendants have cited to no legal authority or evidentiary support to dispute the necessity and reasonableness of the injunctive terms the FTC requests. In stark contrast, the FTC has fully discussed this issue, including lists of numerous cases imposing similar terms, in the FTC's Memo. at 31-39, 41-42.

#### VII. CONCLUSION

In response to the FTC's Motion, Defendants were required to come forward with specific, admissible, and significantly probative evidence that would support a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> See UF #57-67; FTC's Memo. at 30-31.

See Opp. to MSJ at 3.

See Opp. to MSJ at 3.

1	finding in their favor. See supra at 2-3. Instead, Defendants "rest on their							
2	pleadings" by making unsubstantiated allegations that merely mirror the denials in							
3	their Amended Answer, Dkt. #105, or otherwise do not relate to the FTC's Motion.							
4	Failing to meet their burden, Defendants did not place any of the FTC's							
5	uncontroverted facts into question. Therefore, the FTC is entitled to summary							
6	judgment as a matter of law on all counts of its Complaint, and it is entitled to the							
7	requested monetary and injunctive relief.							
8								
9								
10		Respectfully submitted,						
11		WILLARD K. TOM General Counsel						
12		DEANYA T. KUECKELHAN						
13		Regional Director						
14	Dated: May 10, 2010	/s/ James E. Elliott						
15	Batta: 11tay 10, 2010	James E. Elliott, Attorney-in-Charge jelliott@ftc.gov						
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27		Attorneys for Plaintiff FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION						
28								

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**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE** 1 2 I, James E. Elliott, declare: 3 1. I am a citizen of the United States, and I am an attorney employed by and representing the Federal Trade Commission. I am not a party to this action. 4 5 2. My business address is 1999 Bryan Street, Suite 2150, Dallas, Texas 75201. On May 10, 2010, the foregoing document entitled Plaintiff's Reply to 6 3. 7 Defendants' Opposition to Motion for Summary Judgment was served by ECF 8 on the following: 9 10 Richard C. Gilbert [Attorney for Defendants LucasLawCenter "incorporated", 11 Future Financial Services, LLC, Paul Jeffrey Lucas, Christopher Francis Betts, and Frank Sullivan] 12 richardsoal1714@aol.com or rgilbert@gilbertandmarlowe.com 13 Gary O. Caris 14 [Attorney for Receiver, Robb Evans & Associates LLC] 15 gcaris@mckennalong.com, pcoates@mckennalong.com 16 Lesley A. Hawes 17 [Attorney for Receiver, Robb Evans & Associates LLC] lhawes@mckennalong.com, pcoates@mckennalong.com 18 19 Allen C. Ostergar, III [Attorney for Electronic Case Systems Inc.] 20 aostergar@ostergar.com 21 22 I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the foregoing is true and correct. 23 24 Executed on this 10th day of May, 2010, at Dallas, Texas. 25 26 27 /s/ James E. Elliott James E. Elliott 28