*	Case 2:10-cv-03087-GHK-RC Document 1 File	ed 04/26/10 Page 1 of 12 Page ID #:1					
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14	DANIEL K. CRANE-HIRSCH Trial Attorney Office of Consumer Litigation U.S. Department of Justice PO Box 386 Washington, DC 20044 Telephone: 202-516-8242 Facsimile: 202-514-8742 E-mail: Daniel.Crane-Hirsch@usdoj.gov ANDRÉ BIROTTE JR. United States Attorney LEON W. WEIDMAN Chief, Civil Division GARY PLESSMAN Assistant United States Attorney Chief, Civil Frauds Section California State Bar No. 101233 Room 7516, Federal Building 300 North Los Angeles Street Los Angeles, CA 90012 Telephone: (213) 894-2380 E-mail: gary.plessman@usdoj.gov Attorneys for the Plaintiff THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA						
14	IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT						
16	FOR THE CENTRAL DISTR	ICT OF CALIFORNIA					
17							
18	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,	Case No. CV 10-03087	GHK				
19	Plaintiff,		(RCx)				
20	v.	COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL PENALTIES, PERMANENT	(nGA)				
21	SMARTREPLY, INC.,	INJUNCTION, AND OTHER					
22 22	Defendant.	EQUITABLE RELIEF					
23 24							
24	Plaintiff, the United States of America	, acting upon notification and					
26	authorization to the Attorney General by the Federal Trade Commission ("FTC"						
27	or "Commission"), pursuant to Section 16(a)(1) of the Federal Trade Commission						
28	Act ("FTC Act"), 15 U.S.C. § 56(a)(1), for its	s Complaint alleges:					

Complaint

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Plaintiff brings this action under Sections 5(a), 5(m)(1)(A), 13(b), and 16(a) of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. §§ 45(a), 45(m)(1)(A), 53(b), and 56(a), and Section 6 of the Telemarketing and Consumer Fraud and Abuse Prevention Act (the "Telemarketing Act"), 15 U.S.C. § 6105, to obtain monetary civil penalties, a permanent injunction, and other equitable relief from Defendant for its violations of Section 5(a) of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 45(a), and the FTC's Telemarketing Sales Rule (the "TSR" or "Rule"), 16 C.F.R. Part 310.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

2. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction over this action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331, 1337(a), 1345, and 1355, and 15 U.S.C. §§ 45(m)(1)(A), 53(b), and 56(a). This action arises under 15 U.S.C. § 45(a).

 Venue is proper in this District under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1391(b)-(c) and 1395(a), and 15 U.S.C. § 53(b).

DEFENDANT

4. Defendant SmartReply, Inc. ("SmartReply"), is a California for-profit
corporation with its principal place of business in Irvine, California.
SmartReply is a telemarketer that provides "voice marketing" and other
services to induce consumers to purchase goods or services. SmartReply's
voice marketing services use automation to deliver prerecorded messages to
individuals, answering machines, and voicemail services. SmartReply
transacts or has transacted business in this District.

THE TELEMARKETING SALES RULE

5. Congress directed the FTC to prescribe rules prohibiting abusive and
deceptive telemarketing acts or practices pursuant to the Telemarketing And
Consumer Fraud and Abuse Prevention Act ("Telemarketing Act"),
15 U.S.C. §§ 6101-6108. The FTC adopted the original Telemarketing
Sales Rule in 1995, extensively amended it in 2003, and amended certain
provisions thereafter. 16 C.F.R. Part 310 ("TSR").

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- Under the TSR, an "outbound telephone call" means a telephone call
 initiated by a telemarketer to induce the purchase of goods or services or to
 solicit a charitable contribution. 16 C.F.R. § 310.2(u).
- 7. The TSR recognizes that a person may make a "Do Not Call request" by
 stating that he or she does not wish to receive an outbound telephone call
 made by or on behalf of a particular seller. Under the TSR, it is an abusive
 telemarketing practice and a violation of the Rule for a telemarketer to
 engage in, or for a seller to cause a telemarketer to engage in, initiating an
 outbound telephone call to a person who has previously made such a Do
 Not Call request. 16 C.F.R. § 310.4(b)(1)(iii)(A).
- On August 29, 2008, the Commission published an amendment to the TSR 8. 11 that prohibits initiating outbound telephone calls to deliver prerecorded 12 messages unless the message makes certain disclosures and provides a 13 mechanism for the recipients of such messages to make Do Not Call 14 requests. 73 Fed. Reg. 51163, 51188 (2008). As amended, effective 15 December 1, 2008, 16 C.F.R. § 310.4(b)(1)(v)(B)(ii) of the TSR requires 16 that an outbound telephone call that delivers a prerecorded message 17 promptly disclose the identity of the seller, that the purpose of the call is to 18 sell goods or services, and the nature of the goods or services; and that these 19 disclosures be followed immediately by disclosure of one or both of the 20 following: 21
 - A. In the case of a call that could be answered in person by a consumer, that the person called can use an automated interactive voice and/or keypress-activated opt-out mechanism to assert a Do Not Call request at any time during the message; and

B. In the case of a call that could be answered by an answering machine or voicemail service, that the person called can use a

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toll-free telephone number to assert a Do Not Call request.

9. As amended, effective December 1, 2008, 16 C.F.R. § 310.4(b)(1)(v)(B)(*ii*) of the TSR requires that an outbound telephone call that delivers a prerecorded message and could be answered by a person allow the recipient of the call to assert a Do Not Call request by using an automated interactive voice and/or keypress-activated opt-out mechanism that will, once invoked, immediately disconnect the call.

8 10. Since December 1, 2008, it is an abusive telemarketing practice and a
9 violation of the TSR for a telemarketer to initiate, or for a seller to cause a
10 telemarketer to initiate, an outbound telephone call that delivers a
11 prerecorded message that does not disclose that the recipient of the call may
12 make a Do Not Call request as set forth in 16 C.F.R. § 310.4(b)(1)(v)(B)(*ii*),
13 or does not immediately disconnect the call when the opt-out mechanism is
14 invoked.

15 11. Pursuant to Section 3(c) of the Telemarketing Act, 15 U.S.C. § 6102(c), and
16 Section 18(d)(3) of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 57a(d)(3), a violation of the
17 TSR constitutes an unfair or deceptive act or practice in or affecting
18 commerce, in violation of Section 5(a) of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 45(a).

DEFENDANT'S BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

Defendant is a telemarketer that initiates outbound telephone calls to
consumers in the United States to induce the purchase of goods or services.
Defendant is a "telemarketer" engaged in "telemarketing," as defined by the
TSR, 16 C.F.R. § 310.2(bb).

At all times relevant to this Complaint, Defendant has maintained a
substantial course of trade or business in the offering for sale and sale of
goods or services via the telephone, in or affecting commerce, as
"commerce" is defined in Section 4 of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 44.

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15. 1 Since December 1, 2008, Defendant has engaged in telemarketing by a plan, program, or campaign conducted to induce the purchase of goods or 2 services by use of one or more telephones and which involves more than 3 one interstate telephone call. Specifically, SmartReply made outbound 4 telephone calls that would deliver prerecorded messages advertising offers 5 for the purchase of goods sold under the Talbots brand or the J. Jill brand. 6 7 SmartReply initiated at least 3.4 million outbound telephone calls that delivered prerecorded messages during telephone calls answered by 8 persons, answering machines and voicemail services from February 11, 9 2009 through July 23, 2009. 10

16. The prerecorded messages that Defendant delivered did not provide
information about an automated keypad mechanism or toll-free number to
contact the sender immediately after disclosure of the seller, the purpose of
the call and the nature of the goods and services. Instead, the prerecorded
messages did not mention an automated keypad mechanism or toll free
number until after thirty or more seconds of the telemarketing message had
already been played.

The prerecorded messages that Defendant delivered did not inform 17. 18 consumers who answered in person that they may automatically assert a Do 19 Not Call request any time during the message by invoking an automated 20 interactive voice and/or keypress-activated opt-out mechanism. Instead, 21after approximately thirty or forty seconds of the telemarketing message, the 22 recordings delivered by Defendant contained statements such as, "[i]f you'd 23 like more information and to choose whether or not to receive future calls 24 about special offers and promotions, press 1 now or call" a toll-free number, 25 or "[t]o make sure you'll receive pre-recorded exclusive J. Jill savings and 26 event messages - like this one, please press 1 now or call" a toll-free 27 number. 28

18. When consumers who answered Defendants' outbound telephone calls delivering prerecorded messages advertising for the Talbots brand or the J. 2 Jill brand invoked the automated key pad mechanism described in the 3 messages, Defendant did not disconnect the outbound calls immediately 4 and, instead, connected the consumers to additional recordings and 5 additional advertising. 6

VIOLATIONS OF THE TELEMARKETING SALES RULE

In numerous instances on or after December 1, 2008, SmartReply made 19. outbound telephone calls to persons that delivered prerecorded messages that did not comply with 16 C.F.R. § 310.4(b)(1)(v)(B)(ii)(A) or (B), because the messages did not disclose that the recipients of the call could assert a Do Not Call request immediately after disclosure of the identity of the seller, the purpose of the call and the nature of the goods or services. In numerous instances on or after December 1, 2008, SmartReply made 20. outbound telephone calls that were answered in person by a consumer and delivered a prerecorded message that did not comply with 16 C.F.R. § 310.4(b)(1)(v)(B)(*ii*)(A) because the messages did not inform the consumer that he or she could invoke an automated mechanism to assert a Do Not Call request at any time during the message, and SmartReply did not immediately disconnect the call when the automated mechanism was invoked.

CONSUMER INJURY

Consumers in the United States have suffered and will suffer injury as a 21. 23 result of Defendant's violations of the TSR. Absent injunctive relief by this 24 Court, Defendant is likely to continue to injure consumers and harm the 25 public interest. 26

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THIS COURT'S POWER TO GRANT RELIEF

- 2 22. Section 13(b) of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 53(b), empowers this Court to
 3 grant injunctive and other ancillary relief to prevent and remedy any
 4 violation of any provision of law enforced by the FTC.
- 23. Section 5(m)(1)(A) of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 45(m)(1)(A), as modified 5 by Section 4 of the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act of 6 1990, 28 U.S.C. § 2461, as amended, and as implemented by 16 C.F.R. 7 § 1.98(d) (2008) and by 74 Fed. Reg. 857 (Jan. 9, 2009) (to be codified at 8 16 C.F.R. § 1.98(d)), authorizes this Court to award monetary civil penalties 9 of up to \$16,000 for each violation of the TSR after February 9, 2009. 10 Defendant's violations of the TSR were committed with the knowledge 11 required by Section 5(m)(1)(A) of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 45(m)(1)(A). 12
- This Court, in the exercise of its equitable jurisdiction, may award ancillary
 relief to remedy injury caused by Defendant's violations of the TSR and the
 FTC Act.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

Wherefore, Plaintiff requests that this Court, as authorized by Sections 5(a),
5(m)(1)(A), and 13(b) of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. §§ 45(a), 45(m)(1)(A), and
53(b), and pursuant to its own equitable powers:

- A. Enter judgment against Defendant and in favor of plaintiff for each violation
 alleged in this Complaint;
- B. Award plaintiff monetary civil penalties from Defendant for every violation
 of the TSR;
- 24 C. Enter a permanent injunction to prevent future violations of the TSR and the
 25 FTC Act by Defendant;
- 26 D. Order Defendant to pay the costs of this action, and
- E. Award plaintiff such other and additional relief as the Court may determine
 to be just and proper.

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Respectfully submitted,

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 ⁴ OF COUNSEL:
 ⁴ FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

5 LOIS C. GREISMAN Associate Director for Marketing 6 Practices

7 FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

MICHAEL E. TANKERSLEY

202-326-2991

8 Staff Attorney Division of Marketing Practices
9 Federal Trade Commission 600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Rm. H-288
10 Washington, DC 20580

FOR THE PLAINTIFF: UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TONY WEST Assistant Attorney General, Civil Division U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

ANDRE^BIROTTE JR. United States Attorney Central District of California LEE WEIDMAN, AUSA Chief, Civil Division

GARY PLESSMAN, AUSA Chief, Civil Frauds Section Central District of California California State Bar No. 101233 Room 7516, Federal Building 300 North Los Angeles Street Los Angeles, CA 90012 Telephone: 213-894-2474 gary.plessman@usdoj.gov

EUGENE M. THIROLF, Director Office of Consumer Litigation Civil Division

KENNETH L. JOST, Deputy Director Office of Consumer Litigation

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DANIEL K. CRANE-HIRSCH Trial Attorney Office of Consumer Litigation U.S. Department of Justice PO Box 386 Washington, DC 20044-0386 Telephone: 202-616-8242 Daniel.Crane-Hirsch@usdoj.gov

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

NOTICE OF ASSIGNMENT TO UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE FOR DISCOVERY

This case has been assigned to District Judge George King and the assigned discovery Magistrate Judge is Rosalyn M. Chapman.

The case number on all documents filed with the Court should read as follows:

CV10- 3087 GHK (RCx)

Pursuant to General Order 05-07 of the United States District Court for the Central District of California, the Magistrate Judge has been designated to hear discovery related motions.

All discovery related motions should be noticed on the calendar of the Magistrate Judge

NOTICE TO COUNSEL

A copy of this notice must be served with the summons and complaint on all defendants (if a removal action is filed, a copy of this notice must be served on all plaintiffs).

Subsequent documents must be filed at the following location:

[X] Western Division 312 N. Spring St., Rm. G-8 Los Angeles, CA 90012 L Southern Division 411 West Fourth St., Rm. 1-053 Santa Ana, CA 92701-4516 Eastern Division 3470 Twelfth St., Rm. 134 Riverside, CA 92501

Failure to file at the proper location will result in your documents being returned to you.

Case 2:10-cv-03087-GHK-RC Document 1 Name & Address: ANDRÉ BIROTTE JR., United States Attorney GARY PLESSMAN, AUSA, Chief, Civil Fraud Sec. 300 N. Los Angeles St., Ste 7516, Federal Bldg. Los Angeles, CA 90012 Phn: 213-894-2474; Fax: 213-894-2380	Filed 04/26/10 Page 10 of 12
	DISTRICT COURT CT OF CALIFORNIA
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,	CASE NUMBER
PLAINTIFF(S) V.	CV10-03087 GHK (RCx)
SMARTREPLY, INC.,	
·	SUMMONS
DEFENDANT(S).	

TO: DEFENDANT(S): SMARTREPLY, INC.

A lawsuit has been filed against you.

Within 20 days after service of this summons on you (not counting the day you received it), you must serve on the plaintiff an answer to the attached \Box complaint \Box _______ amended complaint \Box _______ amended complaint \Box _______ counterclaim \Box cross-claim or a motion under Rule 12 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. The answer or motion must be served on the plaintiff's attorney, <u>AUSA Gary Plessman</u>, whose address is 300 N. Los Angeles St., Ste 7516, Federal Bldg., Los Angeles, CA 90012; 213-894-2474 . If you fail to do so, 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.

Clerk, U.S. District Court

12 8 APR 2010 Dated:

[Use 60 days if the defendant is the United States or a United States agency, or is an officer or employee of the United States. Allowed 60 days by Rule 12(a)(3)].

Case 2:10-cv-03087-GHK-RC Document 1 Filed 04/26/10 Page 11 of 12 Page ID #:11 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT, CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA CIVIL COVER SHEET

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I (a) PLAINTIFFS (Check box if you are representing yourself []) UNITED STATES OF AMERICA					1	DEFENDANTS SMARTREPLY, INC.							
						County of Residence of First Defendant (in US Plaintiff Case Only) Orange							
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	NDRÉ BIROTTE JR., U						tz & Canter, I	•					
			of, Civil Fraud Section, 300 os Angeles, CA 90012, Pl			310 W. 20th Street, Suite 300 Kansas City, MO 64108 Phone: 816-472-9000; Fax 816-472-5000							
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CV 10-03087

AFTER COMPLETING THE FRONT SIDE OF FORM CV-71, COMPLETE THE INFORMATION REQUESTED BELOW.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY: Case Number:

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Case 2:10-cv-03087-GHK-RC Document 1 Filed 04/26/10 Page 12 of 12 Page ID #:12 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT, CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA CIVIL COVER SHEET

VIII(a). IDENTICAL CASES: Has this action been previously filed in this court and dismissed, remanded or closed? IN Ves If yes, list case number(s):

VIII(b). RELATED CASES: Have any cases been previously filed in this court that are related to the present case? If No Yes If yes, list case number(s): ______

Civil cases are deemed related if a previously filed case and the present case:

B. Call for determination of the same or substantially related or similar questions of law and fact; or

C. For other reasons would entail substantial duplication of labor if heard by different judges; or

D. Involve the same patent, trademark or copyright, and one of the factors identified above in a, b or c also is present.

IX. VENUE: (When completing the following information, use an additional sheet if necessary.)

(a) List the County in this District; California County outside of this District; State if other than California; or Foreign Country, in which EACH named plaintiff resides.
 Check here if the government, its agencies or employees is a named plaintiff. If this box is checked, go to item (b).

County in this District:*	California County outside of this District; State, if other than California; or Foreign Country
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: County n/a	

(b) List the County in this District; California County outside of this District; State if other than California; or Foreign Country, in which EACH named defendant resides.
 Check here if the government, its agencies or employees is a named defendant. If this box is checked, go to item (c).

County in this District:*	California County outside of this District; State, if other than California; or Foreign Country
SmartReply, Inc.: Orange County	

(c) List the County in this District; California County outside of this District; State if other than California; or Foreign Country, in which EACH claim arose. Note: In land condemnation cases, use the location of the tract of land involved.

County in this District:*	California County outside of this District; State, if other than California; or Foreign Country
Orange County	

* Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside, Ventura, Santa Barbara, or San Luis Obispo Counties Note: In land condemnation cases, use the location of the tract of land involved

X. SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY (OR PRO PER)

Notice to Counsel/Parties: The CV-71 (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. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required pursuant to Local Rule 3-1 is not filed but is used by the Clerk of the Court for the purpose of statistics, venue and initiating the civil docket sheet. (For more detailed instructions, see separate instructions sheet.)

Date

Key to Statistical codes relating to Social Security Cases:

Nature of Suit Code	Abbreviation	Substantive Statement of Cause of Action
861	HIA	All claims for health insurance benefits (Medicare) under Title 18, Part A, of the Social Security Act, as amended. Also, include claims by hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, etc., for certification as providers of services under the program. (42 U.S.C. 1935FF(b))
862	BL	All claims for "Black Lung" benefits under Title 4, Part B, of the Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969. (30 U.S.C. 923)
863	DIWC	All claims filed by insured workers for disability insurance benefits under Title 2 of the Social Security Act, as amended; plus all claims filed for child's insurance benefits based on disability. (42 U.S.C. 405(g))
863	DIWW	All claims filed for widows or widowers insurance benefits based on disability under Title 2 of the Social Security Act, as amended. (42 U.S.C. 405(g))
864	SSID	All claims for supplemental security income payments based upon disability filed under Title 16 of the Social Security Act, as amended.
865	RSI	All claims for retirement (old age) and survivors benefits under Title 2 of the Social Security Act, as amended. (42 U.S.C. (g))