Electronically Received 12/29/2022 04:39 PM

Deputy

Plaintiffs , and , (collectively "Plaintiffs"), on behalf of themselves and all others similarly situated (the "Class," as defined below), allege as follows upon information and belief based, *inter alia*, upon investigation conducted by Plaintiffs and their counsel, except as to those allegations pertaining to Plaintiffs personally, which are alleged upon knowledge:

#### I. <u>INTRODUCTION</u>

- 1. On April 20, 2016, Los Angeles County began prohibiting the sale of "commercially bred dogs, cats and rabbits in pet stores, retail businesses or other commercial establishments in the City of Los Angeles." *See* Section 53.73 to Article 3, Chapter 5 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code (which states "it is presently unlawful for any person to sell any live dog, cat or rabbit in any pet store, retail business or other commercial establishment located in the City of Los Angeles, unless the dog, cat or rabbit was obtained from an animal shelter or a humane society located in the City of Los Angeles, or a non-profit rescue organization registered with the Department of Animal Services").
- 2. Effective January 1, 2019, the State of California became the first state in the nation to ban pet stores from selling commercially bred dogs, cats and rabbits. Codified by Health and Safety Code § 122354.5, California only allows a pet store to provide space for the display of dogs, cats or rabbits for adoption if the animals are displayed by a public animal control agency, shelter or animal rescue group. A rescue group providing the animals for adoption must have tax-exempt status under § 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and it must not have obtained animals in exchange for payment or compensation from any person that breeds or brokers animals.
- 3. By 2020, it became clear, however, that unscrupulous individuals running pet stores were selling animals marketed as shelter animals but who were actually obtained from other sources. These individuals were obtaining puppies from sham rescue groups, which registered for nonprofit status with the Internal Revenue Service ("IRS") but in fact functioned as puppy brokers that paid compensation to third parties in exchange for puppies. The puppies

were then sold at exorbitant prices, far exceeding the typical \$180 fees charged for adoptions at California shelters.

- 4. To prevent the abuse being orchestrated by sham rescue organizations and their co-conspirator pet store counterparts, California expanded Health and Safety Code § 122354.5 to mandate that animals displayed for adoption shall be both sterilized and the adoption fees shall not exceed \$500, and pet stores are prohibited from receiving any compensation to display adoptable animals.
- 5. As of January 1, 2021, pet stores (including defendant WYLDER'S HOLISTIC PET CENTER, INC. doing business as THE WAGMOR ("THE WAGMOR")), shall not adopt out, sell, or offer for sale any dogs. THE WAGMOR must only provide space to display dogs for adoption and only if the dogs are displayed by either a public animal control agency or shelter, or animal rescue group. THE WAGMOR must only display dogs that are both sterilized and fees charged for dogs, including but not limited to, adoption fees, shall not exceed five hundred dollars (\$500.00).
- 6. Since the enactment of Health and Safety Code § 122354.5, defendant Melissa Bacelar ("BACELAR") and her for-profit pet store <u>THE WAGMOR</u>, have repeatedly and continuously, with intent to disobey California law, have sold unsterilized puppies and charged fees that on average amount to \$850.00, with prices reaching upwards of \$2,000.00 per dog.<sup>1</sup>
- 7. In an attempt to further confuse and deceive the public, as well as circumvent California law, upon information and belief, in 2019, BACELAR created WAGMOR PETS INC. ("WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT") and registered it for 501(c)(3) exempt status with the IRS. As stated on its initial registration form with the Office of the Attorney General Registry of Charitable Trusts, WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT claims to rescue dogs from City and County Shelters only.<sup>2</sup>

https://petlover.petstablished.com/pets/public/1562483?awo=Wagmor+Pets&widget=false (last visited Dec. 7, 2022) (listing a male Pit Bull Terrier puppy for "adoption" for \$850).

27 Defendants also represent on their website and Instagram page that "Wagmor Pets is a 501c3"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See, e.g.,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Defendants also represent on their website and Instagram page that "Wagmor Pets is a 501c3 organization." *See* https://www.wagmorpets.org/about/ (last visited Dec. 7, 2022) and https://www.instagram.com/wagmorpets/?hl=en (last visited Dec. 7, 2022).

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

8. To display dogs at Bacelar's for-profit business, THE WAGMOR, WAGMOR
PETS NON-PROFIT shall not offer dogs unless they are sterilized, the dogs are adoptable for
total fees, including, but not limited to, adoption fees, not to exceed five hundred dollars
(\$500.00), and the adoption fees are posted and visible to the public on or near the enclosures or
areas where the adoptable animals are displayed.

- 9. Additionally, to be considered an "animal rescue group" under Health and Safety Code § 122354.5, WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT shall not obtain dogs in exchange for payment or compensation from any person that breeds or brokers animals.
- 10. Upon information and belief, BACELAR, THE WAGMOR, and WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT engage in the business practice of directly, or indirectly through agents, of purchasing dogs from Craigslist, backyard breeders, actual breeders, and third parties who live in rural areas and have access to litters of puppies. For example, BACELAR used the "Rescue Manager," Francesca Bucci, to reach out to individuals on Craigslist.com and offer payment for puppies. (See a true and correct copy of text message exchanges between Bacelar and Bucci, attached hereto as Exhibit 1.)
- 11. Upon information and belief, BACELAR has paid Isabelle Oliver to "transport" dogs, when, in fact, Ms. Oliver's compensation includes payment for the actual purchase of puppies. Additionally, it is believed that Tony Farao and Monica Riddle procure puppies for BACELAR in exchange for compensation.
- 12. Even BACELAR herself uses Craigslist.com to contact individuals selling puppies, lies to them about her interest in the puppies, conceals that she is the owner of both a pet store and a "rescue organization," and pays hundreds of dollars to take possession of the puppies without offering to spay or neuter the parents. BACELAR then promotes the puppies on her social media as coming from "deplorable conditions" and places the unsterilized puppies that she purchased for "adoption." (See a true and correct copy of text message exchanges between Bacelar and the Craiglist seller, attached hereto as Exhibit 2.)
  - 13. Upon information and belief, each of the Defendants have, both individually and

3

4

5

6

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

collectively, knowingly participated in the unlawful, unfair, and fraudulent activity of paying
third parties to obtain dogs, providing unsterilized dogs for adoption, charging adoption fees in
excess of \$500 and permitting the pet store to launder all adoption fees in connection with the
display of the dogs. Indeed, Defendants advertise on their website that "[a]doptions start at \$600
but can be more depending on breed, age and the dogs needs." Defendants scheme allows them
to sell puppies at outrageous profits – based on misrepresentations and concealment – while
burdening the Plaintiffs with the care and expense of trying to save the lives of the sick and dying
animals.

- 14. Plaintiffs are each California consumers who purchased unsterilized puppies from Defendants' California retail location held out as bona fide rescue animals, and who paid in excess of \$500, after the State's ban went into effect and who have suffered monetary damages, as their puppies battle serious medical conditions, and, in some cases, have died due to Defendants' conduct. Defendants' conduct, however, extends beyond misrepresentations made to entice Plaintiffs to purchase puppies, to include threats and harassment when they and other victims have discovered the truth and tried to get their money back or speak up.
- 15. Plaintiffs bring this action on behalf of themselves and other similarly situated California consumers to recover the damages they incurred from Defendants' unlawful, unfair and fraudulent sale of animals and to disgorge all profits from Defendants' illegal scheme for profit.

#### II. **PARTIES**

16. Plaintiff ") is, and at all times herein mentioned was, a consumer residing in the County of Los Angeles, State of California. J purchased a puppy named "Heron" later named "Kali" who was diagnosed with distemper and died. 17. Plaintiff is, and at all times herein mentioned was, a consumer residing in the County of Los Angeles, State of California.

boyfriend, executed the paperwork to purchase "Heron" later named "Kali."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See https://www.wagmorpets.org/adoption/ (last visited July 12, 2022).

28

1	18. Plaintiff is, and at all times herein mentioned
2	was, a consumer residing in the County of Los Angeles, State of California.
3	a puppy named "Wilma" who was diagnosed with distemper, it is unknown whether she will live
4	or die.
5	19. Defendant MELISSA BACELAR ("BACELAR") is a resident of Los Angeles
6	County, State of California. She is the owner, founder and chief executive officer of WAGMOR
7	PETS and owner, founder, and chief executive officer of WYLDER'S HOLISTIC PET CENTER,
8	INC. dba THE WAGMOR ("THE WAGMOR"), each of which do business in the County of Los
9	Angeles, State of California.
10	20. Defendant WAGMOR PETS ("WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT") is a California
11	nonprofit public benefit corporation located in Studio City, California. The Officers and Directors
12	are as follows: Defendant MELISSA BACELAR (President/Chief Executive Officer).
13	21. Defendant WYLDER'S HOLISTIC PET CENTER, INC. doing business as THE
14	WAGMOR ("THE WAGMOR") is a Delaware corporation registered to do business in the State
15	of California and is located in the County of Los Angeles, State of California. THE WAGMOR
16	has locations in Studio City, California and previously Valley Village, California.
17	22. Plaintiffs are informed and believe, and thereon allege, that each of the Defendants
18	were, at all times herein mentioned, the co-conspirator, agent, servant, employee, joint venture,
19	successor-in-interest, partner, representative and/or alter ego of one or more of the remaining
20	Defendants and were acting within the course and scope of such relationship. Plaintiffs are further
21	informed and believe that each of the Defendants herein gave consent to, ratified and authorized
22	the acts alleged herein to each of the remaining Defendants.
23	23. Upon information and belief, in committing the wrongful acts alleged herein,
24	Defendants planned and participated in and furthered a common scheme by means of false,
25	misleading, deceptive and fraudulent representations, and continue to do so, in order to induce
26	members of the public to purchase dogs and puppies in excess of the statutorily mandated cap of

\$500. Defendants participated in the making of such representations in that each did disseminate,

or cause to be disseminated, said misrepresentations.

- 24. Plaintiffs are informed and believe, and thereon allege, that, at all times herein mentioned, the employees of Defendants, their subsidiaries and related entities, as well as the employees of those subsidiaries and related entities, were the agents, servants and employees of Defendants, and, at all times herein mentioned, each was acting within the purpose and scope of said agency and employment. Once the dogs and puppies have been purchased and it is discovered that they are ill, Defendants further engage in false, misleading, deceptive and fraudulent representations to avoid liability and place the blame on the consumers.
- 25. The true names and capacities of Defendants named herein as Does 1 through 15, inclusive, whether individual, corporate, associate or otherwise are unknown to Plaintiffs, who therefore sues said Defendants by fictitious names pursuant to California Code of Civil Procedure § 474. Plaintiffs will amend this Complaint to show such true names and capacities of Does 1 through 15, inclusive, when they have been determined.

#### III. JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 26. This Court has jurisdiction over Defendants because Defendants are incorporated in the State of California, have their principal place of business in California and operate a pet store providing daycare for dogs, grooming services and selling puppies in the State of California and within this district.
- 27. Venue is proper in Los Angeles pursuant to California Code of Civil Procedure §395(a). Defendants reside and/or transact business in the County of Los Angeles and are within the jurisdiction of this Court for purposes of service of process. Moreover, several of the acts complaint of occurred at THE WAGMOR location in Studio City, California.

### IV. <u>ALTER EGO ALLEGATIONS</u>

28. Upon information and belief, Defendants BACELAR, WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT, and THE WAGMOR are the alter ego of each other. <u>Upon information and belief, there</u> is a unity of ownership and interest by and between said defendants such that any separateness

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

between them has never existed.

- 29. Upon information and belief, Defendants WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT and THE WAGMOR, were formed and operated with inadequate capitalization and failed to respect other corporate formalities that would indicate a separate existence from each other and from BACELAR.
- 30. Upon information and belief, Defendants BACELAR, WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT, and THE WAGMOR commingle and fail to segregate each individual or entity funds and assets from their own.
- 31. Upon information and belief, Defendant BACELAR has controlled, dominated, managed, and operated Defendants WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT and WAGMOR since their formation for her own personal benefit.
- Upon information and belief, WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT and THE 32. WAGMOR are, and at all times herein mentioned, a mere shell, instrumentality and conduit through which Defendant BACELAR carried on her activities. Upon information and belief, Defendant BACELAR exercised and continue to exercise such complete control and dominance of the activities of WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT and THE WAGMOR such that any individuality or separateness of these entities never existed.
- 33. Adherence to the fiction of the separate existence as entities distinct from each other and from Defendant BACELAR would permit an abuse of the privileges against liability afforded to companies and corporations, and would result in unfairness to Plaintiffs and an inequitable result. It would promote injustice by allowing Defendant BACELAR to evade liability or veil assets that should in equity be used to satisfy the judgment sought by Plaintiffs in this action.

#### V. **FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS**

- California's Ban On Commercially Bred Dogs, Cats and Rabbits. A.
- 34. On January 1, 2019, California's ban on the sale of commercially bred dogs, cats and rabbits came into effect and was codified by Health & Safety Code § 122354.5. The law was

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

expanded as of January 1, 2021, to require steriliztion of all animals placed for sale, cap the fees at \$500.00, and prohibit pet stores from receiving any compensation to display adoptable animals.

- 35. The ban required that pet stores not adopt out, sell, or offer for sale a dog, cat or rabbit unless the animal was sourced from a rescue group or animal shelter: A pet store shall not provide space for the display of dogs, cats, or rabbits available for adoption unless the animals are displayed by either a public animal control agency or shelter, or animal rescue group. See Health & Safety Code § 122354.5, subd. (b)(1).
- 36. A "rescue group" is defined as a "not-for-profit organization that has tax-exempt status under § 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code" and "does not obtain animals in exchange for payment or compensation from any person that breeds or brokers animals." See Health & Safety Code § 122354.5, subd. (e)(1)(A).
- 37. The pet store that provides space for the display of the dogs, cats, or rabbits "shall not receive any fees in connection with the display of the dogs, cats or rabbits. See Health & Safety Code § 122354.5, subd. (b)(3).
- 38. "Any animal displayed for adoption shall be both sterlized and adoptable for total fees, including, but not limited to, adoption fees, not to exceed five hundred dollars (\$500)." See Health & Safety Code § 122354.5, subd. (b)(2).
- 39. A rescue group displaying animals at a pet store, or an animal rescue group operating a retail establishment shall not offer dogs, cats, or rabbits for adoption unless "the animals are sterlized, the animals are adoptable for total fees, including, but not limited to, adoption fees, not to exceed five hundred dollars (\$500). See Health & Safety Code § 122354.5, subd. (c).
  - BACELAR, THE WAGMOR and WAGMOR PET NON-PROFIT'S В. **Deceptive and Fradulent Scheme Leading to Substantial Profits.**
- 40. BACELAR's pet store operations first began in 2014 with Wylder's Holistic Pet Center and Rescue ("Wylder's") on Ventura Boulevard in Studio City, California.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> See https://wyldersholisticpetcenter.square.site/# (last visited Dec. 7, 2022) (listing the business address for Wylder's Holistic Pet Center and Rescue as 11939 Ventura Blvd., Studio city, California 91604, which is the same business address as THE WAGMOR and WAGMOR PET NON-PROFIT).

28

lives").

1	41. Upon information and belief, some time in 2015 Sally, owner of Sally's Rescue
2	Inc., partnered with BACELAR to build out a commercial space across the street from Wylder's.
3	Eventually called THE WAGMOR, it provides doggy day care, grooming, and houses dogs for
4	sale. <sup>5</sup>
5	42. Upon information and belief, originally, the dogs for sale were sourced by Sally's
6	Rescue Inc., a non-profit animal rescue organzation. Sally's Rescue Inc. paid for the grooming of
7	the dogs and the fees consumers paid for the dogs were shared equally between BACELAR and/or
8	THE WAGMOR and Sally's Rescue Inc.
9	43. At some point, BACELAR's relationship with Sally soured and Sally's Rescue
10	Inc. ceased providing dogs to BACELAR for display and sale at THE WAGMOR. Consequently,
11	in February 2020 BACELAR simply created her own non-profit, WAGMOR PETS NON-
12	PROFIT. Further, by creating WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT, BACELAR could buy puppies,
13	call it "rescue" and funnel all monies derived therefrom to THE WAGMOR, which she ulitmately
14	controls and uses for funding her personal life.
15	44. Celebrities promoting BACELAR, THE WAGMOR, and WAGMOR PETS
16	NON-PROFIT, distract from and mask the dark underbelly of BACELAR's operations:
17	a. dogs are being purchased and passed off as "rescues," and dogs are not
18	being seen by a licensed veterinarian prior to sale;
19	b. dogs are being medically treated by an unlicensed individual in her home
20	in lieu of proper veterinary care;
21	c. puppies exposed to parvovirus and distemper are going home with
22	unsuspecting new owners and immediately being diagnosed with canine parvovirus;
23	d. puppies are dying and BACELAR is placing blame on the adopters;
24	e. BACELAR is laundering money meant for WAGMOR PETS NON-
25	<sup>5</sup> See https://www.yelp.com/biz/the-wagmor-luxury-pet-hotel-and-spa-studio-city-2 (last visited
26	Dec. 7, 2022) (noting "Wagmor Pets is a 501c3 organization. Our mission is to rescue, rehabilitate, and rehome dogs in need. We are committed to preventing cruelty and promoting kindness to
27	animals. Through our activities, we aim to reduce animal suffering and increase animal wellbeing

and aiming to rehome them to responsible and caring homes where they can thrive and live happy



PROFIT to her for	profit business	THE WAGMOR	and living lavishly: a
FROM LIGHTEL TO	DIOTH DUSINESS	. THE WALLVIOL	and hymp lavishly, al

- f. desperate owners who are seeking help from BACELAR to treat their ill and dying dogs are being forced to execute non-disclosure agreements in order to receive assistance.
- 45. On information and belief, WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT is merely a front used primarily to legitimize BACELAR's operations. BACELAR promotes dogs, mostly puppies, on her Instagram page "Wagmor Pets" to 197,000 followers. Sharing stories of dogs "found" in deplorable conditions, BACELAR pulls at the heart strings of her followers, urging them to make donations and consider "adoption." Puppies are "adopted" sight unseen. Potential "adopters" must fill out an application online prior to seeing any dog or puppy in person. If a potential "adopter" is contacted, they are told to pay for the animal in advance and given a one-hour window to decide. After contact is made, an email is sent with an invoice, a welcome letter, "Disclosures, Rights and Responsibility," and transfer of ownership form. If it's not paid within an hour, the invoice will be cancelled and the next person in line is invoiced. Often the potential adopter receives text messages urging them to execute the documents and make the payment.
- 46. On information and belief, often times <u>paperwork</u> is <u>completed</u> and <u>payment</u> is <u>made prior to the dog having received a wellness exam.</u> At this point, if the dog is given a wellness exam and an illness is discovered, the consumer is urged to continue with taking possession of the dog.
- 47. On information and belief, other times, new owners who are meeting their dogs for the first time after paperwork was completed and payment was made, discover that the dog is not a right fit for them after meeting them or even changing their minds before the consumer has met the dog. In this situation, BACELAR demands that either the consumer take possession of the dog, citing that a contract has been executed, or informs the consumer that they may return the dog but will not be reimbursed for the fee.
- 48. As for payment, consumers are emailed a receipt showing payment was made to WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT. The consumers' bank accounts, however, show payment was



made to THE WAGMOR, BACELAR's for-profit entity. On information and belief, BACELAR
has diverted all fees paid for dogs away from WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT and has them
deposited into THE WAGMOR's bank account and uses the funds for her personal expenses.

- 49. BACELAR boasted that in 2020 she rescued more than 3,000 dogs (all paid to the WAGMOR at approximately \$850 each). On information and belief, because THE WAGMOR is receiving all fees paid for dogs, THE WAGMOR receives more than \$100,000 in income each month. Whereas, WAGMOR PETS may receive approximately \$30,000 in a given month from direct donations, payments to Venmo via @dogsinneed and Paypal payments.
- 50. Unaware of BACELAR's self-dealing and unaware of Health and Safety Code § 122354.5, and believing that adopting a dog from BACELAR is "rescue" and a tax exempt donation to a 501(c)(3) tax exempt entity, the unknowing consumer pays on average \$850 to obtain an unsterilized puppy, sometimes sight unseen, that may or may not have been seen by a licensed veterinarian. If that dog becomes ill, BACELAR takes no responsibility, leaving the consumer to bear the burden of the life saving costs that may be required.
- PROFIT there is no oversight as to where the puppies for adoption come from or how the funds received from donations and adoptions are applied and spent. On information an belief, BACELAR has misappropriated adoption fees, totaling approximately \$925,000 from approximately 1,100 dogs purchased in 2021 alone, that was meant for WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT but was deposited into THE WAGMOR's bank account and used by BACELAR for her own personal use. This is in direct violation of Health and Safety Code which mandates that a pet store "shall not receive any fees in connection with the display of the dogs, cats or rabbits. *See* Health & Safety Code § 122354.5, subd. (b)(3).
- 52. Upon information and belief, Defendants hide the distribution of their profits by referring to them as a "service fee paid to cover Wagmor Pets' expenses." The "Adoption Disclosures" have the adopter agree "to reimburse Wagmor Pets for services rendered, boarding, food and other items provided for the dog." However, the "service fees" are paid directly into the

# \*

#### bank account belonging to THE WAGMOR.

- 53. Thus, Defendants acquire puppies from Craigslist.com and other sources by paying for them in direct violtion of Health and Safety Code which mandates that a rescue group must "not obtain animals in exchange for payment or compensation from any person that breeds or brokers animals." *See* Health & Safety Code § 122354.5, subd. (e)(1)(A).
- 54. Defendants utilize the veterinary services of Somis Veterinary Hospital ("Somis"). Somis employs an individual named Brittney Delacruz. Delacruz is not a licensed veterinarian. Defendants also pay Delacruz to provide services to Defendants. Delacruz is the "medical coordinator" for WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT but often times Defendants elect to have Delacruz provide medical care in leiu of actually having the dogs see a licensed veterinarian. Upon information and belief, if a dog has a serious illness, Defendants will have Delacruz provide fluids, antibiotics, and metronidozole only, even if the dog's condition is grave. Defendants consider this "emergency medical care."
- 55. Every consumer is exposed to the "rescue" misrepresentation, the promise that "dogs are seen by a vet and receive a wellness exam" and are in "good health" at the time of sale and Defendants perpetrate this scheme for financial gain.

### C. Plaintiffs Were Defrauded By Defendants' Scheme

- 56. Plaintiffs purchased puppies from Defendants in 2022. Before purchasing their respective puppies, each of the Plaintiffs were assured that the puppies were rescue puppies, had seen a veterinarian for a wellness exam, were healthy, and received at least their first round of vaccinations. Defendants provided false information regarding the puppies to be purchased, including failing to disclose that the puppies were being sold for an illegal adoption fee.
- 57. Shortly after coming home, Plaintiffs' puppies demonstrated serious illnesses, which they had at the time of adoption.

1.	<b>Plaintiffs</b>	

58. and his girlfriend

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> A search of https://search.dca.ca.gov/ on or about December 7, 2022, yielded in "no results" for active licenses under the name Brittney Delacruz.

follow WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT on Instagram because they were interested in adopting
a dog. was prescribed an Emotional Support Animal ("ESA") from his long-term
therapist and was specifically searching a dog to be his ESA. They saw that WAGMOR PETS
NON-PROFIT was promoting an event known as Wagmor Wagchella and decided to attend.
59. On April 24, 2022 attended Wagmor Wagchella which
was located at THE WAGMOR. Upon walking up to the venue,
see the poor conditions of the puppies from the outdoor windows, witnessing the puppies
wandering through urine and feces. After entering the location,
greeted by a woman named Valentine and brought through a separate entrance. The puppies were
kept to the immediate right after entering through this door.
the conditions the puppies were kept in, that she began to cry after entering; she could see the
animals eating each other's feces and continuing to walk through urine and other feces.
60. Valentine handed a puppy, named "Heron" (later
changed to "Kali").
wanted to adopt her and get her out of these horrible conditions. They therefore set up an interview
with WAGMOR PETS and during this interview asked WAGMOR
PETS NON-PROFIT a plethora of questions about how "Heron" had been found. They received
a limited answer that they (WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT) had "found the litter in a ditch in
Bakersfield." Further in the interview, continued to ask questions including whether
there were any health concerns they should be aware of. WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT,
through Valentine, ensured them that this puppy was perfectly healthy and they had nothing to
worry about.
61. Based on these assurances,
Prior to attending this event, , in anticipation of adopting a puppy, had
prepared their home by completing a very thorough cleaning, which included disinfecting the
entire premises, and puppy proofing their home. They therefore felt ready to welcome this new
puppy into their lives, and especially to serve as the ESA for

62. Along with a take home bag, they were given a piece of paper regarding antibiotics
they were to administer to the puppy at home. questioned what these
antibiotics were and why they were to be given, but they were told it was "standard procedure."
were also told to keep the puppy inside at home and not to let her touch
the ground or be around any other dogs until she had completed her vaccines. Valentine provided
them with her cell phone number and said they could contact her with any further questions.
were also told about the "medical portal" where they could view their
puppy's medical history. were told to return the following Thursday
for their puppy to receive her second DDHP vaccine. No home check was requested by
WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT.
63. Later, when the "puppy portal" provided to
them by Valentine, they noticed that according to the portal, "Heron" had only been given two
vaccines and there was no record of any prescribed antibiotics for this puppy.
64. On May 1, 2022, began to notice frequent eye discharge
from "Heron." On May 3, 2022 attempted to contact WAGMOR PETS
NON-PROFIT about "Heron's" condition. They called WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT directly
multiple times yet received no response. They therefore resorted to texting Valentine, where they
still did not receive any assistance.
65. On May 10, 2022, received the PCR results for "Heron"
now "Kali." She tested positive for distemper.
66. Upon receiving this news and based on the way they were being ignored by
WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT, decided to look through WAGMOR
PETS NON-PROFIT's social media. They were shocked and horrified to find posts from March
2022 through May 2022 showing that WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT was aware of the
condition of "Heron" and the rest of her litter.
being assured of the health and well-being of
"Heron" and her litter, as well as the other litter of puppies that were rescued at the same time

2	shows posts of puppies from those same two litters who have been hospitalized and some who
3	have passed away. None of this was communicated to them prior to adoption.
4	saw that on March 29, 2022, WAGMOR PETS NON-
5	PROFIT posted a picture of a puppy with a caption stating that this puppy is "riddled with bacteria
6	and malnourishment," yet claimed that it was not parvo or distemper. On information and belief,
7	the puppy in this photograph is "Heron's" sibling, Porcupine. Porcupine later died due to illness.
8	69. They also found that on April 6, 2022, WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT posted to
9	Instagram that four more puppies had become severely ill and needed 24 hour hospitalization.
10	According to this post, all 4 of these severely ill puppies were showing symptoms of distemper,
11	such as diarrhea. It was later confirmed that these puppies tested positive for bordetella,
12	adenovirus, and parainfluenza virus. These puppies can be seen in direct contact with other
13	puppies from both litters in Instagram posts by WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT, including
14	"Heron."
15	70. Further, Instagram posts on April 12, 2022 include a caption stating "[t]hese
16	puppies are still hospitalized," "[t]hey need to be the only dogs in the home," and a later post
17	stating that one of the puppies, Dozer, had passed away. Yet, none of these statements were made
18	to .
19	71. On May 17, 2022 the results of Dozer's PCR test, who had already passed away,
20	revealed that he was positive for the same Wild Type CDV infection distemper as "Heron."
21	had been treating "Heron" now "Kali" with medication
22	intended to fight off the disease but the vet indicated that if neurological signs appeared the most
23	humane decision to make would be euthanasia.
24	73. "Heron" now "Kali" began experiencing serious neurological symptoms which
25	could cause great suffering, and so on May 19, 2022,
26	vet who stated that her symptoms were worsening and euthansia was the best option to prevent
27	her suffering.
28	

and in contact with "Heron's" litter, the Instagram profile of WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT



5

8 9

10

11

physical evidence to the contrary.

12

13

14 15

> 16 17

18

19 20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27 28



1

Even after the frequency of posts about how ill the puppies were and how they needed to be the only dogs in a household, WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT posted about multiple "meet and greet" adoption events with the sick puppies. These events showed the comingling of multiple dogs, some known to be sick and others not yet infected, in closed quarters and without proper sanitation. 75. have not received any financial or other To this day, support (including a refund of the adoption fee) from WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT or THE WAGMOR, who continues to deny their knowledge of "Heron" being sick, despite documented

76. To make matters worse, not only did WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT and THE WAGMOR conceal and deceive but they went so far as to file a false animal control report accusing of animal cruelty. When tried to warn others about their experience with WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT,

they were threatened with a lawsuit by an attorney for WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT and THE WAGMOR.

77. Had known the truth about the dogs sold by BACELAR, THE WAGMOR, and WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT (including that their dog was sold for an illegal adoption fee) they would have chosen to support another organization or shelter directly and not purchased their dog from Defendant. It was only because believed that the higher price paid for the puppy meant a higher level of care and that more money went to rescue efforts, that they decided to adopt from WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT. Under no circumstance, did intend to support a "rescue" that purchased puppies from third parties, charged illegal adoption fees, and failed to provide vet care, and who used profits from the sale of dogs for personal use.

#### 2. Plaintiff

78. is a California resident and currently a PhD student at the University of Southern California. She recently moved from Colorado to Los Angeles to

pursue her PhD. After moving into her one-bedroom apartment, who had a history of
rescuing dogs from legitimate rescue organizations in Colorado, was introduced to WAGMOR
PETS NON-PROFIT and came across a photo of a three month old puppy name "Wilma" on
WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT's Instagram. It was very important to
a "rescue" dog, as has only ever owned rescue dogs and was vehemently opposed to
obtaining a dog from an entity that operates for profit or would engage in "puppy flipping" for
monetary gain.
describes that "Wilma" was "staring back with sweet but scared eyes and
mangey fur that looked to be unkempt and matted down," reminding her of a dog she rescued
when she was a child. From that moment it became clear to that "Wilma" would be her
new companion. was prepared for all of the challenges she knew raising a puppy to be,
razor-sharp teeth, potty-training, and unyielding energy, but she did not care about the trouble
because that "little ball of fluff" was about to be her new companion.
filled out the adoption application for WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT.
prepared for what came next.
80. On April 18, 2022, completed the adoption application and within 15
minutes she was told to expect a call from a woman named Valentine to discuss her application.
Following the completed phone interview, was informed that she had been approved to
adopt "Wilma." No home check was requested by WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT.
was also told that she would have to wait two weeks to receive "Wilma" for the "required puppy
holding period." WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT then stated they needed to collect an \$850.00
adoption fee within 24 hours if wished to secure the adoption of "Wilma."
81. Upon information and belief, to minimize questioning about the outrageousness
81. Upon information and belief, to minimize questioning about the outrageousness of this fee, WAGMORE PETS NON-PROFIT pressured by stating that there was
<u> </u>
of this fee, WAGMORE PETS NON-PROFIT pressured by stating that there was
of this fee, WAGMORE PETS NON-PROFIT pressured by stating that there was another very interested family and that if she did not act fast she may lose "Wilma."

X

aroor.	uite 1200 92614 57	
REVOLVE LAW GROOF	601 Main Street, Suite 1200 Irvine, California 92614 (833) 775-4557	

half the size, leading to believe that everything was just more expensive in Los Angeles.
82. WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT told that this adoption fee specifically
helped to cover shots, spaying, and other costs incurred for the time that the dogs spent in their
care. believed and relied on these statements from WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT
and used this information to justify paying the fee by telling herself that this just meant more
money was going to the care and rescue of animals in need.
83. Just two days later, on April 20, 2022, was contacted via text by
WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT claiming that "Wilma's" foster home had not worked out and
that she needed to come pick up "Wilma" right away, from a location for THE WAGMOR located
in Studio City. At this time, there was no further mention of the two-week holding period, or any
other precautions that should be taken for "Wilma's" health.
84. Unsure of what else to do, went to THE WAGMOR in Studio City and
picked up "Wilma." immediately noticed that "Wilma" was suffering from diarrhea.
When the diarrhea did not subside, on May 5, 2022 took "Wilma" to a veterinarian
where she was told puppy diarrhea was normal and she should not worry unless it gets worse or
she begins to notice blood in the stool. By May 8, 2022 "Wilma's" diarrhea had not subsided and
now noticed blood in her stool.
85. immediately took "Wilma" to the vet and Wilma" was tested for
parasites and given a probiotic to help with her gastrointestinal issues. On May 11, 2022 "Wilma"

once again consulted with her veterinarian. began to develop a cough so was told to just keep an eye on it and soothe the cough with a humidifier.

86. had a trip previously planned for Colorado and therefore she left for Colorado with "Wilma." During this trip noticed that "Wilma's" cough was not subsiding. On May 15, 2022. once again consulted her veterinarian and was told that if the cough worsens or does not subside to take her to a veterinary hospital in Colorado. On May 25, 2022, took "Wilma" to a veterinarian in Colorado as her cough had still not subsided. This veterinarian took x-rays, did a panel of diagnostic tests, and prescribed an antibiotic for the

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

cough. On May 30, 2022	received a call from that veterinary hospital informing her that
"Wilma" had tested positive for	distemper and bordetella. "Wilma's" coughing had still not
subsided, so the veterinarian also p	prescribed another round of antibiotics.

- and called WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT to inform them that "Wilma" had tested positive for distemper, a fatal disease in puppies with only a 20% survival rate.

  MOORE was met with confusion and defensiveness by WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT and was told that no other puppies from this litter were sick.
- 88. By June 8, 2022 "Wilma's" cough had still not subsided so brought her to a veterinarian in Los Angeles where they ran another series of diagnostic tests and x-rays. These x-rays showed damage to "Wilma's" lower respiratory tract, which the vet believed was due to her immunocompromised state from the distemper. "Wilma" was now experiencing a series of infections and permanent lung damage. The vet also believed that "Wilma" would fall ill to many more parasites and infections due to the distemper.
- 89. contacted WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT on multiple occasions informing them of "Wilma's" distemper, and each time she was met with the same confusion and defensiveness and repeatedly told that no other puppies from "Wilma's" litter were sick. took it upon herself to get in contact with the woman that had adopted However, "Wilma's" brother. was then informed that "Wilma's" brother had been having similar diarrhea and intestinal issues leading to him being seen at an animal urgent care, and that this information was known to WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT. On information and belief, WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT concealed this information from and lied about the conditions of other puppies from the litter. Additionally, WAGMOR failed to inform that "Wilma" could be showing signs of illness, failed to use their two-week holding period to ensure "Wilma's" health and safety to other dogs, and failed to inform that she should be looking for signs of life-threatening illness.
- 90. Currently, and "Wilma" are learning how to navigate the difficulties that come with having a very sick puppy. Since the day adopted "Wilma," she has not been

allowed to walk around outside or play with other dogs due to the severity of this illness and risk
of other dogs contracting the illness. Generally, this isolation period would have ended the day
that "Wilma" received her final round of vaccines, approximately at the end of May. However,
due to her diagnosis it has been extended and "Wilma" is still confined to
Due to the distemper, "Wilma" cannot be in public, she cannot be groomed, and she cannot be
boarded. has missed family events, a wedding, and even unknowingly exposed other
dogs to distempter prior to Wilma's diagnosis because she was unaware that Wilma had been
exposed prior to adoption.
91. On June 20, 2022, rushed "Wilma" to the animal hospital because she
was showing signs of neurological issues such as trouble standing, walking and holding her head
up. "Wilma" was admitted to the hospital and was informed that these were a
consequence of distemper. The hospital informed she had the option of euthanasia as
recovery was uncertain. opted to monitor Wilma's symptoms for now.
92. To this day, has received zero support from WAGMOR PETS, financial
or otherwise (including at a minimum a refund of her adoption fee).
approximately \$5000.00 in medical care as well as necessities for "Wilma" since she cannot go
outside nor function properly.
93. On information and belief, had been informed of the distemper or to look
for possible signs of illness, she could have taken steps to plan and prepare, rather than being left
scrambling to pay the rising medical bills and learning to cope with the emotional trauma of
caring for a helpless, ill animal more adequately.
94. After learning of "Wilma's" distemper diagnosis, decided to do some
research on WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT. was extremely disturbed by what she
found. stated that "the statistics on dogs who come through WAGMOR PETS NON-
PROFIT speak for themselves." that the adoption fees charged by WAGMOR
PETS were actually going to THE WAGMOR and not being used to care for the animals as she
had been told and believed. learned that THE WAGMOR AND WAGMOR PETS

NON-PROFIT	purchase	animals	from	puppy	mills	and o	ther	dangerous,	unethical,	and	unsafe
situations.											

- 95. Upon information and belief and based on the information she has researched on WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT and THE WAGMOR, following her adoption of "Wilma," believes that WAGMORE PETS NON-PROFIT and THE WAGMOR is "nothing more than an evil façade used to defraud dog lovers into paying absurd adoption fees in order to 'save' the very animals THE WAGMOR is harming through their lucrative business model." This organization is run by the "irresponsible and not-so-subtle clout chaser," Melissa Bacelar ("BACELAR").
- 96. Upon information and belief, believes BACELAR has endangered lives of animals across Los Angeles County while taking an active role in the overbreeding and abuse of puppies for profit.
- 97. To date, "Wilma" is surving but the cost that will be involved to provide the care needed for her to live as a distemper survivor is unknown and incalculable. Had known the truth about BACELAR, THE WAGMOR, and WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT (including that Defendants were placing dogs up for adoption with illegal fees) she would have adopted directly from a shelter so that there was certainty that the dog was truly a rescue, was sterilized, and to ensure the money paid went to saving other dogs, not to the owner of an entity for profit.

#### VI. <u>CLASS ALLEGATIONS</u>

- 98. Plaintiffs reallege and incorporate by reference the allegations set forth in the preceding paragraphs of this complaint.
- 99. This action is brought and may be properly maintained as a class action pursuant to the provisions of California Code of Civil Procedure § 382 and/or California Civil Code § 1781.
- 100. Plaintiffs bring this action on behalf of Plaintiffs and all others similarly situated.Plaintiffs represent and are members of the Class, consisting of:

All persons who in the State of California who paid monies to Defendant/s for one or more dog(s) with an adoption fee greater than

- 101. Excluded from the proposed Class are Defendants, any entities in which Defendants have a controlling interest, and the officers, directors, affiliates, attorneys, heirs, predecessors, and successors in interest, subsidiaries, employees, agents and/or assigns of Defendants. Plaintiffs reserve the right to modify the definition of the Classes (or add one or more subclasses) after further discovery. Such a representative action is necessary to prevent and remedy the deceptive, unlawful and unfair practices alleged herein.
- 102. Ascertainable Class. This action may be properly brought and maintained as a class action because the members of the proposed Class are clearly and easily ascertainable. While the exact number of Class members is unknown to Plaintiffs at this time, the members of the Class can readily be ascertainable through Defendants' transaction records and receipts and/or billing, database files, and business records. The Class members can be readily located and notified of this class action. Plaintiffs believe that there are several thousands of members of the proposed Class. Accordingly, because the number of persons within the Plaintiff Class is so substantial, it is impractical to join each member of the Class as a named plaintiff. Thus, utilization of the class action mechanism is the most economically feasible means of determining and adjudicating the merits of this litigation.
- 103. <u>Community of Interest</u>. The claims of Plaintiffs are typical of the claims of members of the Class, and Plaintiffs' interests are consistent with and not antagonistic to those of other Class members they seek to represent. Accordingly, this action may be properly brought and maintained as a class action because there is a well-defined community of interest among the members of the proposed Class. Plaintiffs, like all members of the proposed Class, were and are similarly affected and injured by having been misled by Defendants' deceptive and fraudulent actions into paying in excess of \$500.00 to a pet store to purchase puppies from Defendants. The factual bases of Defendants' misconduct are common to all members of the Class and represent a common practice of wrongful conduct resulting in damages to all members of the Class.
  - 104. Common Questions of Law and Fact Predominate. Defendants' pratices and

omissions were applied uniformly such that common questions of fact and law exist to all members of the Class that predominate over any questions affecting only individual members of the Class. These common questions of law and fact which do not vary from Class member to Class member, and which may be determined without reference to the individual circumstances of any class member, include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Whether Defendants' practices and representations made in connection with the origin, labeling, advertising, marketing, promotion, and sale of dogs were "unfair, deceptive, untrue, or misleading" in any respect, thereby violating California Business & Professions Code § 17200, et seq.;
- b. Whether Defendants' practices and representations made in connection with the origin, advertising, marketing, promotion, and/or sales of dogs were "untrue or misleading" in any respect, thereby violating California Business & Professions Code § 17500, et seq.;
- c. Whether Defendants' practices violated the cap on adoption fees by charging in excess of \$500.00 in connection with the sale of dogs, thereby violating Health & Safety Code § 122354.5 and supporting a violation of California Business & Professions Code § 17200, et seq.;
- d. Whether Defendants' practices and representations made in connection with the adoption fees, i.e, calling them a fee for "services" and having the money paid to the pet store violated the prohibition that the pet store shall not receive any fees in connection with the display of dogs, thereby violating Health & Safety Code § 122354.5 and supporting a violation of California Business & Professions Code § 17200, et seq.;
- e. Whether Defendants misrepresented their products and/or services in connection with the sale of dogs;
- f. Whether Defendants' practices and representations made in connection with the sales of dogs violated California Civ. Code § 1750, et seq.;
- g. Whether Defendants were unjustly enriched by collecting, taking or otherwise receiving monies in Defendants' possession belonging to Plaintiffs and the Class and wrongfully retained such monies to its own use and benefit;
- h. Whether Plaintiffs and the Class are entitled to actual damages, restitution, disgorgement and punitive damages; and
- i. Whether Plaintiffs and the Class are entitled to injunctive relief, public injunctive relief, and declaratory relief.
  - 105. Adequate Class Representation by Competent Counsel. The Plaintiffs have no

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

interests that are adverse to, or which conflict with, the interests of the absent members of the Class and are able to fairly and adequately represent and protect the interests of such a Class (and any after defined subclasses). Plaintiffs have raised viable claims of the type reasonably expected to be raised by members of the Class and will vigorously pursue those claims. If necessary, Plaintiffs may seek leave of this Court to amend this Complaint to include additional Class representatives to represent the Class or additional claims as necessary. Plaintiffs have retained and are represented by experienced, qualified, and competent counsel who are committed to prosecuting this class action and have the financial resources necessary to do so. Neither Plaintiffs nor their counsel have any interest adverse to those of the Class members.

106. Substantial Benefit to the Parties and the Court. Certification of this class action is appropriate under California Code of Civil Procedure § 382 and/or California Civil Code § 1781. A class action is superior to other available methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of this controversy, since individual litigation of the claims of all Class members is impracticable. It would be unduly burdensome to the courts in which individual litigation of numerous cases would proceed. Individualized litigation would also present a potential for varying, inconsistent, or contradictory judgments, and would magnify the delay and expense to all parties and to the court system resulting from multiple trials of the same factual issues. By contrast, the maintenance of this action as a class action, with respect to some or all of the issues presented herein, presents few management difficulties, conserves the resources of the parties and of the court system and protects the rights of each member of the Class. Plaintiffs anticipate no difficulty in the management of this action as a class action.

107. Additionally, the prosecution of separate actions by individual Class members may create a risk of multiple adjudications with respect to them that would, as a practical matter, be dispositive of the interests of the other members of the Class not parties to such adjudications, or that would substantially impair or impede the ability of such nonparty Class members to protect their interests. The prosecution of individual actions by Class members could establish inconsistent results and result in establishing incompatible standards of conduct for Defendants.

## VII. <u>CAUSES OF ACTION</u>

#### **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

Violation of California's Unfair Competition Law, Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code §§ 17200, et seq.

(Against All Defendants)

- 108. Plaintiffs reallege and incorporate by reference the allegations set forth in the preceding paragraphs of this complaint.
- 109. Plaintiffs bring this claim individually and on behalf of the members of the proposed California Class against Defendants.
- 110. California Business and Professions Code § 17200 *et seq.* ("UCL"), prohits unfair competition that constitutes any unlawful, unfair or fraudulent business act or practice and unfair, deceptive, untrue or misleading advertising. The statute is directed toward the public's right to protection from fraud, deceit, and unlawful conduct and its main purpose is consumer protection.
- 111. The UCL defines "unfair business competition" to include any "unlawful, unfair or fraudulent" act or practice, as well as any "unfair, deceptive, untrue or misleading" advertising. California Business and Professions Code § 17200.
- 112. The UCL imposes strict liability. Plaintiffs need not prove that Defendants intentionally or negligently engaged in unlawful, unfair, or fraudulent business practices—but only that such practices occurred.
- 113. Plaintiffs are informed and believe and on that basis allege that Defendants have engaged in unlawful, unfair and/or fraudulent business acts or practices in the following ways:
  - a. THE WAGMOR adopts out, sells, or offers for sale dogs in violation of Health & Safety Code § 122354.5;
  - b. THE WAGMOR provides space for the display of dogs that are not being displayed by either a public animal control agency or shelter, or rescue group in violation of Health & Safety Code § 122354.5;
  - c. THE WAGMOR receives fees in connection with the display of and sale of dogs in violation of Health & Safety Code § 122354.5;

E LAW GROUP	Street, Suite 1200 salifornia 92614 ) 775-4557	
OLVE LA	Calif	
VOLVE	Main S vine, Ca (833)	

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

d.	THE WAGMOR displays, adopts out, sells, or offers for sale dogs that are
not sterilized i	n violation of Health & Safety Code § 122354.5;

- e. WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT displays, adopts out, sells, or offers for sale dogs that are not sterilized in violation of Health & Safety Code § 122354.5;
- f. THE WAGMOR adopts out, sells, or offers for sale dogs for total fees, including, but not limited to, adoption fees, that exceed five hundred dollars (\$500) in violation of Health & Safety Code § 122354.5;
- WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT adopts out, sells, or offers for sale dogs g. for total fees, including, but not limited to, adoption fees, that exceed five hundred dollars (\$500) in violation of Health & Safety Code § 122354.5;
- h. WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT does not post adoption fees that are visible to the public on or near the enclosures or areas where adoptable dogs are displayed in violation of Health & Safety Code § 122354.5;
- WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT disguises that it obtains dogs from third i. parties in exchange for payment or compensation:
- THE WAGMOR disguises that it obtains dogs from third parties in exchange for payment or compensation:
- BACELAR disguises that she obtains dogs from third parties in exchange for payment or compensation:
- All Defendants disguise the true origin, condition and health of puppies sold by THE WAGMOR and/or WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT:
- m. All Defendants committed deceptive acts by making written and/or oral material representations and omissions that had a capacity, tendency, or liklihood to deceive or confuse reasonable consumers by representing that the dogs were being placed for adoption by WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT when, in fact, the dogs are being sold by THE WAGMOR and the THE WAGMOR receives all the fees paid by consumers;
  - All Defendants committed deceptive acts by making written and/or oral n.

material representations and omissions that had a capacity, tendency, or liklihood to deceive or confuse reasonable consumers by representing that the dogs are available for adoption through WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT thereby representing fees paid for the dogs would be tax deductible "donations" to WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT when, in fact, the unsuspecting consumers are buying the dogs from THE WAGMOR and THE WAGMOR receives all the fees paid by consumers;

- o. All Defendants committed deceptive acts by making written and/or oral material representations and omissions that had a capacity, tendency, or liklihood to deceive or confuse reasonable consumers by representing donations were needed in order to rescue dogs at a shelter that would be euthanized when, in fact, this statement was false and BACELAR made this statement in order to obtain donations for WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT;
- p. All Defendants committed deceptive acts by making written and/or oral material representations and omissions that had a capacity, tendency, or liklihood to deceive or confuse reasonable consumers by representing donations were needed for caring for two dogs named Faith and Q, when in fact, this statement was false, and the dogs were euthanized by Defendants;
- q. All Defendants committed deceptive acts by making written and/or oral material representations and omissions that had a capacity, tendency, or liklihood to deceive or confuse reasonable consumers by representing dogs received veterinary care, when in fact, no veterinary care was provided or Defendants placed dogs with Brittney Delacruz who cared for the dogs in her own home, on her patio, and without being a licensed veterinarian;
- r. All Defendants committed deceptive acts by making written and/or oral material representations and omissions that had a capacity, tendency, or liklihood to deceive or confuse reasonable consumers by representing the dogs are healthy upon adoption/sale and when the dogs become ill shortly after adoption, refuse to reimburse

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

fees paid for the dogs or to pay for treatment and instead, deny all liability, state that no other dog is similarly affected and offers assistance only if the consumer agrees to execute a non-disclosure agreement;

All Defendants committed deceptive acts by making written and/or oral material representations and omissions that had a capacity, tendency, or liklihood to deceive or confuse reasonable consumers by requiring consumers to enter into an adhesion contract that requires consumers to agree to the health of the dogs, agree to be liable for any future health or behavior issues, and to agree that under no circumstances will fees be reimbursed, even if Defendants were aware of behavior and/or health issues prior to the consumer taking ownership of the dog and failed to disclose this fact.

#### "Unfair" Prong

- A business act or practice is "unfair" under the UCL if it offends an established public policy or is immoral, unethical, oppressive, unscrupulous or substantially injurious to consumers, and that unfairness is determined by weighing the reasons, justifications and motives of the practice against the gravity of the harm to the alleged victims.
- 115. Defendants' actions constitute "unfair" business practices because, as alleged above, Defendants engaged in a misleading and deceptive practice of, at a minimum, intentionally displaying dogs for sale for an adoption fee of more than \$500; disguising that Defendants obtains dogs from third parties in exchange for payment or compensation; and displaying, adopting out, selling, or offering for sale dogs that are not sterilized in violation of Health & Safety Code § 122354.5.
- This is done to deceive consumers into believing they are adopting a legitimate 116. rescue dog that has been sold pursuant to the requirements of Health & Safety Code § 122354.5, thus saving Defendants money and increasing its profit margin.
- 117. Defendants' acts and practices offend an established public policy of transparency in warranty rights, and they therefore engage in immoral, unethical, oppressive, and unscrupulous activities that are substantially injurious to consumers.

3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24

26

27

28

1

2

118. The harm to Plaintiffs and Class Members grossly outweighs the utility of Defendants' practices as there is no utility to Defendants' practices.

#### "Fraudulent" Prong

- 119. A business act or practice is "fraudulent" under the UCL if it is likely to deceive members of the consuming public.
- 120. Defendants' acts and practices alleged above constitute fraudulent business acts or practices as they deceived Plaintiffs and are highly likely to deceive members of the consuming public.
- 121. By not disclosing that the dogs were obtained in exchange for payment (and by seeking to profit from the illegal sale of such dogs), Defendants led Plaintiffs and Class Members to believe that the dogs were being adopted from a legitimate rescue organization and that the dogs were sold pursuant to the requirements of Health & Safety Code § 122354.5, including that such dogs were not being sold for an illegal adoption fee.

#### "Unlawful" Prong

- 122. A business act or practice is "unlawful" under the UCL if it violates any other law or regulation.
- 123. Defendants' acts and practices alleged above constitute unlawful business acts or practices as they have violated the plain language of Health & Safety Code § 122354.5 as described herein. As detailed in Plaintiffs' Second and Third Causes of Action, Defendants' acts and practices surrounding the sale of dogs also violate the FAL and several provisions of the CLRA.
- 124. The violation of any law constitutes an "unlawful" business practice under the UCL.
- 125. These acts and practices alleged were intended to or did result in violations of Health & Safety Code § 122354.5, the FAL and the CLRA.
- 126. The statements and representations made by Defendants include, but are not limited to direct statements, in person, in the adoption documents, by email and via Defendants'

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

online marketing materials, made to the Plaintiffs and the consuming public.

- 127. Defendants' practices, as set forth above, have misled Plaintiffs, the Class Members, and the public in the past and will continue to mislead in the future. Consequently, Defendants' practices constitute an unlawful, fraudulent, and unfair business practice within the meaning of the UCL.
- 128. Plaintiffs are informed and have reason to believe that Defendants continue to practice the same unlawful, unfair, or fraudulent business acts or practices to this day.
- 129. Defendants' acts, misrepresentations, concealment of material facts and failures to disclose as alleged in this Complaint, constitute unlawful, unfair or fraudulent business acts or practices and unfair, deceptive, untrue or misleading advertising within the meaning of California Business & Professions Code § 17200 et seq.
- 130. Upon information and belief, Defendants intended that customers rely on these deceptive acts and practices in purchasing puppies from THE WAGMOR and/or WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT, with the knowledge that significant harm would result.
- 131. Plaintiffs did, in fact, purchase puppies in reliance on these deceptive acts and practices and Defendants' conduct caused injury in fact to Plaintiffs, including significant financial and personal costs.
- 132. Pursuant to California Business & Professions Code § 17203, Plaintiffs seek an award of equitable relief including requiring that Defendants (a) make full restitution of all monies obtained from the unlawful, unfair, or fraudulent business acts or practices and unfair, deceptive, untrue or misleading advertising as described in this Complaint and (b) disgorge all profits obtained from the unlawful, unfair or fraudulent business acts or practices and unfair, deceptive, untrue or misleading advertising as described in this Complaint.
- Pursuant to California Business & Professions Code § 17203, Plaintiffs seek an award of preliminary and permanent injunctive relief enjoining Defendants from continuing to engage in the unlawful, unfair or fraudulent business acts or practices and unfair, deceptive, untrue or misleading advertising as described in this Complaint.

- 134. Plaintiffs also seek pursuant to California Business & Professions Code § 17203, a public injunction requring Defendants to truthfully advertise the true origins of their dogs and/or be enjoined from selling dogs that are adverised as rescue dogs, when in fact they were obtained in exchange for payment. The consuming public will directly benefit from such public injunction in accordance with § 17203.
- 135. Pursuant to California Business & Professions Code § 17205, relief awarded under this cause of action is cumulative to remedies provided by other laws of the state.

#### **SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION**

# Violation of California's False Advertising Law, Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code §§ 17500, et seq. (Against All Defendants)

- 136. Plaintiffs reallege and incorporate by reference the allegations set forth in the preceding paragraphs of this Complaint.
- 137. Plaintiffs bring this claim individually and on behalf of the members of the proposed California Class against Defendant.
- 138. California Business and Professional Code § 17500 provides that it is "unlawful for any person, firm, corporation or association, or any employee thereof with intent directly or indirectly to dispose of real or personal property . . . or anything of any nature whatsoever or to induce the public to enter into any obligation relating thereto, to make or disseminate or cause to be made or disseminated before the public in this state . . . in any newspaper or other publication, or any advertising device, or by public outcry or proclamation, or in any other manner or means whatever, including over the Internet, any statement, concerning that real or personal property . . or concerning any circumstance or matter of fact connected with the proposed performance or disposition thereof, which is untrue or misleading, and which is known, or which by the exercise of reasonable care should be known, to be untrue or misleading, or for any person, firm, or corporation to so make or disseminate or cause to be so made or disseminated any such statement as part of a plan or scheme with the intent not to sell that personal property or those services,

professional or otherwise . . . as so advertised." Id.

139. Defendants have disseminated, or caused to be disseminated, false and misleading statements and representations in the promotion and/or marketing of the puppies purchased by Plaintiffs. These statements and representations include, but are not limited to (a) direct statements, in person at THE WAGMOR store and via Defendants' marketing materials, made to Plaintiffs and the consuming public, regarding the health of its dogs, (b) direct statements, made in person and in each contract regarding the health of the dogs and that WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT incurred expenses for the dogs, and (c) direct warranties provided in each contract that its puppies were in good health and fit for sale. These statements were and continue to be false.

- 140. Defendant violated § 17500, *et seq*. by misleading Plaintiffs and the Class to believe that they were adopting a rescue dog (that was not obtained in exchange for payment) and that the adoption fee complied with California law.
- 141. In making or disseminating the statements alleged herein, Defendants knew, or by the exercise of reasonable care should have known, that such statements were untrue or misleading and in violation of California Business and Professional Code § 17500 *et seq*.
- 142. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' conduct, Plaintiffs suffered damages.
- 143. Plaintiffs and the Class lost money or property as a result of Defendants' violations of the FAL because: (a) they would not have purchased or paid for a dog from Defendants absent Defendants' misrepresentations and omissions of a warning that they were adopting a dog that was illegally obtained in exchange for payment and that the adoption fee charged was in violation of California law; (b) they would not have purchased or adopted a dog absent Defendants' misrepresentations and omissions; (c) they paid a price premium for Defendants' dogs based on Defendant's misrepresentations and omissions; (d) Defendants' dogs did not have the characteristics, benefits, or quantities as promised; and (e) Defendants never intended to refund monies paid for their dogs.
  - 144. Under the FAL, "[i]t is unlawful for any person, firm, corporation or association,

or any employee thereof with intent directly or indirectly to dispose of real or personal property or to perform services" to disseminate any statement "which is untrue or misleading, and which is known, or which by the exercise of reasonable care should be known, to be untrue or misleading." Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 17500.

- 145. Defendants' business practices as alleged herein constitute unfair, deceptive, untrue, and misleading advertising pursuant to the FAL because Defendants advertised the adoption of their dogs in a manner that is untrue and misleading, which Defendants knew or reasonably should have known.
- 146. Defendants profited from the sales of the falsely and deceptively advertised dogs at the expense of unwary and believing consumers.
- 147. Plaintiffs are informed and believe that Defendants continue to disseminate, or cause to be disseminated, similar false and misleading statements about the history, origin and health of other dogs in their care and in their warranties in sales contracts for dog sales.
- 148. Pursuant to California Business & Professions Code § 17535, Plaintiffs seek an award of equitable and injunctive relief from this Court including requiring that Defendants (a) make full restitution of all monies obtained from the dissemination of false, untrue and misleading statements, as described in this Complaint and (b) disgorge all profits obtained from the dissemination of false, untrue and misleading statements, as described in this Complaint.
- 149. Pursuant to California Business & Professions Code § 17535, Plaintiffs seek an award of injunctive relief enjoining Defendants from continuing to engage in the dissemination of false, untrue and misleading public statements and representations as described in this Complaint.
- 150. Plaintiffs and the Class Members request the Court enter an order awarding them mandatory restitution and that they are entitled to recover their reasonable attorneys' fees.
- 151. Plaintiffs and the Class Members therefore also seek pre-and-post judgment interest and attorneys' fees and costs as allowed by statute, including without limitation those recoverable under Cal. Code Civ. Proc. § 1021.5, any common law "private attorney general"

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

equitable doctrine, any "common fund" doctrine, any "substantial benefit" doctrine, and/or any equitable principles of contribution and/or other methods of awarding attorneys' fees and costs.

152. Pursuant to California Business & Professions Code § 17534.5, remedies awarded under this cause of action are cumulative to remedies provided by other laws.

#### THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION

# Violation of California's Consumer Legal Remedies Act, Cal. Civ. Code § 1750, et seq. (Against All Defendants)

- 153. Plaintiffs reallege and incorporate by reference the allegations set forth in the preceding paragraphs of this Complaint.
- 154. Plaintiffs bring this claim individually and on behalf of the members of the proposed California Class against Defendants.
- 155. The Consumers Legal Remedies Act, Cal. Civ. Code §§ 1750, et seq. ("CLRA") prohibits unfair or deceptive practices in connection with the sale of goods or services to a consumer.
- 156. The CLRA is meant to be "liberally construed and applied to promote its underlying purposes, which are to protect consumers against unfair and deceptive business practices and to provide efficient and economical procedures to secure such protection." Cal. Civ. Code § 1760.
- The CLRA defines "services" as "work, labor, and services for other than a 157. commercial or business use, including services furnished in connection with the sale or repair of goods." Cal. Civ. Code § 1761(b). While "goods" are defined as "tangible chattels bought or leased for use primarily for personal, family, or household purposes, including certificates or coupons exchangeable for these goods, and including goods that, at the time of the sale or subsequently, are to be so affixed to real property as to become a part of real property, whether or not they are severable from the real property." Cal. Civ. Code § 1761(a).
- 158. Plaintiffs and Class Members purchased "services" and/or "goods" from Defendants as defined by the CLRA.

159.	Plaintiffs and Class Members are "consumers" who paid Defendats in exchange
for its pet add	option services and to purchase a dog for personal, family or household purposes as
defined by th	e CLRA. Cal. Civ. Code § 1761(d).
160.	Each of the purchases made by Plaintiffs and the Class Members from Defendants
were "Transa	actions" as defined by the CLRA. Cal. Civ. Code § 1761(e).
161.	Defendants are each a "person" as defined by Cal. Civ. Code § 1761(c).

- 162. Defendants' actions, representations, and conduct have violated, and continue to violate the CLRA, because they extend to transactions that intended to result, or which have resulted in, the sale of services and/or goods to consumers.
- 163. Specifically, Defendants are in violation of the CLRA because (at a minimum) Defendants acting with knowledge, intentionally, and unlawfully brought harm upon Plaintiffs and the Class by knowingly and/or purposefully making the following deceptive, material misrepresentations and/or omissions:
  - a. All Defendants committed deceptive acts by making written and/or oral material representations and omissions that had a capacity, tendency, or liklihood to deceive or confuse reasonable consumers by representing that the dogs were being placed for adoption by WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT when, in fact, the dogs are being sold by THE WAGMOR and the THE WAGMOR receives all the fees paid by consumers;
  - b. All Defendants committed deceptive acts by making written and/or oral material representations and omissions that had a capacity, tendency, or liklihood to deceive or confuse reasonable consumers by representing the dogs are healthy upon adoption/sale and when the dogs become ill shortly after adoption, refuse to reimburse fees paid for the dogs or to pay for treatment and instead, deny all liability, state that no other dog is similarly affected and offers assistance only if the consumer agrees to execute a non-disclosure agreement; and,

c. All Defendants committed deceptive acts by making written and/or oral material representations and omissions that had a capacity, tendency, or liklihood to deceive or confuse reasonable consumers by knowingly charging consumers an adoption fee that exceeds the State of California's mandated cap of \$500;

- 164. The CLRA prohibits "[r]epresenting that goods or services have sponsorship, approval, characteristics, ingredients, uses, benefits, or quantities which they do not have or that a person has a sponsorship, approval, status, affiliation, or connection which he or she does not have." By engaging in the conduct set forth herein, Defendants violated and continue to violate Section 1770(a)(5) of the CLRA because Defendants' conduct constitutes unfair methods of competition and unfair or fraudulent acts or practices in that Defendants misrepresented the particular characteristics, benefits, and quantities of its services and/or goods.
- 165. Cal. Civ. Code § 1770(a)(7) also prohibits "[r]epresenting that goods or services are of a particular standard, quality, or grade, or that goods are of a particular style or model, if they are of another." By engaging in the conduct set forth herein, Defendants violated and continue to violate Section 1770(a)(7) of the CLRA because Defendants' conduct constitutes unfair methods of competition and unfair or fraudulent acts or practices in that Defendants misrepresented the particular standard, quality or grade of its services and/or goods.
- 166. Cal. Civ. Code § 1770(a)(9) further prohibits "[a]dvertising goods or services with intent not to sell them as advertised." By engaging in the conduct set forth herein, Defendants violated and continue to violate Section 1770(a)(9), because Defendants' conduct constitutes unfair methods of competition and unfair or fraudulent acts or practices in that Defendant advertises its services and/or goods with the intent not to sell the services as advertised.
- 167. Cal. Civ. Code § 1770(a)(14) further prohibits "[r]epresenting that a transaction confers or involves rights, remedies, or obligations that it does not have or involve, or that are prohibited by law." By engaging in the conduct set forth herein, Defendants violated and continue to violate Section 1770(a)(14), because Defendants' conduct constitutes unfair methods of

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

competition and unfair or fraudulent acts or practices in that Defendants at a minimum are representing that consumers must pay an adoption fee above the state mandated \$500 limit in violation of Health and Safety Code § 122354.5.

- Plaintiffs and the Class acted reasonably when they purchased dogs from Defendants' on the belief that Defendants' misrepresentations were true and lawful.
- 169. Plaintiffs and the Class suffered tangible, concrete, injuries in fact caused by Defendants because: (a) they would not have purchased or paid for a dog from Defendants absent Defendants' misrepresentations and omissions; (b) they would not have purchased or paid for a dog from Defendants on the same terms (i.e., in exchange for a fee that exceeded the \$500 limit in violation of Health and Safety Code § 122354.5) absent Defendants' misrepresentations and omissions; (c) they paid a price premium for their dogs over the state law requirement due to the misrepresentations and omissions of Defendants; and (d) Defendants' dogs and adoption services did not have the characteristics, benefits, or quantities as promised.
- 170. The above-described conduct by Defendants misrepresented the nature of Plaintiffs and the Class Members' purchases. These misrepresentations would and in fact did deceive Plaintiffs, Class Members, and other reasonable consumers.
- 171. On information and belief, Defendants' violations of the CLRA discussed above were done with the actual knowledge, intent, and awareness that the conduct alleged was wrongful.
- 172. On information and belief, Defendants committed these acts knowing they would harm Plaintiffs and Class Members.
- Plaintiffs and Class Members were harmed as a direct and proximate result of 173. Defendants' violations of the CLRA and are thus entitled to a declaration that Defendants violated the CLRA.
- 174. Under California Civil Code § 1780(a), Plaintiffs and members of the Class seek injunctive and equitable relief for Defendants' violations of the CLRA.
  - 175. On July 18, 2022, Plaintiffs, through their attorneys, placed in the mail (certified

mail return receipt requested) a demand for corrective action pursuant to Cal. Civ. Code § 1782
(the "Demand") addressed to Defendants and Defendants' agent(s) for service of process. The
Demand was also sent to Defendants' former counsel on August 31, 2022 via email and via
Certified Mail on September 6, 2022. However, Defendants failed, within 30 days of receipt of
Plaintiffs' Demand, to provide Plaintiffs with an appropriate correction, repair, replacement, or
other remedy, and have offered no relief or cure for the Class Members. Therefore, Plaintiffs seek
actual, punitive, and statutory damages, as appropriate against Defendants, as well as injunctive
relief and attorneys' fees and costs.

176. Attached hereto as **Exhibits 3, 4, and 5** are sworn declarations from Plaintiffs pursuant to Cal. Civ. Code § 1780(d).

## FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION

### **Intentional Misrepresentation**

## (Against All Defendants)

- 177. Plaintiffs reallege and incorporate by reference the allegations set forth in the preceding paragraphs of this Complaint.
- 178. Plaintiffs bring this claim individually and on behalf of the members of the proposed California Class against Defendants.
- 179. Defendants made material representations to Plaintiffs, by means of oral representations, labeling, advertisements, promotions, and/or marketing, that puppies sold by Defendants, including those puppies purchased by Plaintiffs were healthy, when, in fact, they were not.
- 180. Defendants made material representations to Plaintiffs, by means of oral representations, advertisements, promotions, and/or marketing, that 100% of donations received go to medical bills, when, in fact, they do not. BACELAR will use donations to pay for (a) BACELAR's personal expenses for herself and her family, including but not limited to, her children's field trips, teacher's gifts, and her own personal pets; and (b) payment to third parties

who procure puppies for Defendants.

- 181. Defendants made material representations to Plaintiffs, by means of oral representations, advertisements, promotions, and/or marketing, that donations were needed in order to rescue dogs at a shelter that would be euthanized when, in fact, this statement was false and BACELAR made this statement in order to obtain donations for WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT.
- 182. Defendants made material representations to Plaintiffs, by means of oral representations, advertisements, promotions, and/or marketing, that dogs received veterinary care, when in fact, no veterinary care was provided or Defendants placed dogs with Brittney Delacruz who cared for the dogs in her own home, on her patio, and without being a licensed veterinarian.
- 183. Defendants made material representations to Plaintiffs, by means of oral representations or written, advertisements, promotions, and/or marketing, that fees paid for the dogs were tax deductible "donations" to WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT when, in fact, the dogs are being sold by THE WAGMOR and the THE WAGMOR receives all the fees paid by consumers.
- 184. Defendants made material representations that the puppies are "rescue" when, in fact, Defendants purchase puppies from third parties for resale.
  - 185. Defendants' representations were untrue, as set forth above.
- 186. Defendants made the representations herein alleged with the intention of inducing Plaintiffs to purchase the Defendants' puppies and/or make donations.
- 187. Defendants further made material representations with the intention of avoiding liability for the deaths and illnesses of the puppies.
- 188. At the time Defendants made the representations herein alleged, Defendants knew that the representations were false.
- 189. Plaintiffs justifiably relied upon Defendants' fraudulent and intentional misrepresentations and, in reliance on these representations, were induced to purchase the

puppies.

- 190. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' intentional misrepresentations, Plaintiffs were induced to buy sick puppies, spending an amount to be determined at trial on medical care for these puppies, and the emotional distress of having purchased puppy mill puppies.
- 191. Plaintiffs are informed and believe, and thereon allege, that Defendants knew that the puppies were sourced from third parties, paid for, and were ill, and that Defendants intended that consumers would rely on these misrepresentations and purchase sick puppies that were not "rescued." In doing these things, Defendants acted with malice, oppression and fraud and Plaintiffs are therefore entitled to recover punitive damages.
- 192. Plaintiffs and Class Members request the Court enter an order awarding Plaintiffs and the Class Members mandatory restitution, rescission, and/or actual damages, punitive and exemplary damages, and that they are entitled to recover their reasonable attorneys' fees. Plaintiffs and the Class Members therefore also seek pre-and-post- judgment interest and attorneys' fees and costs as allowed by statute, including without limitation those recoverable under Cal. Code Civ. Proc. § 1021.5, any common law "private attorney general" equitable doctrine, any "common fund" doctrine, any "substantial benefit" doctrine, and/or any equitable principles of contribution and/or other methods of awarding attorneys' fees and costs.

## **FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

## **Negligent Misrepresentation**

### (Against All Defendants)

- 193. Plaintiffs reallege and incorporate by reference the allegations set forth in the preceding paragraphs of this Complaint.
- 194. Plaintiffs bring this claim individually and on behalf of the members of the proposed California Class against Defendants.
  - 195. Defendants made material representations to Plaintiffs, by means of oral

representations, labeling, advertisements, promotions, and/or marketing, that dogs sold by Defendants, including those puppies purchased by Plaintiffs were healthy, when, in fact, they were not.

- 196. Defendants made material representations to Plaintiffs, by means of oral representations, advertisements, promotions, and/or marketing, that 100% of donations received go to medical bills, when, in fact, they do not. BACELAR used donations to pay for (a) BACELAR's personal expenses for herself and her family, including but not limited to her children's field trips, teacher's gifts, and her own personal pets; and (b) payment to third parties who procure puppies for Defendants.
- 197. Defendants made material representations to Plaintiffs, by means of oral representations, advertisements, promotions, and/or marketing, that donations were needed in order to rescue dogs at a shelter that would be euthanized when, in fact, this statement was false and BACELAR made this statement in order to obtain donations for WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT.
- 198. Defendants made material representations to Plaintiffs, by means of oral representations, advertisements, promotions, and/or marketing, that dogs received veterinary care, when in fact, no veterinary care was provided or Defendants placed dogs with Brittney Delacruz who cared for the dogs in her own home, on her patio, and without being a licensed veterinarian.
- 199. Defendants made material representations to Plaintiffs, by means of oral representations or written, advertisements, promotions, and/or marketing, that fees paid for the dogs were tax deductible "donations" to WAGMOR PETS NON-PROFIT when, in fact, the dogs are being sold by THE WAGMOR and THE WAGMOR receives all the fees paid by consumers.
- 200. Defendants made material representations that the puppies are "rescues" when, in fact, Defendants purchase puppies from third parties for resale.
  - 201. Defendants' representations were untrue, as set forth above.
  - 202. Defendants made the representations herein alleged with the intention of inducing

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

Plaintiffs to purchase the Defendants' puppies.

203. At the time Defendants made these misrepresentations, Defendants knew or should have known that these misrepresentations were false. Defendants at least negligently misrepresented and or negligently omitted material facts about the true nature of their dogs for sale.

- 204. Plaintiffs justifiably relied upon Defendants' fraudulent and intentional misrepresentations and, in reliance on these representations, were induced to purchase the puppies. If Plaintiffs had known the truth, they would not have purchased THE WAGMOR'S puppies.
- 205. Defendants owed Plaintiffs a duty to take reasonable care that the verbal and written information being provided by Defendants to the Plaintiffs was true and correct, including all information about the puppies' origins and health.
- 206. In providing its services to Plaintiffs and the Class Members, Defendants owed a duty to exercise reasonable care to make full, fair, and adequate disclosure in connection with the characteristics, uses, benefits, standards, quality, attributes, and nature of the dogs it sold. This duty included, among other things, taking reasonable measures to protect the rights of Class Members in compliance with applicable law, including, but not limited to, procedures and policies to supervise, restrict, limit, and determine the accuracy and truthfulness of their representations, materials, and advertising in connection with their goods and services.
- 207. At the time the Defendants made the misrepresentations herein alleged, Defendants had no reasonable grounds for believing the representations to be true, thereby breaching their duty owed to Plaintiffs.
- 208. The negligent misrepresentations and omissions made by Defendants, upon which Plaintiffs and Class Members reasonably, justifiably, and detrimentally relied, were intended to induce and influence, and actually induced and influenced, Plaintiffs and Class Members to purchase Defendant's dogs. Plaintiffs and Class Members would not have purchased their dogs, or would not have purchased the dogs on the same terms, if the true facts had been known. The

negligent actions and misrepresentations of Defendants caused actual and tangible concrete injury and harm to Plaintiffs and Class Members who are entitled to damages and other legal and equitable relief as a result.

- 209. Defendant's negligence was a substantial factor in causing harm to Plaintiffs and Class Members.
- 210. As a proximate result of Defendants' misrepresentations, Plaintiffs were induced to buy sick puppies, spending an amount to be determined at trial on medical care for these puppies, and the emotional distress of having purchased puppies from Defendants.
- 211. Neither Plaintiffs nor other Class Members contributed to the unlawful conduct set forth herein, nor did they contribute to Defendant's making of its misrepresentation.
- 212. Plaintiffs and the Class Members request the Court enter an order awarding Plaintiffs and the Class Members mandatory restitution, rescission, and/or damages, and that they are entitled to recover their reasonable attorneys' fees. Plaintiffs and the Class Members therefore also seek pre-and-post-judgment interest and attorneys' fees and costs as allowed by statute, including without limitation those recoverable under Cal. Code Civ. Proc. § 1021.5, any common law "private attorney general" equitable doctrine, any "common fund" doctrine, any "substantial benefit" doctrine, and/or any equitable principles of contribution and/or other methods of awarding attorneys' fees and costs.

### **SIXTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

### **Unjust Enrichment**

### (Against All Defendants)

- 213. Plaintiffs reallege and incorporate by reference the allegations set forth in the preceding paragraphs of this Complaint.
- 214. "Under California law, the elements of unjust enrichment are: (a) receipt of a benefit; and (b) unjust retention of the benefit at the expense of another." *Valencia v. Volkswagen Grp. of Am. Inc.*, No. 15-CV-00887-HSG, 2015 WL 4747533, at \*8 (N.D. Cal. Aug. 11, 2015).

See also, Munoz v. MacMillan, 195 Cal. App. 4th 648, 661 (2011) ("Common law principles of restitution require a party to return a benefit when the retention of such benefit would unjustly enrich the recipient; a typical cause of action involving such remedy is 'quasi-contract.").

- 215. "When a plaintiff alleges unjust enrichment, a court may construe the cause of action as a quasi-contract claim seeking restitution." *Astiana v. Hain Celestial Grp., Inc.*, 783 F.3d 753, 762 (9th Cir. 2015). "Whether termed unjust enrichment, quasi-contract, or quantum meruit, the equitable remedy of restitution when unjust enrichment has occurred "is an obligation (not a true contract [citation]) created by the law without regard to the intention of the parties, and is designed to restore the aggrieved party to her or her former position by return of the thing or its equivalent in money." *F.D.I.C. v. Dintino*, 167 Cal. App. 4th 333, 346 (2008).
- 216. Plaintiffs and Class Members conferred non-gratuitous benefits upon Defendants by purchasing one or more dogs from Defendants that were displayed for sale in violation of Health and Safety Code § 122354.5, thereby significantly and materially increasing Defendants' revenues, profit margins, and profits, and unjustly enriching Defendants at the expense of and to the detriment of Plaintiffs and the Class Members.
- 217. Plaintiffs and the Class allege that Defendants owes money to them for the unlawful or deceptive conduct described herein.
- 218. At a minimum, Defendants were unjustly enriched by selling dogs in violation of Health and Safety Code § 122354.5.
- 219. Defendants are therefore liable to Plaintiffs and the Class in the amount of unjust enrichment or money had and received to be determined at trial.
- 220. Defendants' retention of any benefit collected directly and indirectly from Plaintiffs' and Class Member's payments to Defendants violates principles of justice, equity, and good conscience. As a result, Defendants have been unjustly enriched.
- 221. Plaintiffs and Class Members are entitled to recover from Defendants all amounts that Defendants has wrongfully and improperly obtained, and Defendants should be required to disgorge to Plaintiffs and Class Members the benefits they have unjustly obtained.

- 222. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' unlawful practices and the retention of Plaintiffs' and the Class Members' payments, Plaintiffs and Class Members have suffered concrete harm and injury, including, but not limited to, monetary loss in connection with their payments made to Defendants.
- 223. Defendants' retention of the non-gratuitous benefits conferred on them by Plaintiffs and Class Members would be unjust and inequitable. Plaintiffs and Class Members are entitled to seek disgorgement and restitution of wrongful profits, revenue, and benefits conferred upon Defendants in a manner established by this Court.
- 224. Plaintiffs and the Class Members request the Court enter an order awarding Plaintiffs and the Class Members restitution, rescission, and/or damages, and that they are entitled to recover their reasonable attorneys' fees.
- 225. Upon information and belief, the amount in which Defendants unjustly enriched themselves is the sum of no less than \$1,000,000.
- 226. It would be unequitable and unjust for Defendants to be permitted to retain any of the referral fee resulting from their wrongful, fraudulent, and inequitable conduct.
- 227. Plaintiffs and the Class Members therefore also seek pre-judgment and post-judgment interest and attorneys' fees and costs as allowed by statute, including without limitation those recoverable under Cal. Code Civ. Proc. § 1021.5, any common law "private attorney general" equitable doctrine, any "common fund" doctrine, any "substantial benefit" doctrine, and/or any equitable principles of contribution and/or other methods of awarding attorneys' fees and costs.

### PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs, on behalf of themselves, and all others similarly situated, and for the members of the general public as private attorney generals under California Business and Professions Code § 17204, pray for relief, jointly and severally, pursuant to each cause of action set forth in this Complaint as follows against Defendants, and each of them:

1. For an order certifying that the action may be maintained as a class action;

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

- 2. For an order that Plaintiffs be appointed as the representatives of the Class;
- 3. For an order that Plaintiffs' attorneys be appointed Class Counsel;
- 4. For an order requiring Defendants to bear the cost of class notice(s);
- 5. For an order awarding declaratory and other equitable relief, including rescission, as necessary to protect the interests of Plaintiffs and the Class Members;
- 6. For an order declaring Defendants' conduct unlawful;
- 7. For an order of equitable relief in the form of restitution of all monies wrongfully obtained as a result of practices and conduct described in this Complaint;
- 8. For an order granting permanent injunctive relief enjoining the Defendants, its successors, agents, representatives, employees, and any party acting in concert with Defendants, from continuing to engage in unlawful, unfair and fraudulent business practices and deceptive representations and advertising as described in this Complaint;
- 9. For an order compelling Defendants to conduct a corrective advertising campaign, including through public injunctive relief;
- 10. For an order compelling Defendants to recall and destroy all misleading and deceptive advertising materials, including through public injunctive relief;
- 11. For an order for actual damages, injunctive relief, restitution, and punitive damages pursuant to California Code of Civil Procedure § 1780;
- 12. For an order of equitable relief in the form of disgorgement of all ill-gotten gains flowing from practices and conduct described in this Complaint;
- 13. For an order requiring imposition of a constructive trust and/or disgorgement of Defendant' ill-gotten gains and to pay restitution to Plaintiffs and all members of the Class and to restore to Plaintiffs and members of the Class all funds acquired by means of any act or practice declared by this court to be an unlawful, fraudulent, or unfair business act or practice, in violation of laws, statutes or regulations, or constituting unfair competition, plus pre-and post-judgment interest thereon;
  - 14. For actual and punitive damages, in an amount to be proven at trial;

# EXHIBIT 1

(805) 774-

# Hey. My google number



Jul 11, 2020

Cool. Ok just text me on my regular number when you text and say like. Check google. Cause I don't always look herd

Here



But cool.

(805) 774- Jul 11, 2020

Сору



Jul 11, 2020

This puppy cute.



I've been texting people all day

· Jul 11, 2020

8 week old heeler pups in San Bernardino but \$350. They won't go lower

2:49



(805) 774-





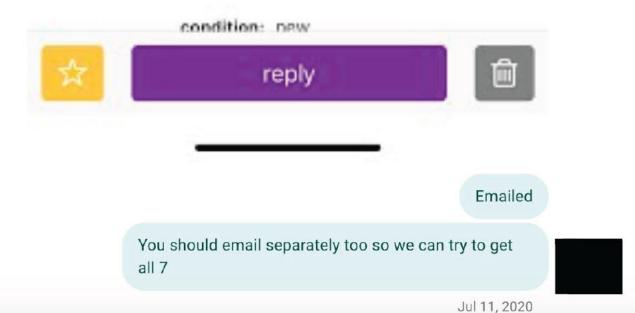
# Maltese Puppies

14 minutes ago · SAN BERNARDINO general for sale - by owner

\$350

7 super cute Maltese puppies ready for their forever homes. 8 weeks old, no shots yet.

5 girls and 2 boys.







# The Maltese worth it.

(805) 774-I • Jul 11, 2020

## Maybe spinner and Isabelle could pick up?

Jul 11, 2020



# Especially if we get 7

(805) 774- • Jul 11, 2020

Yeah 100%

I'll let you know what they say

Jul 11, 2020





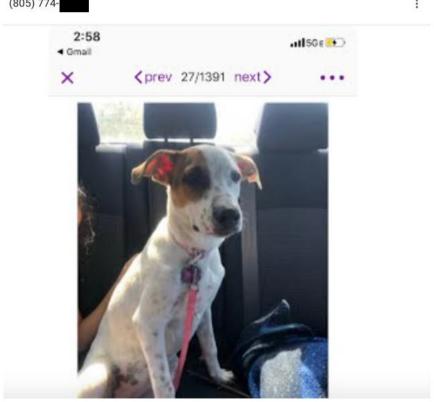
If he sold some already.

(805) 774- Jul 11, 2020

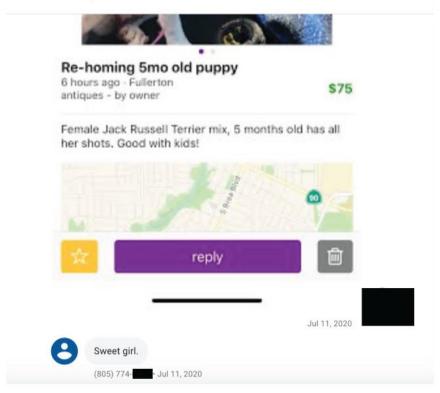
I said 4 - I didn't wanna shoot too high cause I don't want them to get suspicious



(805) 774-:



(805) 774-



## I emailed

•

Waiting on maltese people. They deleted the post from CL already so idk





# Oh weird

(805) 774- Jul 11, 2020

She waited an hour and a half to tell me they're all sold. Fucking idiot.







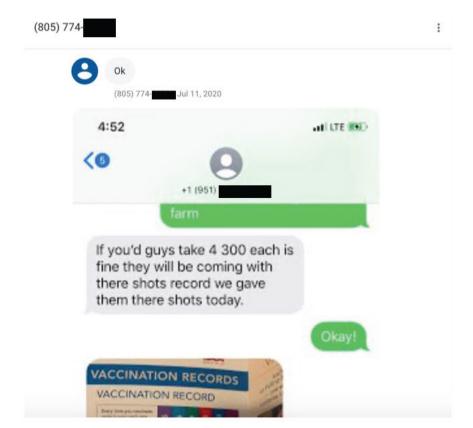
Maybe get the blue heelers If any left.

(805) 774- • Jul 11, 2020

Okay

I asked 300

Jul 11, 2020



## Proof of first vax



Jul 11, 2020



I'm on the phone with my friend. She's having an issue

(805) 774- Jul 11, 2020

Getting address now

No worries

I'll set it up. Do you have 1200 for Isabelle?

Jul 11, 2020

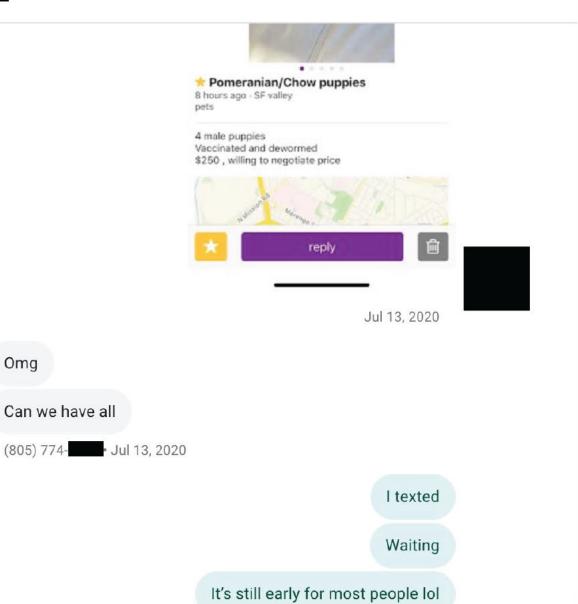




(805) 774-0 ...

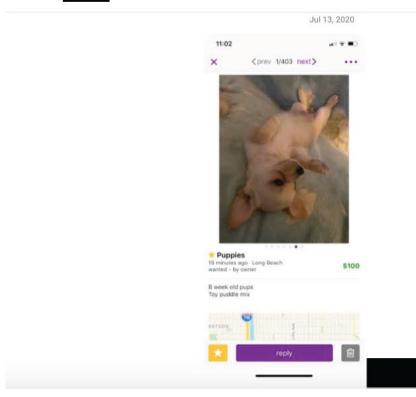
Omg

Can we have all



Jul 13, 2020

(805) 774-



Jul 14, 2020

Omg?

So cute



Puddle

(805) 774- Jul 14, 2020

Lol again with the puddle

Waiting for response

Jul 14, 2020

200 each. White pit mixes. Moreno Valley

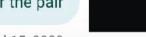
3 puppies

Males



Pit guy isnt answering

But 2 sheps in north Hollywood. \$550 for the pair



Jul 15, 2020

Jul 15, 2020



Ok. Will he do \$500? I need to get cash to store. Which is impossible because I'm stuck at camp. Ugh fml

(805) 774- Jul 15, 2020

No. I asked. He said 550

Jul 15, 2020



Ok can you grab sheps

(805) 774- • Jul 15, 2020

I'm on my way to the doctor

I have an ear infection or a sinus infection

I've had a migraine for 3 days

Shep person can't meet til tomorrow at 5. Asked for a deposit. So no go.

Jul 15, 2020

Need you to try and get these puppies. \$100 each.





#### r nave an ear infection or a sinus infection

I've had a migraine for 3 days

Shep person can't meet til tomorrow at 5. Asked for a deposit. So no go.



Need you to try and get these puppies. \$100 each.

951

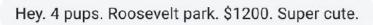


He stopped texting me.

(805) 774- Jul 16, 2020

Kk

Jul 16, 2020

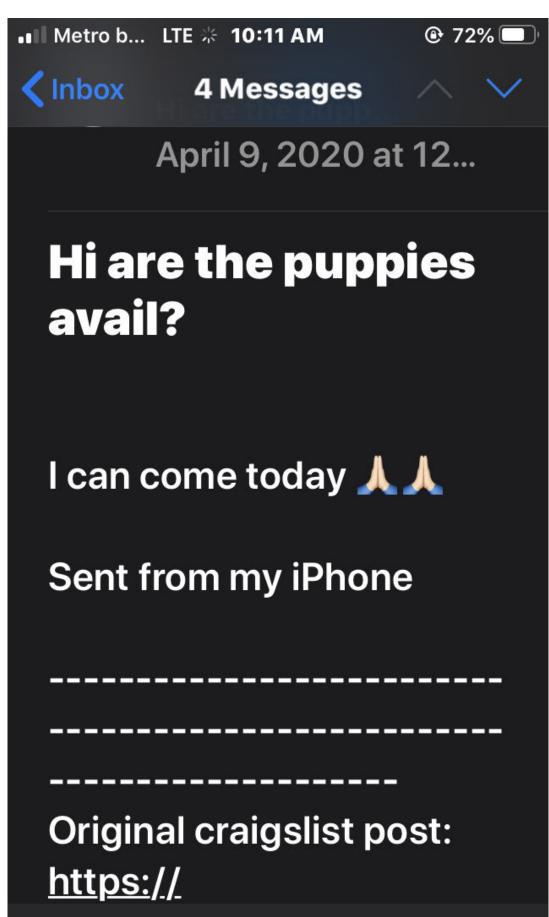


Golden mixes



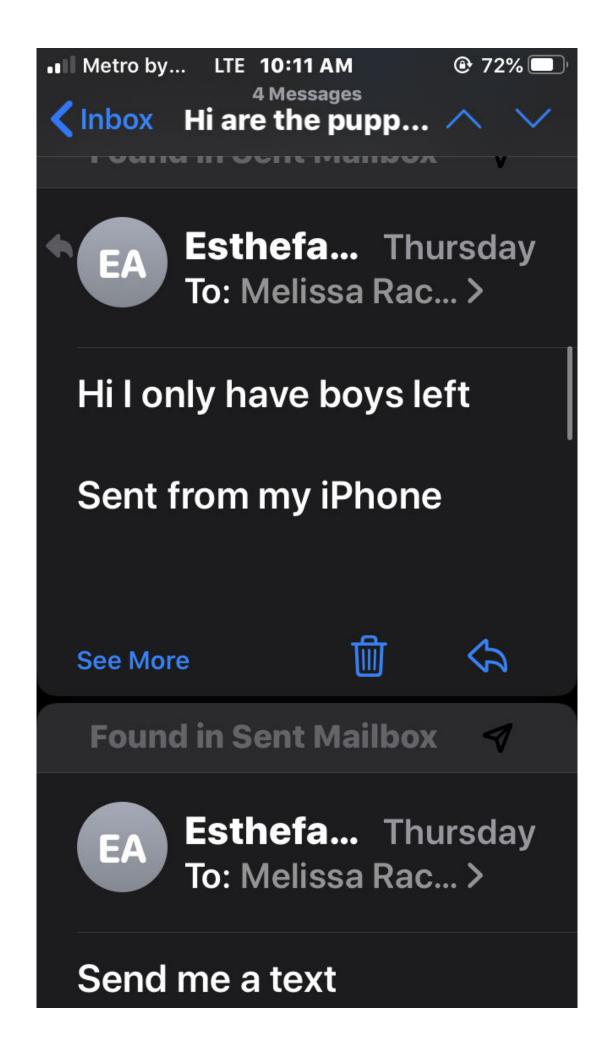
Trying to see if Isabelle will go.

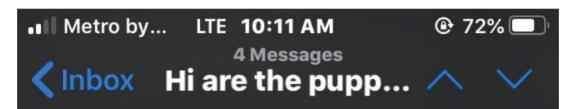
(805) 774- · Jul 16, 2020













Melissa... Thursday To: ab24f43c8... >

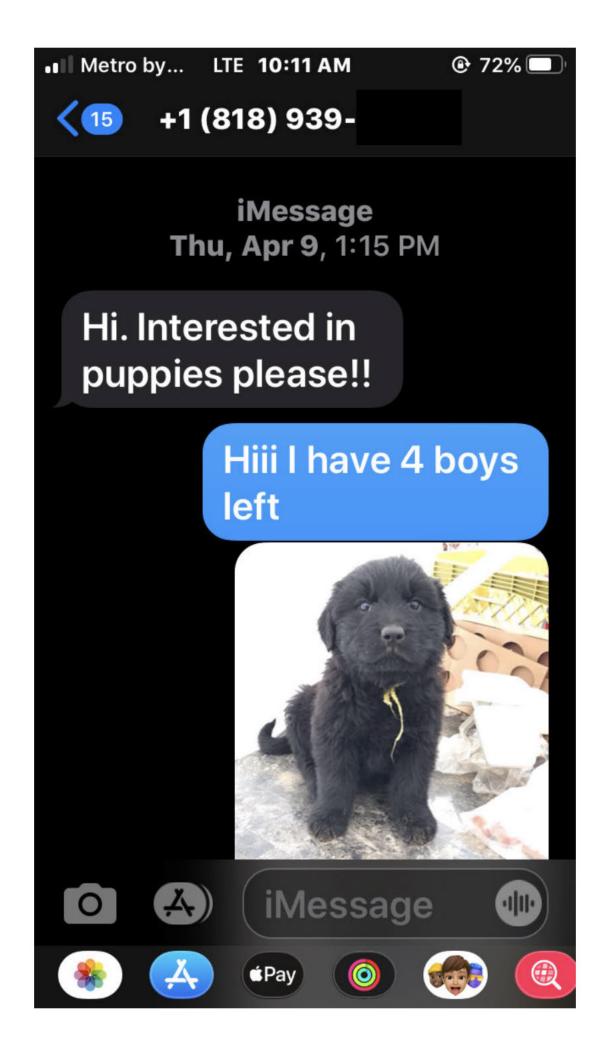
I don't care. We are dying for puppies. Everyone keeps selling them before I get there. Please call or text 818-939-

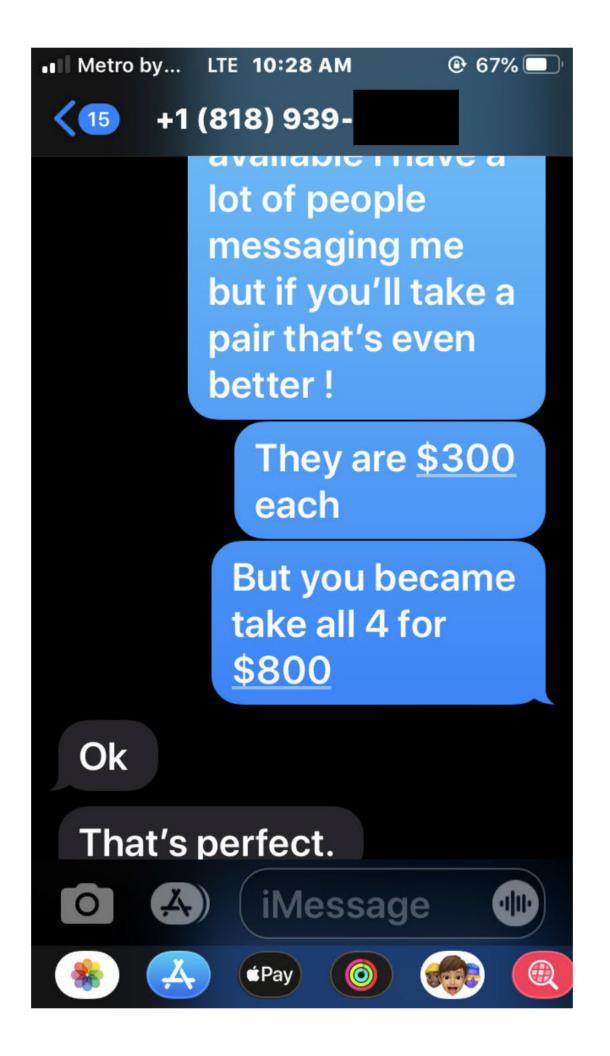
Sent from my iPhone

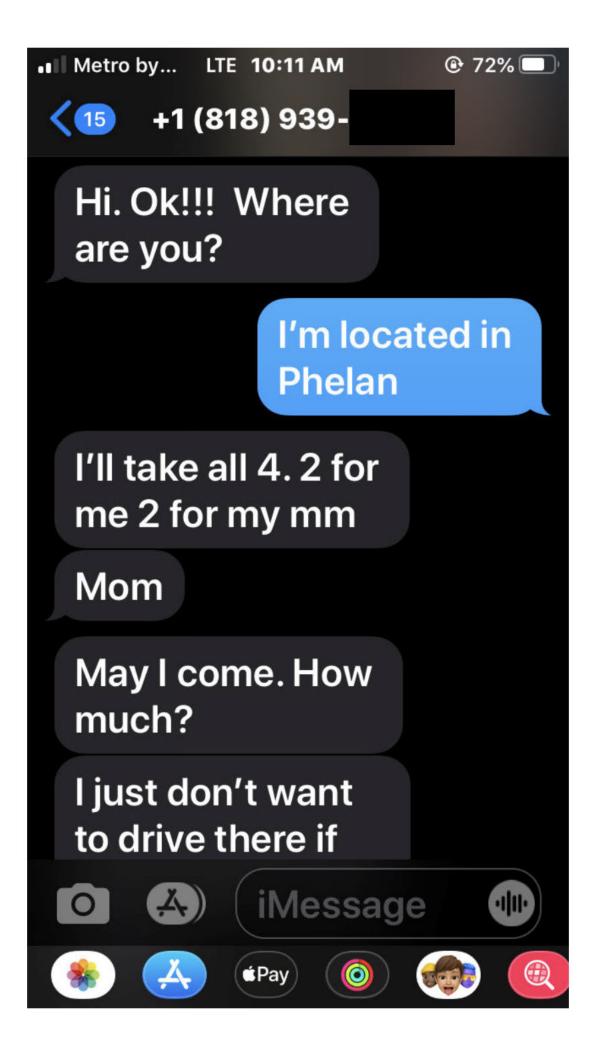
On Apr 9, 2020, at 1:13 PM, craigslist <u>710576</u>

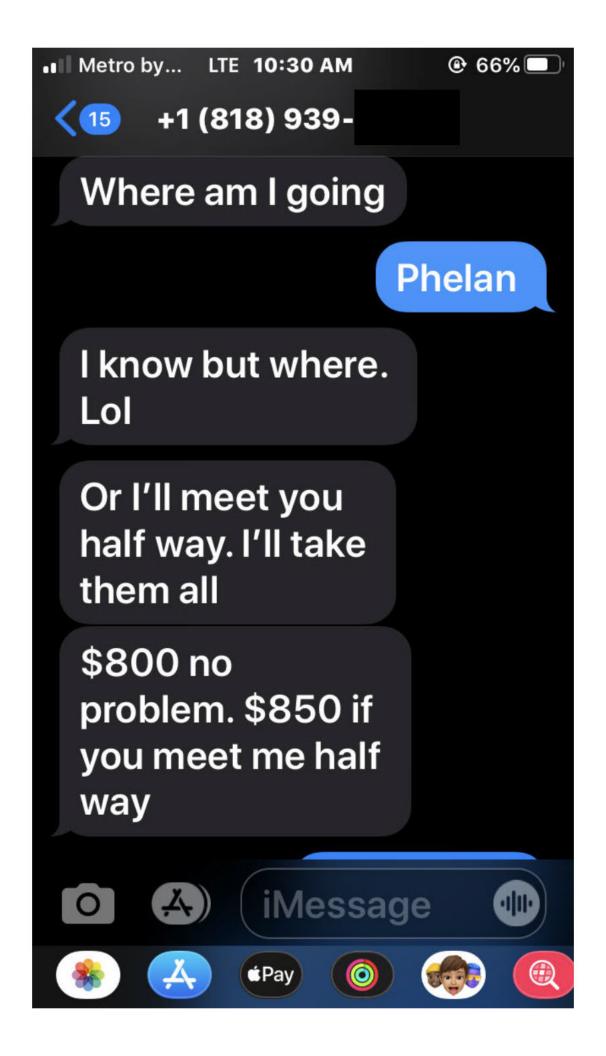


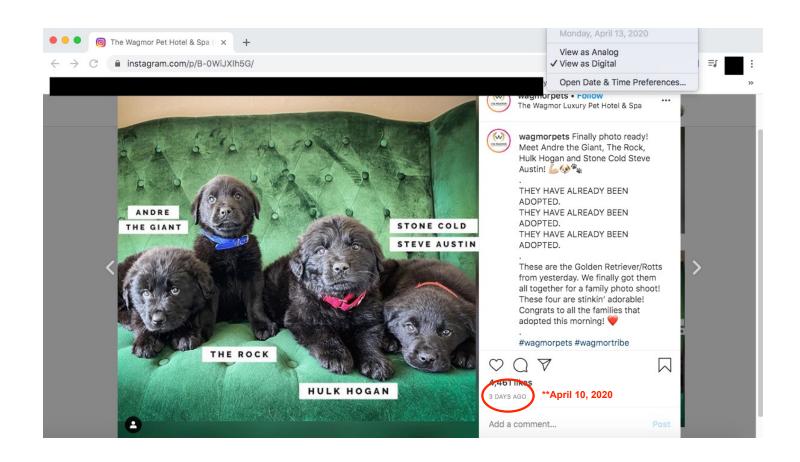


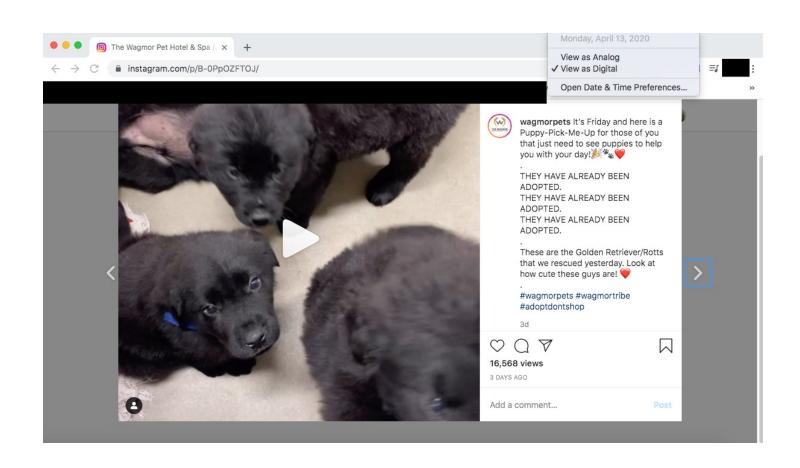


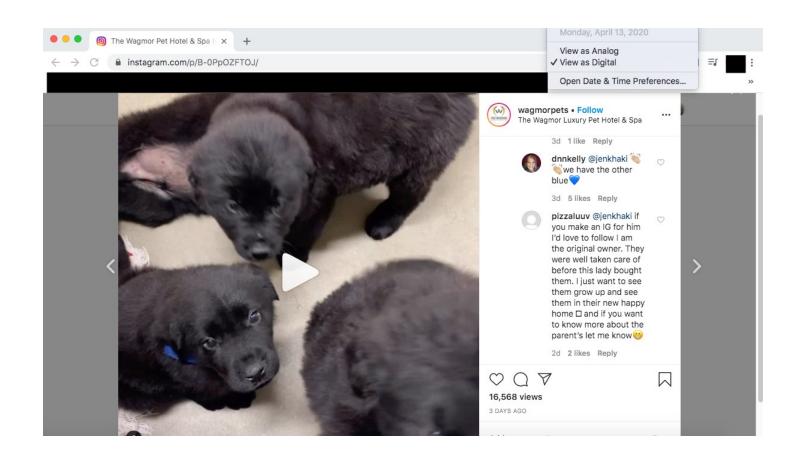


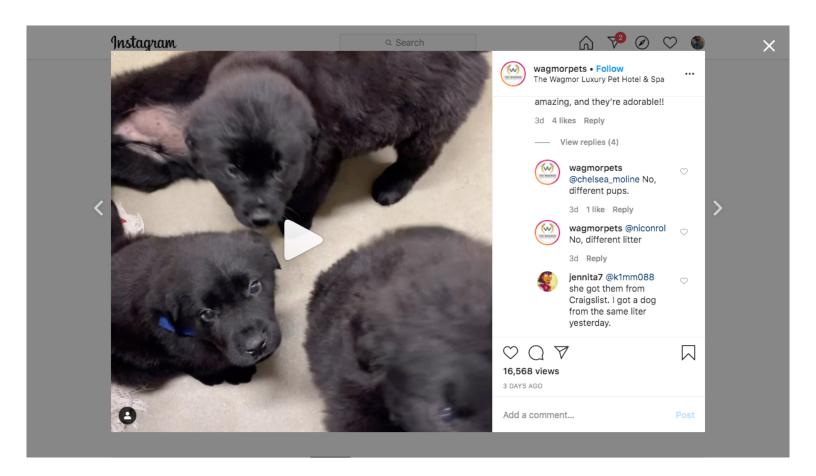












# EXHIBIT 3

# **DECLARATION OF**

# , DECLARE:

- 1. On or about April 18, 2022, I purchased a puppy for \$850. The dog was named "Wilma" who was diagnosed with distemper.
- At the time I purchased my puppy, I was residing in Pasadena, California, where I still currently reside.
- 3. I purchased my puppy from Defendants at their retail store located at: 11939 Ventura Blvd, Studio City, California 91604.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of California that the foregoing is true and correct, and that this declaration was executed on

12/15/2022



# EXHIBIT 4

## **DECLARATION OF**

# , DECLARE:

- 1. On or about April 24, 2022, I purchased a puppy for \$850 plus a \$15 tip. The dog was named "Heron" later named "Kali", who was diagnosed with distemper.
- 2. At the time I purchased my puppy, I was in Los Angeles, California where I also reside.
- 3. I purchased my puppy from Defendants at their retail store located at: 11939 Ventura Blvd, Studio City, California 91604.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of California that the foregoing is true and correct, and that this declaration was executed on 12/29/2022

By:\_\_\_\_

# EXHIBIT 5

## **DECLARATION OF**

# , DECLARE:

- On or about April 24, 2022, I purchased a puppy for \$850 plus a \$15 tip. The dog was named "Heron" later named "Kali", who was diagnosed with distemper.
- 2. At the time I purchased my puppy, I was in Los Angeles, California where I also reside.
- 3. I purchased my puppy from Defendants at their retail store located at: 11939 Ventura Blvd, Studio City, California 91604.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of California that the foregoing is true and correct, and that this declaration was executed on 12/20/2022

