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6 7 8	Attorneys for Plaintiff DANIELLE MICEL	Sy. odor cara, Deputy
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11 12 13	SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA  COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES	
14 15 16	DANIELLE MICELI, individually and on behalf of herself and all others similarly situated,	Case No.  BC 5 7 8 2 2 4  Assigned to: Dept.:
17	Plaintiff, v.	CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT
18 19	INTERNATIONAL COFFEE & TEA, LLC, a Delaware limited liability company,	
20	Defendants.	
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25 26		

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Plaintiff Danielle Miceli (herein "Plaintiff"), individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated, makes the following allegations and claims against International Coffee & Tea, LLC ("Coffee Bean" or "Defendant"), upon personal knowledge, investigation of counsel, and on information and belief as follows:

#### **NATURE OF THE ACTION**

- 1. This class action arises from Defendant's acquisition and use of consumer and/or investigative consumer reports (referred to collectively as "background reports") to conduct background checks on Plaintiff and other prospective, current and former employees.
- 2. Defendant routinely obtained and used information from background reports in connection with its hiring processes without complying with state and federal mandates for doing so.
- 3. Plaintiff, individually and on behalf of others similarly situated, seeks compensatory and punitive damages due to Defendant's systematic and willful violation of, *inter alia*, the Fair Credit Reporting Act ("FCRA"), 15 U.S.C. §§ 1681 *et seq.*, the Investigative Consumer Reporting Agencies Act ("ICRAA"), Cal. Civ. Code §§ 1786 *et seq.*, and the Investigative Consumer Reporting Agencies Act ("ICRAA"), Cal. Civ. Code §§ 1786 *et seq.*,
- 4. The procurement of credit and background reports for employment purposes is subject to strict disclosure requirements under federal law pursuant to the FCRA and under California law pursuant to the CCRAA and ICRAA. Among other things, an employer may not procure a credit or background report concerning a job applicant unless a "clear and conspicuous" disclosure is made in a stand-alone document that "consists solely of the disclosure" informing the applicant that a report may be obtained for employment purposes. This required disclosure document is sometimes referred to as a "preauthorization" form.
- 5. Defendant does not have a preauthorization form in connection with its background reports.
- 6. As further alleged herein, Defendant's violations occurred because

  Defendant has failed to properly apprise itself of the statutory mandates before seeking and acquiring credit and background reports; violated the express and unambiguous provisions of the

relevant statutes; and/or failed to implement reasonable procedures to assure compliance with statutory mandates.

- 7. As a result of Defendant's wrongful acts and omissions, Plaintiff and other putative class members have been injured, including, without limitation, having their privacy and statutory rights invaded in violation of the FCRA, CCRAA and ICRAA.
- 8. Plaintiff seeks on behalf of herself and putative class members, statutory, actual and/or compensatory damages, punitive damages, and equitable relief, including costs and expenses of litigation including attorney's fees, and appropriate injunctive relief requiring Defendant to comply with its legal obligations, as well as additional and further relief that may be appropriate.

#### JURISIDICTION AND VENUE

- 9. This is a class action, pursuant to California Code of Civil Procedure § 382. The monetary damages and restitution sought by Plaintiff exceed the minimal jurisdiction limits of the Superior Court and will be established according to proof at trial.
- 10. This Court has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to California Constitution, Article VI, § 10, which grants the Superior Court original jurisdiction in all causes other than those given by statute to other courts.
- 11. This Court has jurisdiction over Defendant because, upon information and belief, it is a citizen of California, has sufficient minimum contacts in California or otherwise intentionally avails itself of the California market so as to render the exercise of jurisdiction over it by the California courts consistent with traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice.
- 12. Venue is proper in this district pursuant to California Code of Civil Procedure §§ 395(a) and 395.5 and 15 U.S.C. Section 1681p as this is a court of competent jurisdiction where Defendant resides and a substantial part of the events or omissions giving rise to the Complaint occurred.

#### **PARTIES**

- 13. Plaintiff Danielle Miceli is a resident of Burbank, California.
- 14. Defendant Coffee Bean is a Delaware limited liability company with its headquarters and principal place of business located at 1945 South La Cienega Boulevard, Los Angeles, California 90034. It operates around 217 retail locations in California.

## **FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS**

- 15. Plaintiff was employed with Coffee Bean from approximately July, 2010 to June 8, 2014.
- 16. In or around October, 2011, Plaintiff was promoted from Barista to Shift Supervisor.
- 17. Upon information and belief, Defendant procured, or caused to be procured, a background report for employment purposes in connection with Plaintiff's application for Shift Supervisor.
- 18. It is unlawful to procure or cause to be procured, a consumer report, 1 consumer credit report<sup>2</sup> or investigative consumer report<sup>3</sup> for employment purposes, unless a disclosure is made to the consumer in a document that consists solely of the disclosure and the consumer has

- <sup>2</sup> Section 1785.3(c) of the CCRAA defines "consumer credit report" as any written, oral, or other communication of any information by a consumer credit reporting agency bearing on a consumer's credit worthiness, credit standing, or credit capacity, which is used or is expected to be used, or collected in whole or in part, for the purpose of serving as a factor in establishing the consumer's eligibility for employment purposes.
- Section 1681a(e) of the FCRA defines "investigative consumer report" as "a consumer report or portion thereof in which information on a consumer's character, general reputation, personal characteristics, or mode of living is obtained through personal interviews with neighbors, friends, or associates of the consumer reported on or with others with whom he is acquainted or who may have knowledge concerning any such items of information." Section 1786.2(c) of the ICRAA defines "investigative consumer report" as "a consumer report in which information on a consumer's character, general reputation, personal characteristics, or mode of living is obtained through any means."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Section 1681a(d)(1) of the FCRA defines "consumer report" as any oral, or other communication of any information by a consumer reporting agency bearing on a consumer's credit worthiness, credit standing, credit capacity, character, general reputation, personal characteristics, or mode of living which is used or expected to be used or collected in whole or in part for the purpose of serving as factor in establishing the consumer's eligibility for employment purposes.

authorized, in writing, the procurement of the report. 15 U.S.C. § 1681b(b)(2)(A)(i)-(ii); Cal. Civ. Code §1785.20.5(a); Cal. Civ. Code § 1786.16(a)(2)(B).

19. Upon information and belief, based on Defendant's corporate-wide standard procedures, Defendant failed to provide a disclosure and/or obtain authorization, in writing, for the procurement of Plaintiff's background report for employment purposes in violation of the FCRA, CCRAA and ICRAA.

#### **CLASS ACTION ALLEGATIONS**

- 20. Plaintiff brings this lawsuit as a class action on behalf of herself and all others similarly situated as members of the proposed Class pursuant to California Code of Civil Procedures § 382 and Federal Rules of Civil Procedure 23(a) and (b)(3) and/or (b)(2). This action satisfies the numerosity, commonality, typicality, adequacy, predominance, and superiority requirements of those provisions.
  - 21. Plaintiff's proposed class consists of and is defined as:

All persons residing in the United States who applied for an employment position with Defendant within the two years immediately preceding the filing of this lawsuit ("Class").

22. Plaintiff's proposed California subclass consists of and is defined as follows:

All persons residing in California, who applied for an employment position with Defendant within the two years immediately preceding the filing of this lawsuit ("CCRAA/ICRAA Subclass").

- 23. Members of the Class and CCRAA/ ICRAA Subclass, as described above, will be referred to as "class members." Plaintiff reserves the right to amend the above Class and CCRAA/ ICRAA Subclass and to add additional subclasses as appropriate based on investigation, discovery, and the specific theories of liability.
- Numerosity: The class members are so numerous that their joinder would be unfeasible and impractical. The membership of the Class and CCRAA/ICRAA Subclass is unknown to Plaintiff at this time; however, the Class is estimated to be greater than one hundred (100) individuals and the identity of such membership is readily ascertainable by inspection of

Defendant's employment and/or hiring records. Consequently, it is reasonable to presume that the members of the Class are so numerous that joinder of all members is impracticable. The disposition of their claims in a class action will provide substantial benefits to the parties and the Court.

- 25. <u>Commonality:</u> There are common questions of law and fact as to class members that predominate over questions affecting only individual members, including:
- a. Whether it is Defendant's standard procedure to provide a stand-alone written disclosure to applicants and employees before obtaining a credit or background report in compliance with the statutory mandates;
- b. Whether it is Defendant's standard procedure to provide a written copy of the FCRA Summary of Rights in compliance with the statutory mandates;
- c. Whether it is Defendant's standard procedure to provide applicants and employees a reasonable opportunity to obtain copies of their credit or background report in compliance with the statutory mandates;
- d. Whether it is Defendant's standard procedure to provide applicants and employees with written copies of their credit or background in a timely manner in compliance with the statutory mandates;
- e. Whether Defendant's failures to comply with the FCRA, CCRAA or ICRAA were willful or grossly negligent; and
- f. The appropriate amount of statutory damages, attorneys' fees, and costs resulting from Defendant's violations of federal and California law.
- 26. <u>Typicality:</u> Plaintiff is qualified to, and will, fairly and adequately protect the interests of each class member with whom she is similarly situated, and Plaintiff's claims (or defenses, if any) are typical of all class members' as demonstrated herein.
- 27. Adequacy: Plaintiff is qualified to, and will, fairly and adequately protect the interests of each class member with whom she is similarly situated, as demonstrated herein. Plaintiff acknowledges that she has an obligation to make known to the Court any relationship, conflicts, or differences with any class member. Plaintiff's attorneys, the proposed class

counsel, are versed in the rules governing class action discovery, certification, and settlement. Plaintiff has incurred, and throughout the duration of this action, will continue to incur costs and attorneys' fees that have been, are and will be necessarily expended for the prosecution of this action for the substantial benefit of each class member.

- 28. <u>Predominance:</u> Questions of law or fact common to the class members predominate over any questions affecting only individual members of the Class. The elements of the legal claims brought by Plaintiff and the class members are capable of proof at trial through evidence that is common to the class rather than individual to its members.
- 29. Superiority: Plaintiff and the class members have all suffered and will continue to suffer harm and damages as a result of Defendant's unlawful and wrongful conduct. A class action is superior to other available methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of the controversy. Absent a class action, class members would likely find the cost of litigating their claims prohibitively high and would therefore have no effective remedy at law. Because of the relatively small size of the individual class members' claims, it is likely that only a few class members could afford to seek legal redress for Defendant's misconduct. Absent a class action, class members will continue to incur harm and damages and Defendant's misconduct will continue without a remedy. Class treatment of common questions of law and fact will also be a superior method to multiple individual actions or piecemeal litigation in that class treatment will conserve the resources of the courts and the litigants and will promote consistency and efficiency of adjudication.
  - 30. The Class may also be certified because:
- a. The prosecution of separate actions by individual class members would create a risk of inconsistent or varying adjudication with respect to individual class members, which would establish incompatible standards of conduct for Defendant;
- b. The prosecution of separate actions by individual class members would create a risk of adjudications with respect to them that would, as a practical matter, be dispositive of the interests of other class members not parties to the adjudications, or substantially impair or impede their ability to protect their interests; and

- (1) it is *clearly and accurately disclosed* to the consumer that an investigative consumer report including information as to his character, general reputation, personal characteristics, and mode of living, whichever are applicable, may be made, and such disclosure
- (A) is made in a writing mailed, or otherwise delivered, to the consumer, not later than three days after the date on which the report was first requested, and
- (B) includes a statement informing the consumer of his right to request the additional disclosures provided for under subsection (b) of this section and the written summary of the rights of the consumer prepared pursuant to section 1681g(c) of this title; (Emphasis added)
- 36. As discussed more fully above, Defendant violated Section 1681b(b)(2)(A) of the FCRA by failing to provide Plaintiff and class members with a clear and conspicuous written disclosure, before a consumer report was procured or caused to be procured, in a document that consists solely of the disclosure.
- 37. Upon information and belief, Defendant has a policy and practice of failing to provide adequate written disclosures to applicants and employees, before procuring consumer reports or causing consumer reports to be procured. Pursuant to that policy and practice, Defendant procured consumer reports or caused consumer reports to be procured for Plaintiff and class members without first providing a written disclosure in compliance with Section 1681b(b)(2)(A) of the FCRA.
- 38. Defendant violated section 1681d(a)(1) of the FCRA by failing to clearly and accurately disclose, in writing, that an investigative consumer report may be made; failing to inform Plaintiff and class members of their right to request the additional disclosures provided for under section 1681d(b); and failing to provide a written summary of Plaintiff's and class members' rights under section 1681g(c) as part of the disclosure.
- 39. Upon information and belief, Defendant has a policy and practice of procuring investigative consumer reports or causing investigative consumer reports to be procured for applicants and employees without providing a written summary of their rights under the FCRA at the same time as the disclosure explaining that an investigative consumer report may be made.

- 40. Pursuant to that policy and practice, Defendant procured investigative consumer reports or caused investigative consumer reports to be procured for Plaintiff and class members, without providing a timely written summary of their rights under the FCRA.
- 41. Accordingly, Defendant willfully violated and continues to violate the FCRA including, but not limited to, Sections 1681b(b)(2)(A) and 1681d(a). Defendant's willful conduct is reflected by, among other things, the facts set forth above.
- 42. As a result of Defendant's illegal procurement of credit and background reports by way of its inadequate disclosures, as set forth above, Plaintiff and the class members have been injured by, including, but not limited to, having their privacy and statutory rights invaded in violation of the FCRA.
- 43. Plaintiff, on behalf of herself and all class members, seek all available remedies pursuant to 15 U.S.C. Section 1681n, including statutory damages and/or actual damages, punitive damages, injunctive and equitable relief, and attorneys' fees and costs.
- 44. In the alternative to Plaintiff's allegations that these violations were willful, Plaintiff alleges that the violations were negligent and seeks the appropriate remedy, if any, under 15 U.S.C. Section 1681o.

### SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION

# Violation of the Consumer Credit Reporting Agencies Act Section 1785.20.5(a).

- 45. Plaintiff hereby incorporates by reference the allegations contained in this Complaint.
  - 46. Defendant is a "person" as defined by Cal. Civ. Code Section 1785.3(j).
- 47. Plaintiff and class members are consumers within the meaning of Cal. Civ. Code Section 1785.3(b), because they are "natural individuals."
- 48. Section 1785.3(c) of the CCRAA defines "consumer credit report" as any written, oral, or other communication of any information by a consumer credit reporting agency bearing on a consumer's credit worthiness, credit standing, or credit capacity, which is used or is expected to be used, or collected in whole or in part, for the purpose of serving as a factor in establishing the consumer's eligibility for employment purposes.

- 49. Section 1785.3(d) of the CCRAA defines "consumer credit reporting agency" as "any person who, for monetary fees, dues, or on a cooperative nonprofit basis, regularly engages in whole or in part in the business of assembling or evaluating consumer credit information or other information on consumers for the purpose of furnishing consumer credit reports to third parties, but does not include any governmental agency whose records are maintained primarily for traffic safety, law enforcement, or licensing purposes."
- 50. Section 1785.3(f) of the CCRAA defines "employment purposes," when used in connection with a consumer credit report, as "a report used for the purpose of evaluating a consumer for employment, promotion, reassignment, or retention as an employee."
- 51. Section 1785.20.5(a) of the CCRAA requires that prior to requesting a consumer credit report for employment purposes, the user of the report shall provide written notice that (1) identifies the specific basis under subdivision (a) of Section 1024.5 of the Labor Code for use of the report; (2) informs the person of the source of the report; and (3) contains a box that the person may check off to receive a copy of the credit report. The employer must provide the report to the applicant or employee contemporaneously and at no charge.
- 52. At all relevant times herein, Defendant willfully violated Section 1785.20.5(a) of the CCRAA as to Plaintiff and class members because it failed to provide written notice to Plaintiff and class members prior to requesting a consumer credit report and failed to provide the report to the applicant or employee contemporaneously and at no charge.
- 53. On information and belief and based upon the facts likely to have evidentiary support after a reasonable opportunity for further investigation and discovery, Defendant had and has a policy and practice of failing to provide notice prior to requesting a consumer credit report and failing to provide the report to the applicant or employee contemporaneously and at no charge.
- 54. Pursuant to that policy and practice, Defendant willfully violated Section 1785.20.5(a) of the CCRAA as to Plaintiff and class members.
- 55. Accordingly, Defendant willfully violated and continues to violate the CCRAA including, but not limited to Section 1785.20.5(a), and has violated the privacy rights of Plaintiff

and class members. Defendant's willful conduct is reflected by, among other things, the facts set forth above.

- 56. As a result of Defendant's willful conduct as set forth above, Plaintiff and class members have been injured including, but not limited to, having their privacy and statutory rights invaded in violation of the CCRAA.
- 57. Plaintiff, on behalf of herself and all class members, seeks all available remedies pursuant to Cal. Civ. Code Sections 1785.31 including statutory damages and/or actual damages, punitive damages, injunctive and equitable relief, and attorneys' fees and costs.
- 58. In the alternative to Plaintiff's allegation that these violations were willful, Plaintiff alleges that the violations were negligent and seeks the appropriate remedy, if any, under Cal. Civ. Code Section 1785.31.

#### **THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION**

# Violation of the Investigative Consumer Reporting Agencies Act Section 1786.16(b).

- 59. Plaintiff hereby incorporates by reference the allegations contained in this Complaint.
  - 60. Defendant is a "person" as defined by Cal. Civ. Code Section 1786.2(a).
- 61. Plaintiff and class members are consumers within the meaning Cal. Civ. Code Section 1786.2(b), because they are natural individuals who have made application to a "person" for employment purposes.
- 62. Section 1786.2(c) of the ICRAA defines "investigative consumer report" as "a consumer report in which information on a consumer's character, general reputation, personal characteristics, or mode of living is obtained through any means."
- 63. Section 1786.2(d) of the ICRAA defines "investigative consumer reporting agency" as "any person who, for monetary fees or dues, engages in whole or in part in the practice of collecting, assembling, evaluating, compiling, reporting, transmitting, transferring, or communicating information concerning consumers for the purposes of furnishing investigative consumer reports to third parties, but does not include any governmental agency whose records

are maintained primarily for traffic safety, law enforcement, or licensing purposes, or any licensed insurance agent, insurance broker, or solicitor, insurer, or life insurance agent."

- 64. Section 1786.16(a)(2)(B) provides, in relevant part:
- (B) The person procuring or causing the report to be made provides a clear and conspicuous disclosure in writing to the consumer at any time before the report is procured or caused to be made in a document that consists solely of the disclosure, that:
  - (i) An investigative consumer report may be obtained.
  - (ii) The permissible purpose of the report is identified.
- (iii) The disclosure may include information on the consumer's character, general reputation, personal characteristics, and mode of living.
- (iv) Identifies the name, address, and telephone number of the investigative consumer reporting agency conducting the investigation.
- (v) Notifies the consumer in writing of the nature and scope of the investigation requested, including a summary of the provisions of Section 1786.22.
- (vi) Notifies the consumer of the Internet Web site address of the investigative consumer reporting agency identified in clause (iv), number of the agency, where the consumer may find information about the investigative reporting agency's privacy practices . . . . (Emphasis added)
- 65. Defendant violated Section 1786.16(a)(2)(B) of the ICRAA by failing to provide a clear and conspicuous disclosure in writing to Plaintiff and Class Members before an investigative report was procured.
  - 66. Section 1786.16(b)(1) provides, in relevant part:
  - (b) Any person described in subdivision (d) of Section 1786.12 who requests an investigative consumer report, in accordance with subdivision (a) regarding that consumer, shall do the following:
  - (1) Provide the consumer a means by which the consumer may indicate on a written form, by means of a box to check, that the consumer wishes to receive a copy of any report that is prepared. If the consumer wishes to receive a copy of the report, the recipient of the report shall send a copy of the report to the consumer within three business days of the date that the report is provided to the recipient, who may contract with any other entity to send a copy to the consumer. The notice to request the report may be contained on either the disclosure form, as required by subdivision (a), or a separate consent form. The copy of the report shall contain the name, address, and telephone number of the person who issued the report and how to contact them.

- 67. Defendant violated Section 1786.16(b)(1) by failing to provide to Plaintiff and class members a written form, by means of a box to check, to indicate their desire to receive a copy of their investigative consumer report requested by Defendant.
- 68. Upon information and belief, Defendant had and has a policy and practice of procuring investigative consumer reports or causing investigative consumer reports to be procured for applicants and employees without providing them a way to indicate on a written form, by means of a box to check, that they wish to receive a copy of any report that is prepared. Pursuant to Defendant's policy and practice, Defendant procured investigative consumer reports or caused investigative consumer reports to be procured for Plaintiff and class members without providing them with the means required under Section 1786.16(b)(1) of the ICRAA to indicate that they would like to receive a copy of their report(s).
- 69. Accordingly, Defendant willfully violated and continues to violate the ICRAA including, but not limited to Sections 1786.16(a)(2)(B) and 1786.16(b)(1). Defendant's willful or grossly negligent conduct is reflected by, among other things, the facts set forth above.
- 70. As a result of Defendant's willful or grossly negligent failure to provide the required form and/or report(s) as set forth above, Plaintiff and class members have been injured including, but not limited to, having their privacy and statutory rights invaded in violation of the ICRAA.
- 71. Plaintiff, on behalf of herself and all class members, seeks all available remedies pursuant to Cal. Civ. Code Section 1786.50 including actual damages, punitive damages, injunctive and equitable relief, and attorneys' fees and costs.

#### RELIEF REQUESTED

Plaintiff, on behalf of herself and the class members, requests that the Court enter judgment against Defendant, via the following:

1. An order certifying the proposed Class and Subclass, designating Plaintiff as named representative of the Class and Subclass, and designating the undersigned as Class Counsel;