		ENDORSED
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2	VALERIAN LAW, P.C. 1604 Solano Ave., Suite D	San Francisco County Superior Court
	Albany, CA 94707	SEP 24 2019
3	Telephone: (888) 686-1918	CLERK OF THE COURT
4	Facsimile: (510) 982-4513	BY: KALENE APOLONIO
5	Email: xinying@valerian.law	Deputy Clerk
6	Attorneys for Plaintiff Douglas Clevenger	. ,
7		
8	SUPERIOR COURT OF TH	IE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
9	FOR THE COUNTY	OF SAN FRANCISCO
10	UNLIMITED JURISDICTION	
		CGC-19-579487
11	DOUGLAS CLEVENGER,	Case No.
12	Plaintiff,	COMPLAINT FOR DAMAGES AND
13	,	EQUITABLE RELIEF FOR VIOLATIONS OF THE CALIFORNIA
	vs.	LABOR CODE, FAIR LABOR
14		STANDARDS ACT, AND CALIFORNIA UNFAIR COMPETITION LAW
15	JOSEPH SAVERI LAW FIRM, INC.;	UNFAIR COMPETITION LAW
16	JOSEPH SAVERI, and DOES 1 through 10,	
	Defendants.	DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL
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19	Plaintiff Douglas Clevenger ("Plaintiff")	complains against Defendants Joseph Saveri Law
20	Firm, Inc. ("JSLF"), Joseph Saveri and DOES 1 to 10, inclusive (collectively "Defendants") as	
21	follows:	
22	I. FACTUA	L ALLEGATIONS
23	Plaintiff Douglas Clevenger is an	n administrative support professional who helped
24	Defendant Joseph Saveri launch the law firm that bears his name.	
25	2. According to its website, "[t]he Jo	oseph Saveri Law Firm, Inc. opened for business in

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May 2012. Since then, Joseph Saveri and his growing staff of experienced attorneys have been

busy fighting anticompetitive business practices throughout the country, serving as lead and co-

counsel on a variety of cases involving price-fixing, illegal reverse-payment agreements, agreements regarding hiring and recruiting, and antitrust cases involving sports leagues and other industries. The Firm represents individuals and businesses, and specializes in antitrust, class action, and other complex business disputes. To date, the Firm's attorneys have generated \$4 billion in settlements and successful resolutions for their clients."

3. Plaintiff sues for Defendants' failure to pay him for all work time, failure to pay overtime wages, failure to provide adequate meal breaks, failure to provide accurate wage statements, and failure to timely pay wages upon separation. He seeks damages, restitution, equitable relief, reasonable attorney's fees and costs, and interest on unpaid wages.

A. Saveri Lured Clevenger Away from His Career at Lieff Cabraser.

- 4. At the time Mr. Saveri launched JSLF, Plaintiff Douglas Clevenger had been stably employed at Lieff Cabraser Heimann & Bernstein LLP for eight years. At LCHB, Mr. Clevenger worked for Mr. Saveri, the chair of the antitrust group, and approximately eight other attorneys. In May 2012, Mr. Saveri left LCHB to launch his own firm and hired Mr. Clevenger as one of his first two employees.
- 5. On or about May 29, 2012, Mr. Saveri sent Mr. Clevenger an offer letter to work as an Office Manager at JSLF. The offer included the following terms and conditions:
- "Your primary duties will be office administration, supervision of staff, management of bank accounts, coordination with firm accountants and other vendors, ensuring compliance with all federal, state and local regulations, ensuring compliance with State Bar rules including MCLE, word processing, legal secretarial work, time keeping, and other day-to-day tasks. You must record and submit your time for billable work."
- "You will be a non exempt [sic] employee paid on an hourly basis at the rate of \$46 per hour, plus overtime."
- "You have been hired to work a minimum 5-day workweek, of 40 hours per week and eight (8) hours per day. In addition, you will be compensated for overtime hours at time and one-half or double time as required by law."
 - "Our office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. All staff members are required to be in

the office within at least one hour of the start and stop time ... We sometimes work a full eight-hour day on Saturdays and other Saturdays work for only a few hours, as the workload requires. Your position will require hours outside normal working hours."

- 6. Mr. Clevenger accepted Mr. Saveri's offer on June 14, 2012 and started work at JSLF on June 18, 2012. He was excited by the opportunity to help Mr. Saveri build his new firm and enticed by Mr. Saveri's sales pitch.
- 7. At the time of hire, Mr. Clevenger asked Mr. Saveri why the Office Manager position was "non-exempt." Mr. Saveri simply said that is how he wanted it.
- B. Saveri Made Clevenger His Office Administrator, Secretary, and Personal Valet, Keeping Him at His Beck and Call.
- 8. It soon became clear that Mr. Saveri expected Mr. Clevenger to do much more than what his offer letter conveyed.
- 9. Mr. Clevenger was the firm's only support staff for years he was the office manager, office assistant, paralegal, and Mr. Saveri's personal assistant all in one. As a jack-of-all-trades support staffer, Mr. Clevenger assisted Mr. Saveri in building the infrastructure of the firm from recruiting employees to helping with administration of payroll, from buying office supplies to working with the firm's employment counsel on getting policies in place. On top of a wide array of personal assistant and legal secretarial duties, Mr. Clevenger also handled firm office moves, server work and upgrades, furniture delivery, bookkeeping issues, and other aspects of office administration.
- 10. But Mr. Saveri required Mr. Clevenger to not only administer the firm's daily operations (a more than full-time task for a growing firm), but also handle Mr. Saveri's personal errands and affairs. He treated Plaintiff like a personal valet.
- 11. Among other things, Mr. Saveri required Mr. Clevenger to get his shoes shined; get his cars fixed; pick up his lunch whenever Mr. Saveri was in the office; pick up Mr. Saveri's medical prescriptions; make personal and medical appointments; make contractor and interior design appointments for Mr. Saveri's various residential properties; arrange for personal purchases for Mr. Saveri; book Mr. Saveri's haircuts; and handle travel bookings, arrangements, and changes

for Mr. Saveri, his mother, and other Saveri family members. Mr. Saveri did not hesitate to require Mr. Clevenger to handle any type of personal task or to invade Mr. Clevenger's nights, weekends and vacation days.

- 12. For example, Mr. Saveri regularly traveled overseas for personal vacations and sometimes for professional meetings. Regardless where Mr. Saveri was in the world, he demanded that Mr. Clevenger be available at a moment's notice to attend to his personal matters and would get very angry at Mr. Clevenger if he was not available. On Mr. Saveri's trips overseas he would repeatedly lose his wallet—one full of credit cards—or his cell phone, and he would demand that Mr. Clevenger work around the clock to freeze all his cards, get new ones issued immediately and sent overseas, and to arrange for the purchase and delivery of a new phone. Mr. Saveri would demand that Mr. Clevenger interact with him on these matters on a real time basis, thereby requiring Mr. Clevenger to work during European or Asian business hours from San Francisco. Mr. Saveri also had the same problems keeping up with his phone and wallet when he traveled around the U.S., and naturally required Mr. Clevenger to clean up these messes.
 - C. Mr. Saveri Refused to Pay Plaintiff Properly for All His Work Time.
- 13. Mr. Clevenger was Joseph Saveri's assistant at LCBH. There, Mr. Clevenger assisted 9 attorneys in total, and Mr. Saveri was his supervisor.
- 14. At LCBH, Mr. Saveri resisted approving Mr. Clevenger's overtime. He told Mr. Clevenger that all work for him had to be done between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., and that any overtime had to be billed as work for one of the other 8 attorneys. Mr. Clevenger did what he could to comply, but it was not always possible. If he had to work overtime to finish work assigned by Mr. Saveri, Mr. Clevenger would submit his overtime requests without Mr. Saveri's approval. Fortunately, LCBH paid Mr. Clevenger properly with or without Mr. Saveri's approval.
- 15. This aversion to paying Plaintiff any overtime wages carried over to the Saveri Law Firm.
- 16. At the Saveri Law Firm, all employees were required to report their total daily work hours Excel spreadsheets made for submission to the individual(s) who handled payroll.
 - 17. Throughout his employment by Defendants, Mr. Clevenger worked overtime and

missed lunch breaks regularly. He routinely put in more than 8 hours per day and over 40 hours per week in the San Francisco office of the firm. On top of that, he also worked from home on nights and weekends to complete the many projects, assignments, and errands on his plate.

- 18. From the beginning of his employment to approximately mid-2013, Mr. Clevenger worked overtime, but was not paid overtime wages. In that period, Mr. Clevenger would submit his actual hours worked, including overtime, to payroll. However, month after month, he was only paid for his non-overtime hours.
- 19. After almost a year of this, in approximately mid-2013, Mr. Saveri's employment attorney, Lisa Maslow, advised Mr. Saveri to retroactively pay Mr. Clevenger for his overtime work. Cornered with nearly a years' worth of timesheets documenting unpaid overtime, Mr. Saveri paid Mr. Clevenger grudgingly.
- 20. Soon after, Mr. Saveri told Mr. Clevenger to stop reporting his overtime. He said, "remember, your bonus is discretionary." Mr. Saveri made it clear that he could pay overtime or a bonus, but not both. Having known Mr. Saveri for so long, Mr. Clevenger understood that Mr. Saveri was serious in not wanting to pay overtime.
- 21. In the wake of this episode, Mr. Clevenger asked Mr. Saveri why he would not simply reclassify him as an exempt employee. Mr. Saveri refused and appeared irritated, replying, "don't tell me how to run my business!"
- 22. Mr. Clevenger obeyed, and he stopped submitting his actual hours worked, to avoid Mr. Saveri's ire and preserve his chance of getting an annual bonus.
- 23. Throughout his employment, Mr. Clevenger frequently worked more than 8 hours per day and/or 40 hours per week in the San Francisco office of the firm. He also worked from home on nights and weekends as needed. On occasion, Mr. Clevenger has also worked on seven consecutive days in a week.
- 24. Mr. Clevenger was forced to work off the clock in terms of lunch time and in terms of evening and weekend overtime.
- 25. Mr. Clevenger was not provided any off-duty lunch breaks. Mr. Saveri expected Mr. Clevenger to be available throughout the mid-day time period. If Mr. Saveri went out for lunch –

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and he often enjoyed long business lunches -- he would be upset if Mr. Clevenger was not at his desk while Mr. Saveri was out.

- 26. By refusing to pay overtime, and not relieving Mr. Clevenger for lunch breaks, Mr. Saveri effectively required Mr. Clevenger to automatically deduct at least 1 hour for lunch on his timesheet.
 - 27. Mr. Clevenger did not receive any meal period premium pay for missed meal breaks.
- 28. Mr. Clevenger was pressured by Mr. Saveri to falsify his timesheets by putting down only 8 hours of work per day and 1 hour for a lunch break. Defendants' practices and policies directly resulted in failure to maintain accurate start and end times of meal periods and start and end times of work periods.
- 29. Upon information and belief, Defendant Joseph Saveri knew Mr. Clevenger worked more than 8 hours per day and/or 40 hours per week and routinely was unable to take off-duty lunch breaks of at least 30 minutes long.
- Upon information and believe, Defendants improperly confiscated Plaintiff's 30. accrued vacation wages.
- 31. At one point, Mr. Clevenger complained to Mr. Saveri that his sister, who was working for the firm as a paralegal, had made a rude and hostile remark. The cubicles of Ms. Saveri and Mr. Clevenger faced each other with a glass pane between them. One day, she taped up some paper to block his view. He went over, took the papers down, and asked why she had done that. She responded, "I don't want to look at your ugly face."
- 32. On the day after Mr. Clevenger complained about the sister's behavior, Mr. Saveri placed Mr. Clevenger on a mandatory one-week leave. During this leave, the firm paid Mr. Clevenger out of his accrued vacation. Plaintiff felt he was being punished.
- 33. For years, Mr. Clevenger was cowed into accepting his working conditions. If Mr. Clevenger tried to push back on something that he thought was not right, Mr. Saveri verbally berated him (put-downs about his professional competency, trustworthiness, loyalty, worth to Mr. Saveri's business, etc.) or sent him cutting emails conveying the same.
 - 34. Defendants willfully refused to pay Plaintiff full earned wages, did not honor

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Plaintiff's employment agreement, and committed a host of Labor Code violations.

II. PARTIES

- 35. At all times herein mentioned, Plaintiff DOUGLAS CLEVENGER was and is an individual residing in the State of California. Plaintiff was hired by Defendants as a non-exempt, hourly paid employee in June 2012 and remained in that same position until his termination in approximately late November 2018.
- 36. At all times herein mentioned, Defendant JOSEPH SAVERI LAW FIRM, INC. was and is a California corporation whose principal place of business was located within the City and County of San Francisco.
- 37. At all times herein mentioned, Defendant JOSEPH SAVERI was and is an individual residing in the County of San Francisco. Mr. Saveri has at all times relevant to this Complaint acted as an owner, director, officer, or managing agent of the Joseph Saveri Law Firm, Inc.
- 38. Plaintiff is ignorant of the true names and capacities of defendants sued herein as DOES 1 through 10, inclusive, and therefore sues these defendants by such fictitious names. Plaintiff will amend this complaint to allege their true names and capacities when ascertained. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that each of the fictitiously named defendants is legally responsible in some manner for the wrongs and injuries alleged herein.
- 39. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that at all times mentioned herein each Defendant was the actual or ostensible agent or employee of each and all the other Defendants and was acting within the course and scope of said agency or employment.
- 40. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that at all times mentioned herein the Defendants, and each of them, were engaged in a joint venture and common enterprise and acting within the scope of and in pursuance of the joint venture and common enterprise.
- 41. Joseph Saveri Law Firm, Inc. was Plaintiff's employer. Joseph Saveri, on behalf of his law firm, has engaged, suffered and permitted Plaintiff to work. He has signed documents on behalf of his law firm and presented them to Plaintiff which purport to dictate wages, hours and working conditions to Plaintiff.
 - 42. Upon information and belief, the Joseph Saveri Law Firm, Inc. is a closely held

corporation and Mr. Saveri is its sole shareholder, officer, and director.

43. California's Fair Day's Pay Act provides:

Any employer or other person acting on behalf of an employer, who violates, or causes to be violated, any provision regulating minimum wages or hours and days of work in any order of the Industrial Welfare Commission, or violates, or causes to be violated, Sections 203, 226, 226.7,1193.6, 1194, or 2802, may be held liable as the employer for such violation ... For purposes of this section, the term "other person acting on behalf of an employer" is limited to a natural person who is an owner, director, officer, or managing agent of the employer, and the term "managing agent" has the same meaning as in subdivision (b) of Section 3294 of the Civil Code.

Cal. Labor Code § 558.1. See also Turman v. Superior Court (2017) 17 Cal.App.5th 969 (holding that a sole shareholder and president of a closely held corporation may be personally liable in a lawsuit to recover overtime, meal and rest period premiums, tip compensation, and minimum wages under California law)

- 44. The federal Fair Labor Standards Act defines "employer" to includes "any person acting directly or indirectly in the interest of an employer in relation to an employee. . . . "29 U.S.C. § 203(d).
- 45. Joseph Saveri meets the criteria specified in Labor Code § 558.1 and 29 U.S.C. § 203(d) to be individually liable for the wage and hour violations asserted in this Complaint.

III. JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 46. Venue is proper in the Superior Court of San Francisco County under Code of Civil Procedure § 395 because Defendant Joseph Saveri Law Firm's principal place of business is in San Francisco, California.
- 47. Jurisdiction is proper in this case in that the amount in controversy exceeds the jurisdictional minimum of this court.

FAILURE TO PAY OVERTIME WAGES AND FOR ALL TIME WORKED California Labor Code §§ 200, 510, 1194; IWC Wage Order No. 4 By Plaintiff Against All Defendants

48. Plaintiff incorporates by reference all previous paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

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59.

Plaintiff incorporates by reference all previous paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

- 60. Defendants did not relieve Plaintiff of all duty so that he could take adequate meal breaks.
- 61. At all relevant times, Plaintiff was not provided and did not take a thirty (30) minute, uninterrupted meal break during his normal schedule of 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. that commenced before the end of his fifth hour of work.
- 62. At all relevant times, in those days when he worked 10 or more hours, Plaintiff was not provided and did not take a 30-minute uninterrupted second meal break that commenced before the end of his tenth hour of work.
- 63. Defendants failed to compensate Plaintiff for his missed, shortened, interrupted, or late meal breaks by paying one additional hour of pay at Plaintiff's regular rate of compensation for each workday that a required meal period is not provided. Defendants never paid such a premium wage.
- 64. Because Defendants failed to afford proper meal periods and failed to pay meal period premium wages, they violated California Labor Code 226.7 and 512 and IWC Wage Order No. 4.
- 65. Defendants are liable to Plaintiff for one hour of additional pay at the regular rate of compensation for each workday that the proper meal period was not provided, as well as interest thereon, reasonable attorneys' fees, and costs of suit.

FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION FAILURE TO PAY ALL EARNED VACATION WAGES California Labor Code § 200 By Plaintiff Against All Defendants

- 66. Plaintiff incorporates by reference all previous paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.
- 67. Accrued vacation wages are earned wages under California law.
- 68. Defendants failed to pay Plaintiff the full value of his vacation pay in violation of Plaintiff's employment agreement and the California Labor Code.
- 69. Plaintiff is entitled to recovery of the full amount of the difference between what he was paid and what he was required to be paid, including interest thereon, reasonable attorneys' fees, and costs of suit.

FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION

FAILURE TO PAY WAGES UPON SEPARATION FROM EMPLOYMENT California Business and Professions Code §§ 201, 202, 203 By Plaintiff Against All Defendants

- 70. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates by reference all previous paragraphs.
- 71. California Labor Code §§ 201 and 202 require Defendants to pay all wages due and owing to Plaintiff immediately upon discharge or within seventy-two hours of resignation. After they terminated Plaintiff's employment, Defendants did not pay all wages due to Plaintiff immediately upon discharge and did not pay within seventy-two hours.
- 72. As a result of Defendants' willful failure to pay Plaintiff owed wages upon separation from employment, Defendants are liable for statutory waiting time penalties pursuant to California Labor Code § 203 and an award of costs and reasonable attorneys' fees.

SIXTH CAUSE OF ACTION FAILURE TO FURNISH ACCURATE WAGE STATEMENTS California Labor Code § 226 By Plaintiff Against All Defendants

- 73. Plaintiff incorporates by reference all previous paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.
- 74. Defendants failed to keep accurate records of work hours and intentionally subverted Plaintiff's ability to do so.
- 75. Therefore, Defendants issued wage statements to Plaintiff that failed to state accurate work hours, accurate gross wages earned, and accurate net wages earned.
- 76. Plaintiff has been injured by Defendants' failure to provide wage statements with full and accurate information.
- 77. As a result, Defendants are liable to Plaintiff for the amounts provided by California Labor Code § 226(e): the greater of actual damages or fifty dollars (\$50) for the initial violation and one hundred dollars (\$100) for each subsequent violation, up to four thousand dollars (\$4,000), and an award of costs and reasonable attorneys' fees.

SEVENTH CAUSE OF ACTION UNLAWFUL AND UNFAIR BUSINESS PRACTICES California Business and Professions Code §§ 17200 et seq. By Plaintiff Against All Defendants

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- 78. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates by reference all previous paragraphs.
- 79. Each Defendant is a "person" as defined under California Business & Professions Code § 17021.
- 80. Defendants' willful failure to pay for all work time, failure to pay overtime wages, failure to pay all vacation wages, failure to pay all wages due upon separation from employment, and failure to maintain accurate time records constitute unlawful activity prohibited by California Business and Professions Code § 17200.
- 81. Any business act or practice that violates state or federal wage and hour laws through failure to pay wages is, by definition, an unfair business practice under Bus. & Prof. Code § 17200.
- 82. As a result of their unlawful and unfair acts, Defendants have reaped and continue to reap unfair benefits and illegal profits at the expense of Plaintiff.
- 83. Defendants should be made to disgorge these ill-gotten gains and restore to Plaintiff the wrongfully withheld wages to which he is entitled and interest on these wages.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff requests the following relief against Defendants:

- A. Award damages to Plaintiff, in an amount to be determined at trial;
- B. Order Defendants to pay restitution to Plaintiff;
- C. Order equitable accounting to identify, locate, and restore to Plaintiff his wages due;
- D. Award penalties available under applicable laws, including waiting time penalties;
- E. Award costs and expenses, including reasonable attorneys' fees, costs, and expert fees, pursuant to the California Labor Code §§ 218.5, 226, 1194, 29 U.S.C. § 216(b), and all other applicable statutes;
 - F. Award pre-judgment and post-judgment interest, as provided by law; and
- G. Order such other and further legal and equitable relief as this Court deems necessary, just, and proper.

DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

Plaintiff Douglas Clevenger demands a trial by jury on all causes of action.

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1	DATED: September 24, 2019	VALERIAN LAW, P.C.
2	DATED. September 24, 2017	By: Walerian
		By: Walerian
3		Xinying Valerian, Esq. Attorney for Plaintiff Douglas Clevenger
4		Attorney for Frankfir Douglas Clevenger
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