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DARWIN A. WIEDENBERG
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CLERMONT COUNTY, OH

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
CLERMONT COUNTY, OHIO

STATE OF OHIO ex rel.
ATTORNEY GENERAL
DAVE YOST
30 E. Broad Street, 14th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Plaintiff,

v.

LONNELL JACKSON, individually and
d/b/a ROYALTY AUTOMOTIVE GROUP
5332 Crystal Drive
Fairfield, Ohio 45014

and

MELCHIZEDEK DUBOSE, individually
and d/b/a
ROYALTY AUTOMOTIVE GROUP
5523 Mallard Pointe Court
Milford, Ohio 45150

Defendants.

CASE NO. 2023CV11840

JUDGE

JUDGE FERENC

**COMPLAINT AND REQUEST FOR
DECLARATORY JUDGMENT,
INJUNCTIVE RELIEF,
CONSUMER RESTITUTION, AND
CIVIL PENALTIES**

JURISDICTION

1. Plaintiff, State of Ohio, through counsel Attorney General Dave Yost, having reasonable cause to believe that violations of Ohio's consumer protection laws have occurred, brings this action in the public interest and on behalf of the State of Ohio under the authority vested in the Attorney General by R.C. 1345.07.
2. The actions of Defendant Lonnell Jackson ("Jackson") and Defendant Melchizedek Dubose ("Dubose") (collectively "Defendants") have occurred in the State of Ohio,

including in Clermont County and, as set forth below, are in violation of the Consumer Sales Practices Act (“CSPA”), R.C. 1345.01 et seq., and the Certificate of Motor Vehicle Title Act, R.C. 4505.01 et seq.

3. Jurisdiction over the subject matter of this action lies with this Court pursuant to R.C. 1345.04 of the CSPA.
4. This Court has venue to hear this case pursuant to Ohio Civ. R. 3(C)(1), 3(C)(2), and 3(C)(3) in that Clermont County is where Defendant Dubose resides, where Defendants’ principal place of business was located, and where Defendants conducted activities that gave rise to Plaintiff’s claims for relief.

DEFENDANTS

5. Defendant Jackson is a natural person who resides at 5332 Crystal Drive, Fairfield, Ohio 45014
6. Defendant Dubose is a natural person who resides at 5523 Mallard Pointe Court, Milford, Ohio 45150.
7. Defendants filed Articles of Organization with the Ohio Secretary of State for an Ohio limited liability corporation named Royalty Automotive Group LLC in August 2019. In August 2022, the Secretary of State issued a cancellation of the limited liability company named Royalty Automotive Group LLC.
8. Defendants and Royalty Automotive Group LLC did business using the name Royalty Automotive Group to sell used motor vehicles.
9. Defendants operated their Royalty Automotive Group used vehicle dealership at 5656 Wolfpen-Pleasant Hill Road, Milford, Ohio 45150 during the time relevant to the transactions described in this Complaint.

10. Later, the Defendants moved Royalty Automotive Group to 1220 State Route 29, Suite B, Milford, Ohio 45150-2266.
11. Defendants dominated, controlled, directed, and approved the business activities and sales conduct of Royalty Automotive Group at the time of the violations set forth in this Complaint and caused, personally participated in, or ratified the acts and practices of Royalty Automotive Group as described in this Complaint.
12. Defendants were, at all times relevant to this action, engaged in the business of soliciting, promoting, purchasing, selling, and collecting the proceeds of the sales of used motor vehicles to consumers.
13. Defendants are “supplier[s]” as that term is defined in R.C. 1345.01(C) as Defendants were, at all times relevant herein, engaged in the business of effecting or soliciting “consumer transactions” by offering for sale and selling used motor vehicles to individuals for purposes that were primarily personal, family, or household within the meaning specified in R.C. 1345.01(A) and (D).

STATEMENT OF FACTS

14. Defendants owned and operated Royalty Automotive Group, which held used motor vehicle dealer license number UD023370, issued under R.C. 4517.01 et seq., allowing it to engage in the business of displaying or selling at retail or wholesale used motor vehicles. The dealership’s license has expired.
15. Defendants solicited individual consumers to enter into consumer transactions, specifically for the sale of used motor vehicles.
16. At all relevant times hereto, Defendants displayed and sold used motor vehicles at the Royalty Automotive Group dealership locations.

17. Defendants failed to file applications for certificate of title within 30 days after the assignment or delivery of motor vehicles.
18. Defendants sold motor vehicles to consumers that did not have certificates of title issued in the name of the dealership at the time of sale.
19. Defendants failed to obtain certificates of title in the name of consumer purchasers on or before the 40th day after the sale of motor vehicles.
20. To date, Title Defect Recision Fund claims totaling \$24,157.49 have been paid from the Title Defect Recision Fund administered by the Attorney General's Office after Defendants failed to obtain certificates of title in the names of consumer purchasers on or before the 40th day after the sale of motor vehicles.
21. Upon information and belief, Defendants' Royal Automotive Group dealership is out of business.

CAUSE OF ACTION:

Violations of the Certificate of Motor Vehicle Title Act & the CSPA

22. Plaintiff incorporates by reference, as if completely rewritten herein, the allegations set forth in the preceding paragraphs of this Complaint.
23. Defendants engaged in unfair or deceptive acts or practices in violation of R.C. 1345.02(A) of the CSPA, by failing to file applications for certificates of title within 30 days after the assignment or delivery of motor vehicles as required by R.C. 4505.06(A)(5)(b) of the Certificate of Motor Vehicle Title Act.
24. Defendants engaged in unfair or deceptive acts or practices in violation of R.C. 1345.02(A) of the CSPA, by selling to consumers motor vehicles that did not have certificates of title issued in the name of the dealership at the time of sale and then failing to obtain certificates

of title in the name of the consumer purchasers on or before the 40th day following the date of the sale of the motor vehicles as required by R.C. 4505.181(B)(1) of the Certificate of Motor Vehicle Title Act.

25. Such acts or practices have been previously determined by Ohio courts to violate the CSPA. Defendants committed said violations after such decisions were available for public inspection pursuant to R.C. 1345.05(A)(3).

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff respectfully requests that this Court grant the following relief:

- A. ISSUE A PERMANENT INJUNCTION, pursuant to R.C. 1345.07(A)(2), enjoining Defendants, doing business under their own names, the names Royalty Automotive Group LLC, Royalty Automotive Group, or any other names, their agents, representatives, salespeople, employees, successors, or assigns, and all persons acting in concert and participation with them, directly or indirectly, from committing any unfair, deceptive, or unconscionable acts or practices that violate the CSPA, R.C. 1345.01 et seq, or the Certificate of Motor Vehicle Title Act, R.C. 4505.01 et seq., including, but not limited to, violating the specific provisions alleged to have been violated herein.
- B. DECLARE, pursuant to R.C. 1345.07(A)(1), that each act or practice complained of herein violates the CSPA, R.C. 1345.01 et seq., and the Certificate of Motor Vehicle Title Act, R.C. 4505.01 et seq., in the manner set forth in this Complaint.
- C. ORDER Defendants, pursuant to R.C. 1345.07(B), to pay damages to all consumers injured by Defendants' conduct.
- D. ORDER Defendants jointly and severally liable for reimbursement to the Attorney General's Title Defect Recision Fund for funds expended to resolve title defects caused by

Defendants' motor vehicle title violations.

- E. ASSESS, FINE, AND IMPOSE upon Defendants a civil penalty of \$25,000 for each separate and appropriate violation of the CSPA described herein, pursuant to R.C. 1345.07(D).
- F. ISSUE AN INJUNCTION prohibiting Defendants from engaging in business as suppliers in any consumer transaction in the State of Ohio until such time as they have satisfied all monetary obligations ordered by this Court, and any other court in Ohio, in connection with a consumer transaction.
- G. ISSUE A PERMANENT INJUNCTION prohibiting Defendants from applying for or being granted any motor dealer or salesperson license under Chapter 4517 of the Revised Code.
- H. GRANT Plaintiff its costs in bringing this action including, but not limited to, the costs of collecting on any judgment awarded.
- I. ORDER Defendants to pay all court costs.
- J. GRANT such other relief as the Court deems to be just, equitable, and appropriate.

Respectfully submitted,

DAVE YOST
Ohio Attorney General



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