COMP

RAHUL RAVIPUDI (NV Bar No. 14750)

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Defendants as follows:

Electronically Filed 1/8/2020 9:50 AM Steven D. Grierson **CLERK OF THE COURT**

CASE NO: A-20-808100-0 Department 32

COMPLAINT AND DEMAND FOR

(Exempt from Arbitration: Amount in Controversy Greater Than \$50,000)

& MORGAN, P.A., and hereby demand a trial by jury and complain and allege against

Case Number: A-20-808100-C

INTRODUCTORY ALLEGATIONS

- 1. This action arises from a senseless, avoidable tragedy. In the early morning hours of December 21, 2019, a fire broke out at the Alpine Motel Apartments in Downtown Las Vegas, Nevada, a three-story apartment complex owned and operated by Defendant LAS VEGAS DRAGON HOTEL, LLC and its managing member Defendant ADOLFO OROZCO. A stove used as a makeshift heater in lieu of a proper heating system reportedly sparked the fire. It spread throughout the building, but there was neither a sprinkler system to contain it nor a fire alarm to warn residents of the impending danger. Even when residents attempted to evacuate, many found that the rear exit door had been barricaded. Several were found trapped in the building, unable to escape, while others resorted to jumping from second and third story windows to escape the flames. In total, six people lost their lives, and thirteen were seriously injured, making it the deadliest fire in the City's history.
- 2. One of those killed was Tracy Ann Cihal, a 57-year-old woman affectionately known as "Mama Bear" to other Alpine residents for the caring attention she paid to others. Ms. Cihal lived on the first floor and used a walker for mobility. She was unable to evacuate the building in time and lost her life in the fire. Her body was found in the main hallway near the barricaded back exit door.
- 3. As alleged in greater detail below, Plaintiffs seek all available relief against

 Defendants for the negligence and wrongful conduct that led to the wrongful death of decedent

 Tracy Ann Cihal.

PARTIES AND JURISDICTION

4. Plaintiff DEBORAH CIHAL CRAWFORD ("Ms. Cihal Crawford") is an adult citizen and resident of Hillsborough County, Florida. Ms. Crawford is the next of kin to decedent Tracy Ann Cihal. Ms. Cihal Crawford brings this action individually as heir to the ESTATE OF TRACY ANN CIHAL. At all relevant times, Tracy Ann Cihal was a resident of Alpine Motel Apartments located at 213 N. Ninth Street, Las Vegas, Nevada 89101 and died in a fire that occurred on December 21, 2019.

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- Plaintiff JOHN DOE ADMINISTRATOR is the Special Administrator of the 5. ESTATE OF TRACY ANN CIHAL.
- Defendant LAS VEGAS DRAGON HOTEL, LLC ("DRAGON HOTEL") is, and 6. at all times relevant hereto was, a Nevada limited liability company authorized to and doing business in Clark County, Nevada.
- Defendant ADOLFO OROZCO ("OROZCO") is, and at all times relevant hereto 7. was, a resident of Clark County, Nevada, and managing member of DRAGON HOTEL.
- Upon information and belief, each of the Defendants sued herein as Defendants 8. DOES 1 through 10, inclusive, and ROE ENTITIES 1 through 10, inclusive, are responsible in some manner for the events and happenings herein referred to, including without limitation the ownership, control, security, operations, supervision, inspection, management, maintenance, design, repair, construction, and/or renovation of the real property located at 213 N 9th St, Las Vegas, NV 89101, including without limitation the property's fire prevention, suppression, and/or safety systems, heating, ventilation, and cooling systems, emergency exits, and utility services, any or all of which thereby proximately caused the injuries and damages to Plaintiffs as alleged herein as a result of the fire that erupted at the property on December 21, 2019; that when the true names and capacities of such Defendants become known, Plaintiff will ask leave of this Court to amend this complaint to insert the true names, identities and capacities together with proper charges and allegations.
- At all relevant times, Defendants, and each of them, were the agents, ostensible 9. agents, servants, employees, employers, partners, co-owners and/or joint venturers of each other and of their co-Defendants, and were acting within the color, purpose and scope of their employment, agency, ownership and/or joint ventures and by reason of such relationships with Defendants, and each of them, are vicariously and jointly and severally responsible and liable for the acts and/or omissions of their co-Defendants.
- At all relevant times the Alpine Motel Apartments were owned, maintained, 10. operated, leased, rented, run and supervised by Defendants DRAGON HOTEL, OROZCO, and DOES 1 through 10 and ROE ENTITIES 1 through 10 inclusive, and each of them.

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- Upon information and belief, Defendant DRAGON HOTEL owned, possessed, 11. secured, controlled, operated, managed, leased, inspected, maintained, repaired, and/or supervised Alpine Motel Apartments located at 213 N Ninth Street, Las Vegas, Nevada 89101, and/or had the right(s) to own, possess, secure, control, operate, manage, lease, inspect, maintain, repair, and/or supervise Alpine Motel Apartments. DRAGON HOTEL also had the duty and had the authority, discretion, and responsibility for the day to day operation and management of the business, including but not limited to the supervision, hiring, and firing of employees and/or agents in furtherance of the business of Alpine Motel Apartments and ensuring that the property and its tenants were reasonably safe from foreseeable harm.
- Upon information and belief, Defendant OROZCO had and exercised the duty and 12. authority, discretion, and responsibility for the day to day operation and management of the Alpine Motel Apartments, including the supervision, hiring, and firing of employees and/or agents in furtherance of the business of Alpine Motel Apartments and ensuring that the Property and its tenants were reasonably safe from foreseeable harm.
- Further, upon information and belief, OROZCO had a duty to make Alpine Motel 13. Apartments and its tenants safe from all known fire hazards and to inspect, install, maintain, and/or provide fire safety products and/or equipment, including but not limited to smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, and a fire alarm system.
- Upon information and belief, OROZCO had the authority, discretion, and 14. responsibility to purchase, install, inspect, test and/or provide Alpine Motel Apartments and its tenants with properly functioning and properly mounted fire safety products and/or equipment, including but not limited to smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, and a fire alarm system.
- Upon information and belief, OROZCO was under a duty to advise, discuss, 15. inform, counsel, repair, and/or replace any missing or faulty smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, electrical power sources, appliances, heaters, furnaces, and/or any other defective or dangerous product or condition installed or existing at Alpine Motel Apartments, including safe entrance and egress to and from the building and its units.

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- Upon information and belief, OROZCO caused or contributed to the subject 16. incident, Tracy Ann Cihal's death, and the injuries and damages complained of herein. Further, at all times relevant hereto, OROZCO employed, supervised, directed and/or managed the property managers and maintenance personnel at Alpine Motel Apartments. OROZCO is being sued individually for his own independent negligence and for his negligence committed in the course and scope of his employment with DRAGON HOTEL.
- Plaintiffs' Complaint states a controversy over which this Court has jurisdiction and 17. venue is properly in this Court as all Defendants are and were authorized to do business in Clark County, Nevada and committed a tort in Clark County. This matter in controversy exceeds, exclusive of interests and costs, the minimum jurisdictional amount of the Court of \$15,000.00.

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

- Decedent Tracy Ann Cihal was a resident of the Alpine Motel Apartments, located 18. at 213 North 9th Street, Las Vegas, Nevada, 89101 ("Alpine Motel Apartments").
- The Alpine Motel Apartments is a forty-two (42) unit apartment complex and 19. motel rented to the general public for residential use.
- Upon information and belief, the Alpine Motel Apartments did not have adequate 20. heating facilities, in violation of applicable fire codes and/or NRS 118A.290.
- As a result of not having adequate heating facilities, and upon information and 21. belief, residents of the Alpine Motel Apartments resorted to using cooking stoves as heat sources.
- In the early hours of the morning on December 21, 2019, a fire ignited in a first-22. floor unit located within the three-story Alpine Motel Apartments.
- An initial investigation by Las Vegas Fire and Rescue indicated the cause of the 23. tragic fire was a cooking stove being used as a heat source.
- After the fire broke out, residents attempted to evacuate the Alpine Motel 24. Apartments.
- Upon information and belief, some residents of the Alpine Motel Apartments 25. resorted to leaping from upper-story windows in an attempt to escape the fire.
 - Upon information and belief, the Alpine Motel Apartments did not have adequate 26.

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hallway lighting (means of egress illumination) as required by the applicable fire code, which prevented residents from quickly and safely exiting the burning building.

- Upon information and belief, the egress doors located within the Alpine Motel 27. Apartments were bolted closed, in violation of the applicable fire code, NRS 41.800, and trapping residents from safely exiting the burning building.
- Upon information and belief, the Alpine Motel Apartments did not have working 28. fire alarms or smoke detectors, in violation of the applicable fire code, and causing numerous residents to fail to perceive the threat of the spreading fire.
- Upon information and belief, the Alpine Motel Apartments did not have working 29. fire extinguishers or a fire suppression system, in violation of the applicable fire code.
- Upon information and belief, the Alpine Motel Apartments, including without 30. limitation Tracy Ann Cihal's unit, were uninhabitable and/or failed to provide basic essential services and/or utilities, including heating and air systems, as required by NRS 118A.290 and other applicable law.
- Prior to the subject fire, Defendants failed to inspect, install, replace, test, and/or 31. maintain the appliances, fire safety equipment and devices, entry and exit doors and/or pathways, electrical power sources, and/or the utilities at the Alpine Motel Apartments and inside Tracy Ann Cihal's apartment.
- Defendants knew or should have known that the equipment, devices, products, and/or 32. conditions that caused or contributed to the fire and damages described herein were faulty and that the Alpine Motel Apartments, including Tracy Ann Cihal's apartment, was unreasonably dangerous and/or failed to meet or comply with applicable laws, codes, and/or ordinances.
- Tracy Ann Cihal's death and the damages complained of herein were the direct and 33. proximate result of the failure of the Defendants to provide its tenants and/or invitees, including Tracy Ann Cihal, with safe and/or habitable living conditions.
- Upon information and belief, the named Defendants took the actions as described 34. herein with knowledge of the probable harmful consequences of a wrongful act and a willful and deliberate failure to act to avoid those consequences, and said actions were the product of

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negligence, malice, and/or oppression.

- The injuries and ultimate death of Tracy Ann Cihal was the result of the negligent, 35. knowing, oppressive, malicious, and/or reckless conduct of the Defendants and/or their failure to properly distribute, select, install, inspect, repair, maintain, test, or purchase smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, fire alarm system, essential utilities, entrance and exit doors, appliances, and/or electrical power sources at Alpine Motel Apartments.
- At all relevant times Defendants DRAGON HOTEL, OROZCO, and DOES 1 36. through 10 and ROE ENTITIES 1 through 10, and each of them, had a duty to act reasonably to provide Plaintiffs, and each of them, with safe and habitable apartments and to comply with all statutory requirements and codes governing the maintenance of rental apartment units, among other responsibilities and duties imposed at law.
- Defendants DRAGON HOTEL, OROZCO, DOES 1 through 10 and ROE 37. ENTITIES 1 through 10, inclusive, and each of them did not equip the Alpine Motel Apartments with an adequate fire suppression system, an alarm system, smoke detectors, or safe means of egress, all in violation of applicable fire codes.
- Defendants DRAGON HOTEL, OROZCO, DOES 1 through 10 and ROE 38. ENTITIES 1 through 10, inclusive, and each of them, were the agent, representative, servant, independent contractor, subcontractor, partner, joint venture, alter ego, successor in interest, affiliate, parent and/or subsidiary, employee and franchise of each of the remaining Defendants, and each of them herein, and were at all times acting within the purpose and scope of said agency, service, employment, partnership, joint venture, parent/subsidiary and franchise as such and with the express and/or implied permission, knowledge, consent, and ratification of all said other Defendants.
- Plaintiffs further allege upon information and belief that the OROZCO and DOES 39. 1 through 10, inclusive, and each of them, were the alter egos of DRAGON HOTEL and ROE ENTITIES 1 through 10, inclusive, and each of them named herein, having influenced and governed the entities, there is such unity of interest and ownership that the limited-liability company and the person are inseparable from each other; and adherence to the notion of the

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limited-liability company being an entity separate from the person would sanction fraud or manifest injustice. Further, OROZCO is liable for the damages caused to Plaintiffs as a result of the duties he owed to them as an individual, separate and apart from his role as a member of DRAGON HOTEL, including without limitation his individual negligence concerning his direct knowledge of actions that threatened physical injuries to Plaintiffs.

FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION

WRONGFUL DEATH

(against all Defendants)

- Plaintiffs re-allege each and every allegation contained in the preceding and 40. subsequent paragraphs, and by this reference incorporates said paragraphs as though fully set forth herein.
- On or about December 21, 2019, Tracy Ann Cihal was a tenant of the Alpine Motel 41. Apartments and legally on the premises described herein above.
- Defendants owed Tracy Ann Cihal the duty to act as a reasonable landlord, obey by 42. applicable laws, codes, and ordinances, and provide Tracy Ann Cihal a habitable dwelling and a premises safe from unreasonable danger.
- Additionally, Defendants owed Tracy Ann Cihal the non-delegable duty to 43. maintain the Alpine Motel Apartments and its common areas and means of egress in a reasonably safe condition, owed a duty to use reasonable care when inspecting, servicing and maintaining the Alpine Motel Apartments and its common areas and means of egress, and had a duty to comply with all applicable building, housing and fire codes.
- Upon information and belief, Defendants had actual and constructive notice of code 44. violations, dangerous conditions, and/or deficiencies that rendered the Alpine Motel Apartments and its and common areas uninhabitable, prior the fire described herein, and was given notice by the decedent, Tracy Ann Cihal, other residents, and/or local health and/or fire inspectors. The Defendants conduct created a foreseeable zone of risk that a fire and smoke resulting therefrom would occur.
 - Defendants breached their duties in that they failed to use reasonable care in the 45.

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manner by which they owned, operated, managed, maintained, supervised, inspected, failed to inspect, controlled, and/or renovated the Alpine Motel Apartments, including the property's fire prevention, suppression, and/or safety systems, heating, ventilation, and cooling systems, emergency egress routes, and utility services. At the time Tracy Ann Cihal occupied the Alpine Motel Apartments, Defendants:

- Failed to maintain, or adequately maintain the smoke alarms, fire a. extinguishers, and fire alarm system at the subject property;
- Failed to inspect, or adequately inspect the smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, b. and fire alarm system at the subject property;
- Failed to maintain or adequately maintain the entrance and exit doors of the C. subject property;
- Failed to inspect, or adequately inspect the entrance and exit doors of the d. subject property;
- Failed to maintain or adequately maintain the utilities, specifically the e. heating systems, of the subject property;
- Failed to warn or adequately warn the Tracy Ann Cihal of the dangerous f. conditions relating to the fire protection devices and systems, the entrance and exit doors (sealed shut), and lack of essential utilities, including heat, when Defendants knew or should have known of their existence and when Plaintiff's decedent was unaware of the dangerous conditions;
- Failed to correct or adequately correct the fire protection devices and systems and dangerous conditions relating to the habitability and fire safety at the subject property when Defendants knew or should have known of their existence;
- Failed to provide a safe and secure means of moving about the subject h. property for Plaintiff's decedent;
- Failed to install fire prevention devices, specifically smoke alarms, fire i. extinguishers, and fire alarm systems;
 - Negligently hired, trained, and supervised the managers, maintenance j.

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personnel, and employees working at Alpine Motel Apartments regarding fire safety and how to properly install, inspect, test, maintain, and/or repair the smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, fire alarm system, entrance and exit doors, and/or essential utilities, specifically the heating systems at Alpine Motel Apartments;

- Failed to comply with the applicable building, housing and fire codes; and k.
- Failed to act reasonably under the circumstances. 1.
- Plaintiffs are informed and believe and allege thereon that these dangerous 46. conditions were known to Defendants DRAGON HOTEL, OROZCO, DOES 1 through 10, and ROE ENTITIES 1 through 10, inclusive and each of them, and/or was discoverable through reasonable inspection of the property.
- As a result of Defendants' negligence, the building was in an unsafe and dangerous 47. condition so that instead of protecting the tenants, it actually exposed the tenants to an unreasonable risk of harm and exacerbated, instead of mitigated, the damages caused by the fire.
- Tracy Ann Cihal was part of the class of people intended to be protected by the fire 48. code of the City of Las Vegas and other applicable codes, regulations, laws, and ordinances of which Defendants violated, including NRS 41.800 and/or NRS 118A.290.
- Defendants' actions and omissions as alleged herein directly and proximately 49. caused the wrongful death of Tracy Ann Cihal.
- As a result of the wrongful deaths of Tracy Ann Cihal, Deborah Cihal Crawford 50. has sustained the loss of love, affection, society, service, comfort, support, right of support, expectations of future support, and counseling, companionship, solace and mental support, as well as other benefits and assistance, all to her general damages in a sum in excess of Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$15,000.00).
- Plaintiffs further seek exemplary and punitive damages in excess of Fifteen 51. Thousand Dollars (\$15,000.00).
- Plaintiffs have been required to engage the services of an attorney, incurring 52. attorneys' fees and costs to bring this action.

Las Vegas, NV 89148 702.560.5520 phone • 702.975.2515 fax

SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION

NEGLIGENCE

(against all Defendants)

- 53. Plaintiffs re-allege each and every allegation contained in the preceding and subsequent paragraphs, and by this reference incorporates said paragraphs as though fully set forth herein.
- 54. On or about December 21, 2019, Tracy Ann Cihal was a tenant of the Alpine Motel Apartments and legally on the premises described herein above.
- 55. Defendants owed Tracy Ann Cihal the duty to act as a reasonable landlord, obey by applicable laws, codes, and ordinances, and provide Tracy Ann Cihal a habitable dwelling and a premises safe from unreasonable danger.
- 56. Additionally, Defendants owed Tracy Ann Cihal the non-delegable duty to maintain the Alpine Motel Apartments and its common areas and means of egress in a reasonably safe condition, owed a duty to use reasonable care when inspecting, servicing and maintaining the Alpine Motel Apartments and its common areas and means of egress, and had a duty to comply with all applicable building, housing and fire codes.
- 57. Upon information and belief, Defendants had actual and constructive notice of code violations, dangerous conditions, and/or deficiencies that rendered the Alpine Motel Apartments and its and common areas uninhabitable, prior the fire described herein, and was given notice by the decedent, Tracy Ann Cihal, other residents, and/or local health and/or fire inspectors. The Defendants conduct created a foreseeable zone of risk that a fire and smoke resulting therefrom would occur.
- 58. Defendants breached their duties in that they failed to use reasonable care in the manner by which they owned, operated, managed, maintained, supervised, inspected, failed to inspect, controlled, and/or renovated the Alpine Motel Apartments, including the property's fire prevention, suppression, and/or safety systems, heating, ventilation, and cooling systems, emergency egress routes, and utility services. At the time Tracy Ann Cihal occupied the Alpine Motel Apartments, Defendants:

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- Failed to maintain, or adequately maintain the smoke alarms, fire a. extinguishers, and fire alarm system at the subject property;
- Failed to inspect, or adequately inspect the smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, b. and fire alarm system at the subject property;
- Failed to maintain or adequately maintain the entrance and exit doors of the c. subject property;
- Failed to inspect, or adequately inspect the entrance and exit doors of the d. subject property;
- Failed to maintain or adequately maintain the utilities, specifically the e. heating systems, of the subject property;
- Failed to warn or adequately warn the Tracy Ann Cihal of the dangerous f. conditions relating to the fire protection devices and systems, the entrance and exit doors (sealed shut), and lack of essential utilities, including heat, when Defendants knew or should have known of their existence and when Plaintiff's decedent was unaware of the dangerous conditions;
- Failed to correct or adequately correct the fire protection devices and g. systems and dangerous conditions relating to the habitability and fire safety at the subject property when Defendants knew or should have known of their existence;
- Failed to provide a safe and secure means of moving about the subject h. property for Plaintiff's decedent;
- Failed to install fire prevention devices, specifically smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, and fire alarm systems;
- Negligently hired, trained, and supervised the managers, maintenance j. personnel, and employees working at Alpine Motel Apartments regarding fire safety and how to properly install, inspect, test, maintain, and/or repair the smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, fire alarm system, entrance and exit doors, and/or essential utilities, specifically the heating systems at Alpine Motel Apartments;
 - Failed to comply with the applicable building, housing and fire codes; and k.

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- Failed to act reasonably under the circumstances. 1.
- Plaintiffs are informed and believe and allege thereon that these dangerous 59. conditions were known to Defendants DRAGON HOTEL, OROZCO, DOES 1 through 10, and ROE ENTITIES 1 through 10, inclusive and each of them, and/or was discoverable through reasonable inspection of the property.
- As a result of Defendants' negligence, the building was in an unsafe and dangerous 60. condition so that instead of protecting the tenants, it actually exposed the tenants to an unreasonable risk of harm and exacerbated, instead of mitigated, the damages caused by the fire.
- Tracy Ann Cihal was part of the class of people intended to be protected by the fire 61. code of the City of Las Vegas and other applicable codes, regulations, laws, and ordinances of which Defendants violated, including NRS 41.800 and/or NRS 118A.290.
- As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' negligence, a fire ignited at the 62. Alpine Motel Apartments on December 21, 2019, causing Tracy Ann Cihal to experience pain and suffering, and ultimately death, leaving behind grieving family members, including Plaintiff Deborah Cihal Crawford.
- Plaintiffs further seek exemplary and punitive damages in excess of Fifteen 63. Thousand Dollars (\$15,000.00).
- Plaintiffs have been required to engage the services of an attorney, incurring 64. attorneys' fees and costs to bring this action.

THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION

VIOLATION OF NRS 41.800

(against all Defendants)

- Plaintiffs re-allege each and every allegation contained in the preceding and 65. subsequent paragraphs, and by this reference incorporates said paragraphs as though fully set forth herein.
- NRS 41.800(1) makes it unlawful for a person to obstruct "the ingress or egress to 66. any public or private property from any other public or private place in such a manner as not to leave a free passageway for persons and vehicles lawfully seeking to enter or leave the property

via the public or private place."

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- A person aggrieved by a violation of NRS 41.800(1) may bring a civil action 67. against those who committed the violation, and seek actual damages, reasonable attorney's fees and costs, and any other legal or equitable relief the Court deems appropriate.
- Defendants intentionally obstructed the ingress and egress of the Alpine Motel 68. Apartments in such a manner to prevent the free passageway for Tracy Ann Cihal, who was lawfully seeking to leave the property.
- As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' violation of NRS 41.800, Tracy 69. Ann Cihal suffered damages in excess of Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$15,000.00).
- Plaintiffs further seek exemplary and punitive damages in excess of Fifteen 70. Thousand Dollars (\$15,000.00).
- Plaintiffs have been required to engage the services of an attorney, incurring 71. attorneys' fees and costs to bring this action.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs pray for relief as follows:

- For general damages sustained by Plaintiffs in an amount in excess of \$15,000; 1.
- For special damages sustained by Plaintiffs in an amount in excess of \$15,000; 2.
- For punitive damages against Defendants in an amount in excess of \$15,000; 3.
- For attorneys' fees and costs; 4.
- For interest at the statutory rate; and 5.
- For such other relief as the Court deems just and proper. 6.

DATED: January 8, 2020

PANISH SHEA & BOYLE LLP

Adam 30 A

By:

RAHUL RAVIPUDI (NV Bar No. 14750) IAN SAMSON (NV Bar No. 15089) ADAM ELLIS (NV Bar No. 14514) Attorneys for PLAINTIFFS

PANISH SHEA & BOYLE LLP 8816 Spanish Ridge Ave. Las Vegas, NV 89148 702.560.5520 phone • 702.975,2515 fax

DEMAND FOR TRIAL BY JURY

Plaintiffs hereby demand a trial by jury as to all causes of action.

DATED: January 8, 2020

PANISH SHEA & BOYLE LLP

By:

RAHUL RAVIPUDI (NV Bar No. 14750) IAN SAMSON (NV Bar No. 15089) ADAM ELLIS (NV Bar No. 14514)

Attorneys for PLAINTIFFS