1 2 PLAINTIFF IN PRO PER Pro Se Murad Clark 3 2355Westwood Boulevard 4 Los Angeles, CA 90064 Telephone: (323) 907-5475 5 Email: muradclark@gmail.com 6 7 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT 8 CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA 9 Case No.: Murad Clark, an individual, 10 LASC CASE NO. 20STCV39023 11 [Action Filed: October 13, 2020] Plaintiff, [Assigned: Hon. Stephen I. 12 Goorvitch in Dept. 32] VS. 13 PLAINTIFE'S MOTION FOR 14 DEFAULT JUDGMENT CITY OF LOS ANGELES: CITY 15 OF LOS ANGELES POLICE **DEPARTMENT** 16 **OFFICER** COVARRUBIAS #42028, 17 Individually and in His Official Capacity As Police Officer; OFFICER ZAVALA 18 #40197, Individually and in His 19 Capacity As A Police Officer; SERGEANT CHRISTOPHER BURKE 20 #36665, Individually and in His Official Capacity As A Police Officer and DOES 1 through 50, 21 22 Inclusive 23 Defendants 24 Pro Se Plaintiff, Murad Clark (hereinafter referred to as "Clark") and pursuant to Federal 25 Rule of Civil Procedure ("Rule") 15, and Fed. R. Civ. P. 55(a)., hereby moves for this honorable court 26 for Default Judgment in his favor as to all counts of Plaintiff's Complaint. Based on the pleadings, 27 there exist no genuine issues of material facts and Plaintiff is entitled to a Default judgment as a matter 28 of law. In support of his motion, Plaintiff states as follows: - 1 -

Motion for Default Judgment

1. INTRODUCTION AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff brought a civil action against the Defendants for:

- I. Violation of the Fourteenth Amendment 42 U.S.C. §1983;
- II. Violation of Title VI of Civil Rights Act Of 1964,42 U.S.C§ 2000d Race Discrimination in A Federally Funded Programs;
- III. Violation of The Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments 42 U.S.C. 1983;
- IV. Violation of Commerce Clause, Article Iv, And 42 U.S.C.§1983;
- V. Violation Of 42 U.S.0 § 1983;
- VI. Conspiracy to Violate Civil Rights 42 U.S.C. §§ 1985 And 1986;
- VII. Violation of Government Code Section 11135 And 11139102;
- VIII. Violation of Article 1, Section 13 of the California Constitution;
 - IX. Violation of Civil Code Section 52.1(B);
 - X. Intentional Infliction of Emotional Distress;
 - XI. False Imprisonment
- XII. Negligent Infliction of Emotional Distress.

This is a civil rights action seeking declaratory, injunctive, and monetary relief against Defendants engaging in and condoning a continuing pattern and practice of race-based stops, detentions and searches of motorists of color, traveling on the public streets and highways of the State of California. The specific abuses giving rise to this action occurred on December 18, 2019 in the area of 1426 Channing St. Los Angeles, Ca 90021.

Plaintiff Clark who has been grossly humiliated, targeted, interrogated, detained and searched by defendants' LAPD in the area of Alameda and 14th St. due to the defendants' policy and practice of

what is commonly known as "racial profiling." The moment Mr. Clark was approached by the defendants he became a victim of what the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit called "an all too familiar set of circumstances- an intrusive law enforcement stop and seizure of innocent persons on the basis of suspicions rooted principally in the race of the 'suspect' as in the case of *Washington v. Lambert, 98 F.3d 1181, 1182 (1996).*

On or about December 18, 2019, Plaintiff was legally parked in a cul-de-sac at approximately 8:40 p.m. located at 1426 Channing St Los Angeles, CA 90021. Mr. Clark was at the wheel of his black colored 2019 Honda Odyssey parked stationary getting direction from his GPS device. The plaintiff was not blocking or obstructing any traffic or breaking any traffic laws (see exhibit A). While the plaintiff was getting directions, an LAPD patrol vehicle came southbound on channing street while the plaintiff was still parked stationery facing northbound on Channing St.

As defendant LAPD officers pulled alongside plaintiff's vehicle, officer COVARRUBIAS in the driver's seat shined a bright dome light located on the side of his patrol car into the driver side of the plaintiff's vehicle where he was located. When defendant LAPD Officer Covarrubias saw that the plaintiff was Black he along with two other LAPD officers immediately jumped out of the patrol car. To see what the problem was, plaintiff stepped out of his vehicle to speak with officers and was placed into handcuffs giving no initial reason for making contact with plaintiff.

Shortly after plaintiff stepped out of his vehicle to see what the problem was, he was first approached by the defendant driver LAPD officer COVARRUBIAS who had his gun pointed at plaintiff as he jumped out of his patrol vehicle still facing southbound. Plaintiff was then taken to the rear of his vehicle where he was forced to stand facing a fence while defendant LAPD officers' searched plaintiff's vehicle even though plaintiff said he did not consent to any search.

During this time, the plaintiff was subjected to random questioning for an extended period of time while handcuffed and unable to move freely. In total, there were 8 three defendant LAPD officers'. One unidentified officer was questioning the handcuffed plaintiff while defendant LAPD officers COVARRUBIAS and officer ZAVALA conducted the unlawful search and seizure of plaintiff's personal property. During the search of plaintiff's vehicle, officer COVARRUBIAS became noticeably frustrated after not being able to find anything illegal in plaintiff's car. Defendant LAPD officer

 ZAVALA walked over to Plaintiff who was standing facing a fence to the rear of his vehicle, unbuckled his belt to look down his pants.

Plaintiff informed defendant LAPD officers' several times that his equipment belt was left in a locker at his job so there are no guns or drugs in the vehicle. After scouring through the front and middle portion of plaintiff's vehicle, defendant LAPD officer ZAVALA, and officer COVARRUBIAS went to the back of plaintiff's vehicle opened his trunk then proceeded to remove all of plaintiff's personal property out onto the street (see exhibit B). The search defendant LAPD officers' undertook turned up nothing, however, the plaintiff noticed his missing Sony tablet that was located in the trunk of his vehicle in the exact area where the search was taking place. Plaintiff also realized after the search that \$150 in US currency was missing from his glove compartment on the passenger side of his vehicle. After a detention that lasted for two hours but may have been longer. Mr. Clark was released without a ticket or citation or a reason for the stop. His only "crime" it turned out, was being a black male. 30.

Mr. Clark was detained and searched without any legal basis, and have been shamed and demeaned by being forced to endure the humiliating questions and treatment from the officers who detained and searched him then seized his personal property. The actions of defendant LAPD officers, towards plaintiff Mr. Clark was a wanton violation and disregard of his constitutional rights against unlawful search and seizure. While it can be argued that the defendant officers are in the performance of their duty, Plaintiff would like to reiterate that nothing in his actions would justify a warrantless search, except that to his good faith belief, that he was merely profiled and considered to be a suspect because of the fact that his a black man. Mr. Clark travels on Alameda and throughout LAPDs patrol area for work- related reasons approximately once or twice a month. Mr. Clark has no intention of changing his job or his residence, and therefore has a reasonable expectation that he will travel these same streets in the future. Therefore, based on his stop, his observations of other stops coupled with the history of LAPD officers racially profiling and his needs to use those streets for business and personal reasons, Mr Clark has a valid and reasonable fear that he will be stopped by the LAPD again in the future solely on the basis of his race.

The LAPD has long relied upon race and ethnicity in conducting stops, detentions, interrogations and searches of motorist. They have engaged in an unabated, continuing pattern and practice of racial

 profiling. In recent years, the law enforcement practice of targeting motorist on the basis of race or ethnicity has increased dramatically nationwide. In addition, plaintiff believes LAPD is allowing and encouraging pretextual racial stops of black motorist. Racial profiling encourages officers to rely upon minor traffic violations that can be used as an excuse or pretext to stop motorist that somehow seem "suspicious". Once a stop has been made, officers are trained to seek consent to search-which most unwary motorists readily give-so that there is no need to point to any probable cause should questions about the legality of the search arise later. When consent is refused, police often detain the motorist.

Plaintiff originally file this complaint at LOS ANGELES SUPERIOR COURT, CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA against the Defendants on or about October 13, 2020. The complaint and the accompany documents were duly served to all defendants on October 27, 2020, except the city of Los Angeles which received their summons and complaint on November 5, 2020. (see proof of service to the Defendants, Exhibit C).

The Defendants willfully failed to file an answer to the Plaintiff's complaint, this action was later removed from the LOS ANGELES SUPERIOR COURT, CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA to the UNITED STATE DISTRICT COURT at the CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA. Exhibit D.

LEGAL STANDARD

Entry of default is appropriate "[w]hen a party against whom a judgment for affirmative relief is sought has failed to plead or otherwise defend." Fed. R. Civ. P. 55(a). A party has no duty to defend, however, unless the plaintiff properly served the defendant with the summons and complaint, or waives such service, pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure. <u>See Murphy Bros., Inc. v. Michetti Pipe Stringing, Inc., 526 U.S. 344, 350 (1999)</u> (holding "one becomes a party officially, and is required to take action in that capacity, only upon service of a summons").

Under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure ("Rule") 15, obtaining a default judgment is a two-step process. First, the plaintiff must establish default by affidavit or otherwise, after which the court clerk

enters default. Fed. R. Civ. P. 55(a). Second, the plaintiff must apply to the court for a default judgment if the plaintiff's claim is for a sum that is not certain or a sum that cannot be made certain by computation. Fed. R. Civ. P. 55(b). Pursuant to the Local Rules of the Central District of California, applications for default judgment must be accompanied by a declaration that includes the following information: (a) When and against what party the default was entered; (b) The identification of the pleading to which default was entered; (c) Whether the defaulting party is an infant or incompetent person, and if so, whether that person is represented by a general guardian, committee, conservator or other representative; (d) That the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 App. U.S.C. § 521) does not apply; and (e) That notice of the Application for Default has been served on the defaulting party, if the defaulting party has appeared in the action or it the damages sought are unliquidated. L.R. 55-1; see also Fed. R. Civ. P. 55(b)(2).

A plaintiff is not entitled to a court-ordered default judgment merely because the defendant defaulted, and the applicable procedural requirements are met. Fed. R. Civ. P. 55. The district court, in its discretion, may grant or deny a motion for default judgment. <u>Aldabe v. Aldabe, 616 F.2d 1089, 1092 (9th Cir. 1980)</u>. In conducting this evaluation, the Court considers the following factors: (1) the possibility of prejudice to the plaintiff; (2) the merits of plaintiff's substantive claim; (3) the sufficiency of the complaint; (4) the sum of money at stake in the action; (5) the possibility of a dispute concerning material facts; (6) whether the default was due to excusable neglect; and (7) the strong policy underlying the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure favoring decisions on the merits. <u>Eitel v. McCool, 782 F.2d 1470, 1471-72 (9th Cir. 1986)</u>. Although Raff filed an Opposition, he only indirectly addresses the excusable neglect factor, which the Court turns to first. (See generally, Opp'n.)

ARGUMENTS

1. Excusable Neglect

Pursuant to this Eitel factor, a court must consider whether the defendant's failure to respond to the plaintiff's allegations is the result of excusable neglect. *Eitel, 782 F.2d at 1472*. The possibility of excusable neglect is remote where the defendant is provided proper notice of the pending suit, but does not contact the court or the plaintiff in any manner. See *Phillip Morris USA, Inc. v. Castworld Prods., Inc., 219 F.R.D. 494, 501 (C.D. Cal. 2003). Cf. Eitel, 782 F.2d at 1472 (finding excusable neglect).*

was served and in fact reached what appeared to be a final settlement agreement prior to the deadline for [the] answer").

where "[t]he record shows that the parties engaged in earnest settlement negotiations after the complaint

In this present case the complaint and the accompany documents were duly served to all defendants on October 27, 2020, except the city of Los Angeles which was served on November 5, 2020. (See proof of service to the Defendants, Exhibit C). However, the Defendants wilfully failed to file an answer to the Plaintiff's complaint. Despite being put on notice of this action, the Defendants have failed to respond. Their failure to respond does not appear to be excusable. Thus, this factor favors granting default judgment. See *Wecosign, Inc. v. IFG Holdings, Inc., 845 F. Supp. 2d 1072, 1082 (C.D. Cal. 2012)*.

2. Possibility of Prejudice to Plaintiff

Under this *Eitel* factor, the Court examines whether a plaintiff will be prejudiced if the request for entry of default judgment is denied. *Eitel*, 782 F.2d at 1471. The plaintiff has a basis for establishing prejudice if, absent default judgment, the plaintiff is left without other recourse for recovery. See *PepsiCo, Inc. v. Cal. Sec. Cans.*, 238 F. Supp. 2d 1172, 1177 (C.D. Cal. 2002); *Philip Morris USA v. Castworld Prods.*, *Inc.*, 219 F.R.D. 494, 499 (C.D. Cal. 2003). In this instant case Plaintiff will suffer prejudice if default judgment is not entered against the Defendants because "it will be forced to commit time, resources, and personnel to prosecute a lawsuit" in which the Defendants will not meaningfully participate. Therefore, the Plaintiff "cannot litigate against Defendants because they did not properly appear in Court. Thus, the Plaintiff "cannot conduct discovery and move the case forward without Defendants' participation. Absent an entry of a default judgment against these Defendants, Plaintiff clearly would suffer prejudice." As discussed above, despite notices from this Court, Defendants continued to flout the Court's rules and failed to meaningfully participate in this action. It is "perfectly appropriate" to enter default judgment because it failed to retain counsel. See *United States v. High Country Broad. Co., Inc., 3 F.3d 1244, 1245 (9th Cir. 1993)*. Plaintiff only recourse for recovery is to pursue default judgment. Thus, this *Eitel* factor favors entry of default judgment.

3. Merits of Claim and Sufficiency of Verified Complaint

Under the second and third <u>Eitel</u> factors, the Court must determine whether Plaintiff's substantive claims have merit and whether Plaintiff's FAC sufficiently sets forth a claim for relief. <u>Eitel, 782 F.2d</u> <u>at 1471</u>. "The Ninth Circuit has suggested that these two factors require that a plaintiff 'state a claim on which the [plaintiff] may recover.' <u>PepsiCo, Inc. v. Cal. Sec. Cans, 238 F. Supp. 2d 1172, 1175</u> (C.D. Cal. 2002) (citing Danning v. Lavine, 572 F.2d 1386, 1388 (9th Cir. 1978)

Once a default has been entered by the clerk, the well-pleaded factual allegations of the complaint, except those concerning damages, are deemed to have been admitted by the non-responding party. *TeleVideo Sys. Inc. v. Heidenthal, 826 F.2d 915, 917-18 (9th Cir. 1987).*

In this instant case, Plaintiff's pleadings contain sufficient statement of claim against Defendants. A pleading in a civil action must contain "a short and plain statement of the claim showing that the pleader is entitled to relief." Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(a)(2). To satisfy the Rule 8 pleading requirements, a complaint must provide the defendant fair notice of what the plaintiff's claim is and the grounds upon which it rests. <u>Swierkiewicz v. Sorema N.A.</u>, 534 U.S. 506, 512, (2002).

Plaintiff's complaint provided a factual allegation against Defendants. Plaintiff did quote the specific statements and facts upon which the claim is premised and attached copies of the relevant documents to the complaint. These satisfy the applicable pleading requirements.

While a complaint "does not need detailed factual allegations," it must provide "more than labels and conclusions" or "a formulaic recitation of the elements of a cause of action." <u>Bell Atl. Corp.</u> v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 555 (2007); see Ashcroft v. Igbal, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009).

Plaintiff brought a civil action against the Defendants for:

- I. Violation of the Fourteenth Amendment 42 U.S.C. §1983;
- II. Violation of Title VI of Civil Rights Act Of 1964,42 U.S.C\u00a8 2000d Race Discrimination in A Federally Funded Programs;
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IV.	Violation of Commerce Clause, Article Iv, And 42 U.S.C.§1983;
V.	Violation Of 42 U.S.0 § 1983;
VI.	Conspiracy to Violate Civil Rights 42 U.S.C. §§ 1985 And 1986;
VII.	Violation of Government Code Section 11135 And 11139102;
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"an all too familiar set of circumstances- an intrusive law enforcement stop and seizure of innocent	
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Plaintiff successfully pled a claim against Defendants for violating, the Title VI of the civil Rights act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000 d. The Title VI of the civil Rights act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000 d provides that "no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color or national origin, be

Washington v. Lambert, 98 F.3d 1181, 1182 (1996).

excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. Federal regulations implementing title VI prohibit federally funded programs or activities from having a racially discriminatory impact or effect. The regulations provided that no program receiving financial assistance through the US Department of Justice shall: Utilize criteria or method of administration which have the effect of subjecting individuals to discrimination because of their race, color, or national origin, or have the effect of defeating or substantially impairing accomplishment of the objectives of the program as respects individuals of a particular race, color, or national origin.

Defendant LAPD receives federal financial assistance from the United States department of Justice, and thus is bound to abide by the terms of title VI and its implementing regulations, including 28 CFR section 42.101 et seq. The Eleventh Amendment immunity of the State of California, the LAPD was abrogated by Congress in its enactment of title VI. 42 USC section 2000d-7.

Defendants LAPD and Cities violation of 42 USC section 2000 d and its implementing regulations have caused and will continue to cause plaintiff to suffer tremendous harm and public humiliation in that he has been made to endure and will continue to be subjected to LAPD and or the cities practice of race-based discrimination without judicial intervention.

Plaintiff also successfully pled other causes of action that entitled him to a relief, see plaintiff's complaint, Exhibit E. Therefore, Plaintiff's pleadings contain legal conclusions which are supported by factual allegations. *Since they are* well-pleaded factual allegations, the court must, second, assume their veracity.

4. Amount of Damages

Next, "the court must consider the amount of money at stake in relation to the seriousness of Defendant's conduct." *PepsiCo*, *238 F. Supp. 2d at 1176*. If the amount of money at stake is proportional to the harm caused by the defendant's conduct, default judgment is warranted. Landstar *Ranger, Inc. v. Parth Enters., Inc., 725 F. Supp. 2d 916, 921 (C.D. Cal. 2010)*.

Here the Plaintiff is seeking for an (1) award of compensatory and general damages against defendants in each of them, for plaintiff in an amount to be determined according to proof at trial; (2) Award exemplary and punitive damages against all defendants sued in their individual capacities in an amount to be proven at trial; (3) An award of statutory damages and penalties pursuant to California civil code section 52 (b); (4) An award of plaintiff their cost, expenses and reasonable attorney fees pursuant to 42 USC 1988, California civil code section 52 (B) and 52.1 (h), and California code of civil procedure section 1021.5.

The Plaintiff is also seeking this court for an Issue an injunction (a) prohibiting defendants from engaging in vehicular stops or searches based on race or ethnicity; (b) ordering defendants to establish effective preventative mechanisms to ensure that discriminatory traffic stops and vehicular searches do not continue in the future, including but not limited to the following:

- (i)to cease and desist from all pretextual stops;
- (ii) to cease and desist from all searches without probable cause of criminal activity;
- (iii) to collect and maintain comprehensive records of all traffic stops in the state of California, including those stops that do not result in the issuance of a citation; and
- (iv) to establish a procedure to enable each person involved in a traffic stop the right to file a grievance to contest illegal acts and acts motivated by bias;
- (v)to establish clear and consistent discipline in the event a grievance is sustained;

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27 28 (vi) to establish a civilian complaint review board;

(vii) to appoint an independent auditor who will review the records of officers quarterly to determine that there is compliance with these reforms;

(viii) to establish early warning system which will collect information such as citizen complaints against an officer and other information regarding misconduct and will alert the officer's supervisor when a set number of incidents are recorded;

(ix) to establish a mechanism for internal discipline of officers who are found to have engaged in racial profiling and pretextual stops.; and

(x) to require that all officers participate in regular and recurring training to assure that the officers do not act due to bias based on race or ethnicity.

Considering the facts that the Defendant violated the Plaintiff civil rights, racial discrimination is a serious violation not all only to the rights of the plaintiff but also to the good people of America, thus the amount of money at stake is proportional to the harm caused by the defendant's conduct, and therefore default judgment is warranted.

5. Possibility of Dispute Concerning Material Facts

The next *Eitel* factor examines the likelihood of dispute between the parties regarding the material facts surrounding the case. Eitel, 782 F.2d at 1471-72. This factor is particularly relevant when the parties to a lawsuit dispute material facts in their pleadings and one party subsequently defaults. Id. at 1472. However, when the moving party supports its claims with ample evidence and the defaulting party makes "no attempt to challenge the accuracy of the allegations in the complaint, no factual disputes exist that preclude the entry of default judgment." Landstar Ranger, 725 F. Supp. 2d 916 at 922.

I, Murad Clark do hereby declare that I have personal knowledge of the facts set forth herein and if called as a witness in this case, I could and would competently testify as follows;

- 1. I am over 18 years of age and duly competent and authorized to provide this Declaration. I make this Declaration on my own personal knowledge and not upon information or belief, and the statements herein are true and correct.
- 2. I am the Plaintiff in this lawsuit, and by virtue of my position, I am conversant with the facts and circumstances of this suit and other related facts.
- 3. This is a civil rights action seeking declaratory, injunctive, and monetary relief against Defendants engaging in and condoning a continuing pattern and practice of race-based stops, detentions and searches of motorists of color, traveling on the public streets and highways of the State of California. The specific abuses giving rise to this action occurred on December 18, 2019 in the area of 1426 Channing St. Los Angeles, Ca 90021.
- 4. Plaintiff originally file this complaint at LOS ANGELES SUPERIOR COURT, CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA against the Defendants on or about October 13, 2020.
- 5. The complaint and the accompany documents were duly served to all defendants on October 27, 2020, except the city of Los Angeles which received their summons and complaint on November 5, 2020. (Exhibit C).
- 6. The Defendants willfully failed to file an answer to the Plaintiff's complaint, this action was later removed from the LOS ANGELES SUPERIOR COURT, CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA to the UNITED STATE DISTRICT COURT at the CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA. Exhibit D.
- 7. The defendants in this action are not infant or incompetent person.
- 8. And that the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 App. U.S.C. § 521) does not apply to this action.

9. I make this declaration in support of motion for default judgment against the defendant.

I declare under Penalty of perjury pursuant to the laws of the United States of America that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on December 10, 2020

Name of declarant here (Declarant)

1 2 **CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE** 3 4 This statement is to certify that, on **December 10, 2020**, a copy of the foregoing 5 6 has been e-mailed to all parties who have agreed to accept service electronically: 7 **SERVICE LIST** 8 9 MICHAEL N. FEUER, City Attorney 10 KATHLEEN A. KENEALY, Chief Deputy City Attorney (SBN 212289) 11 SCOTT MARCUS, Senior Assistant City Attorney (SBN 184980) CORY M. BRENTE, Senior Assistant City Attorney (SBN 12 115453) 13 NICHOLAS D. LAUBER, Deputy City Attorney (SBN 288499) 200 N. Main Street, 6th Floor, City Hall East 14 Los Angeles, California 90012 15 Tel: (213) 978-7052; Fax: (213) 978-8785 Email: nicholas.lauber 0,1acity.org 16 17 18 19 Pro Se Murad Clark 20 2355Westwood Boulevard 21 Los Angeles, CA 90064 Telephone: (323) 907-5475 22 Email: muradclark@gmail.com 23 PLAINTIFF IN PRO PER 24 25 26 27 28

