FILED
U.S. DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT ARKANSAS

# IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF ARKANSAS CENTRAL DIVISION

FEB **0 2** 2022

TAMMY H. DOWNS, CLERK

By: DEP CLERK

CAYLA JACKSON, Individually and on Behalf of All Others Similarly Situated

VS.

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No. 4:22-cv-93 - JM

**PRAIRIE COUNTY, ARKANSAS** 

**DEFENDANT** 

#### ORIGINAL COMPLAINT—COLLECTIVE ACTION

Plaintiff Cayla Jackson individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated, by and through her attorneys Colby Qualls and Josh Sanford of the Sanford Law Firm, PLLC, for her Original Complaint—Collective Action ("Complaint") against Defendant Prairie County, Arkansas ("Defendant"), states and alleges as follows:

#### I. PRELIMINARY STATEMENTS

- 1. This is a collective action brought by Plaintiff, individually and on behalf of all similarly situated employees who were employed by Defendant at any time within a three-year period preceding the filing of this Complaint.
- 2. Plaintiff brings this action under the Fair Labor Standards Act, 29 U.S.C. § 201, et seq. ("FLSA"), and the Arkansas Minimum Wage Act, Ark. Code Ann. § 11-4-201, et seq. ("AMWA"), for declaratory judgment, monetary damages, liquidated damages, interest and costs, including reasonable attorneys' fees, as a result of Defendant's policy and practice of failing to pay Plaintiff and all other similarly situated employees lawful overtime compensation for hours worked in excess of forty per week.

This case assigned to District Judge Moody and to Magistrate Judge Ray

Page 1 of 12
Cayla Jackson, et al. v. Prairie County, Arkansas
U.S.D.C. (E.D. Ark.) No. 4:22-cv-\_\_\_
Original Complaint—Collective Action

 Upon information and belief, for at least three years prior to the filing of this Complaint, Defendant has willfully and intentionally committed violations of the FLSA and the AMWA as described, *infra*.

#### II. JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 4. The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Arkansas has subject matter jurisdiction over this suit under the provisions of 28 U.S.C. § 1331 because this suit raises federal questions under the FLSA.
- 5. Plaintiff's claims under the AMWA form part of the same case or controversy and arise out of the same facts as the FLSA claims alleged in this complaint. Therefore, this Court has supplemental jurisdiction over Plaintiff's AMWA claims pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1367(a).
- 6. The acts complained of herein were committed and had their principal effect against Plaintiff within the Central Division of the Eastern District of Arkansas; therefore, venue is proper within this District pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391.

#### III. THE PARTIES

- 7. Plaintiff is an individual and resident of Prairie County.
- 8. Defendant is a geographic and political subdivision of Arkansas.
- 9. Defendant operates the Sheriff's department wherein Plaintiff was employed within the three years preceding the filing of this lawsuit.
- 10. Defendant can be served through the Prairie County Judge, who is Mike Skarda, at 200 Courthouse Square, Des Arc, Arkansas 72040.

IV. FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

11. Plaintiff repeats and realleges all previous paragraphs of this Complaint as

though fully incorporated in this section.

12. Defendant is an "employer" within the meaning set forth in the FLSA and

the AMWA and was, at all times relevant to the allegations in this Complaint, Plaintiff's

employer.

13. Defendant is an employer subject to the FLSA as a public agency

pursuant to 29 U.S.C. § 203.

14. Plaintiff was employed by Defendant as a Jailer from April of 2020 until

October of 2020, and as a Dispatcher from October of 2020 until November of 2021.

15. Defendant classified Plaintiff as nonexempt from the overtime

requirements of the FLSA and the AMWA and paid her an hourly rate.

16. At all times material herein, Plaintiff has been entitled to the rights,

protections and benefits provided under the FLSA and the AMWA.

17. Defendant also employed other Jailers and Dispatchers within the three

vears preceding the filing of this lawsuit.

18. Defendant participated in the management of Plaintiff's work, including

setting and enforcing the amount of hours worked and the amount and manner of

compensation paid.

19. Defendant dictated, controlled and ratified, both implicitly and explicitly.

the wage and hour practices and all related employee compensation policies that are at

issue in this case.

Page 3 of 12
Cayla Jackson, et al. v. Prairie County, Arkansas
U.S.D.C. (E.D. Ark.) No. 4:22-cv-\_\_\_
Original Complaint—Collective Action

20. Defendant operates the Prairie County Sheriff's Department where

Plaintiff was employed within the past three years as a Jailer and a Dispatcher.

21. At all relevant times herein, Defendant directly hired Jailers and

Dispatchers to work at its facilities, paid them wages and benefits, controlled their work

schedules, duties, protocols, applications, assignments and employment conditions,

and kept at least some records regarding their employment.

22. Plaintiff regularly worked over forty hours in a week.

23. As both a Jailer and as a Dispatcher, Plaintiff was generally scheduled to

work seven twelve-hour shifts within a two-week period.

24. Upon information and belief, other Jailers and Dispatchers had similar

schedules to Plaintiff and also regularly worked over forty hours in a week.

25. Plaintiff and other Dispatchers and Jailers were regularly required to work

additional hours outside their scheduled shifts.

26. For example, Dispatchers were required to arrive to their shift 10 to 15

minutes before their scheduled start time.

27. Additionally, as both a Dispatcher and a Jailer, Plaintiff was occasionally

required to come in to work on her day off. Other Dispatchers and Jailers were also

occasionally required to work on their days off.

28. Plaintiff and other Dispatchers and Jailers were not paid for all hours

worked.

29. Plaintiff and other Dispatchers and Jailers were generally required to

record only 84 hours during a two-week period.

Page 4 of 12
Cayla Jackson, et al. v. Prairie County, Arkansas
U.S.D.C. (E.D. Ark.) No. 4:22-cv-\_\_\_
Original Complaint—Collective Action

30. When Plaintiff and other Dispatchers and Jailers were permitted to record

additional hours, they were either paid their regular hourly rate (i.e., were not paid an

overtime premium) or were paid with comp time. Upon information and belief, the comp

time was paid out at a 1:1 ratio rather than at 1.5 times the additional hours worked.

31. Upon information and belief, Defendant takes advantage of the election

available to it under 29 U.S.C. § 203 as a public agency and has established a work

period of 86 hours over 14 days for law enforcement activities.

32. However, pursuant to 29 C.F.R. § 553.211(g), a dispatcher is a "civilian"

employee and is expressly not included in the term "employee in law enforcement

activities."

33. Defendant failed to pay Plaintiff and other Jailers and Dispatchers for all

hours worked.

34. Defendant failed to pay Plaintiff and other Dispatchers a proper overtime

rate for hours worked over 40 each week.

35. Defendant failed to pay Plaintiff and other Jailers a proper overtime rate

for hours worked over 86 in a two-week period.

36. Defendant did not pay Plaintiff and other Jailers and Dispatchers for all

hours worked.

37. Defendant knew or should have known that Plaintiff and other Jailers and

Dispatchers were working additional hours off-the-clock for which they were not

compensated.

38. At all relevant times, Defendant has deprived Plaintiff and other Jailers

and Dispatchers of regular wages and overtime compensation for all hours worked.

Page 5 of 12
Cayla Jackson, et al. v. Prairie County, Arkansas
U.S.D.C. (E.D. Ark.) No. 4:22-cv-\_\_\_
Original Complaint—Collective Action

39. Defendant knew or showed reckless disregard for whether its actions violated the FLSA.

#### V. REPRESENTATIVE ACTION ALLEGATIONS

- 40. Plaintiff repeats and realleges all previous paragraphs of this Complaint as though fully incorporated in this section.
- 41. Plaintiff brings this claim for relief for violation of the FLSA as a collective action pursuant to Section 16(b) of the FLSA, 29 U.S.C. § 216(b), on behalf of all persons similarly situated who were, are, or will be employed by Defendant within the applicable statute of limitations period, who are entitled to payment of the following types of damages:
  - A. Overtime premiums for all hours worked over forty in any week;
  - B. Liquidated damages; and
  - C. Attorney's fees and costs.
  - 42. Plaintiff proposes the following collective under the FLSA:

#### All Jailers and Dispatchers in the past three years.

- 43. In conformity with the requirements of FLSA Section 16(b), Plaintiff has filed or will soon file a written Consent to Join this lawsuit.
- 44. The relevant time period dates back three years from the date on which Plaintiff's Original Complaint—Collective Action was filed herein and continues forward through the date of judgment pursuant to 29 U.S.C. § 255(a), except as set forth herein below.
- 45. The members of the proposed FLSA collective are similarly situated in that they share these traits:

- A. They were paid hourly;
- B. They worked overtime in at least one week within the three years preceding the filing of this lawsuit;
- C. They were subject to Defendant's common policy of requiring Jailers and Dispatchers to work off the clock; and
- D. They were subject to Defendant's common policy of failing to pay Jailers and Dispatchers for all hours worked.
- 46. Plaintiff is unable to state the exact number of the collective but believes that the collective exceeds twenty persons.
- 47. Defendant can readily identify the members of the collective, who are a certain portion of the current and former employees of Defendant.
- 48. The names and physical and mailing addresses of the probable FLSA collective action plaintiffs are available from Defendant.
- 49. The email addresses of many of the probable FLSA collective action plaintiffs are available from Defendant.

## VI. FIRST CLAIM FOR RELIEF (Individual Claim for FLSA Violations)

- 50. Plaintiff repeats and realleges all previous paragraphs of this Complaint as though fully set forth herein.
- 51. Plaintiff asserts this claim for damages and declaratory relief pursuant to the FLSA, 29 U.S.C. § 201, et seq.
- 52. At all relevant times, Defendant has been, and continues to be, an enterprise engaged in commerce within the meaning of the FLSA, 29 U.S.C. § 203.

53. 29 U.S.C. §§ 206 and 207 require any enterprise engaged in commerce to

pay a minimum wage for all hours worked up to 40 each week and to pay 1.5 times their

regular wages for all hours worked over 40, unless an employee meets certain

exemption requirements of 29 U.S.C. § 213 and all accompanying DOL regulations.

54. Defendant classified Plaintiff as nonexempt from the requirements of the

FLSA.

55. Defendant failed to pay Plaintiff for all hours worked.

56. Defendant failed to pay Plaintiff a sufficient overtime premium for all hours

worked over forty each week.

57. Defendant knew or should have known that its actions violated the FLSA.

58. Defendant's conduct and practices, as described above, were willful.

59. By reason of the unlawful acts alleged herein, Defendant is liable to

Plaintiff for monetary damages, liquidated damages and costs, including reasonable

attorney's fees provided by the FLSA for all violations which occurred beginning at least

three years preceding the filing of Plaintiff's initial complaint, plus periods of equitable

tolling.

60. Defendant has not acted in good faith nor with reasonable grounds to

believe its actions and omissions were not a violation of the FLSA, and, as a result

thereof, Plaintiff is entitled to recover an award of liquidated damages in an amount

equal to the amount of unpaid overtime premium pay described above pursuant to

Section 16(b) of the FLSA, 29 U.S.C. § 216(b).

61. Alternatively, should the Court find that Defendant acted in good faith in failing to pay Plaintiff as provided by the FLSA, Plaintiff is entitled to an award of prejudgment interest at the applicable legal rate.

## VII. SECOND CLAIM FOR RELIEF (Collective Action Claim for FLSA Violations)

- 62. Plaintiff repeats and realleges all previous paragraphs of this Complaint as though fully set forth herein.
- 63. Plaintiff asserts this claim for damages and declaratory relief on behalf of all similarly situated employees pursuant to the FLSA, 29 U.S.C. § 201, et seq.
- 64. At all relevant times, Defendant has been, and continues to be, an enterprise engaged in commerce within the meaning of the FLSA, 29 U.S.C. § 203.
- 65. 29 U.S.C. §§ 206 and 207 require any enterprise engaged in commerce to pay a minimum wage for all hours worked up to 40 each week and to pay 1.5 times their regular wages for all hours worked over 40, unless an employee meets certain exemption requirements of 29 U.S.C. § 213 and all accompanying DOL regulations.
- 66. Defendant classified Plaintiff and other similarly situated employees as nonexempt from the overtime provisions of the FLSA.
- 67. Defendant failed to pay Plaintiff and similarly situated employees for all hours worked.
- 68. Defendant failed to pay Plaintiff and similarly situated employees a sufficient overtime premium for all hours worked over forty each week
- 69. Defendant deprived Plaintiff and similarly situated employees of compensation for all of the hours worked over forty per week, in violation of the FLSA.
  - 70. Defendant knew or should have known that its actions violated the FLSA.

71. Defendant's conduct and practices, as described above, were willful.

72. By reason of the unlawful acts alleged herein, Defendant is liable to

Plaintiff and all similarly situated employees for monetary damages, liquidated damages

and costs, including reasonable attorney's fees provided by the FLSA for all violations

which occurred beginning at least three years preceding the filing of Plaintiff's initial

complaint, plus periods of equitable tolling.

73. Defendant has not acted in good faith nor with reasonable grounds to

believe its actions and omissions were not a violation of the FLSA, and, as a result

thereof, Plaintiff and similarly situated employees are entitled to recover an award of

liquidated damages in an amount equal to the amount of unpaid overtime premium pay

described above pursuant to Section 16(b) of the FLSA, 29 U.S.C. § 216(b).

74. Alternatively, should the Court find that Defendant acted in good faith in

failing to pay Plaintiff and the collective members as provided by the FLSA, they are

entitled to an award of prejudgment interest at the applicable legal rate.

VIII. THIRD CLAIM FOR RELIEF (Individual Claim for AMWA Violations)

75. Plaintiff repeats and realleges all previous paragraphs of this Complaint as

though fully set forth herein.

76. Plaintiff asserts this claim for damages and declaratory relief pursuant to

the AMWA, Ark. Code Ann. §§ 11-4-201, et seq.

77. At all relevant times, Defendant was Plaintiff's "employer" within the

meaning of the AMWA, Ark. Code Ann. § 11-4-203(4).

78. Sections 210 and 211 of the AMWA require employers to pay all

employees a minimum wage for all hours worked, and to pay 1.5 times regular wages

Page 10 of 12
Cayla Jackson, et al. v. Prairie County, Arkansas
U.S.D.C. (E.D. Ark.) No. 4:22-cv-\_\_\_
Original Complaint—Collective Action

for all hours worked over forty hours in a week, unless an employee meets the

exemption requirements of 29 U.S.C. § 213 and accompanying DOL regulations.

79. Defendant classified Plaintiff as nonexempt from the requirements of

AMWA.

80. Defendant failed to pay Plaintiff for all hours worked.

81. Defendant failed to pay Plaintiff a sufficient overtime premium for all hours

worked over forty each week.

82. Defendant knew or should have known that its practices violated the

AMWA.

83. Defendant's conduct and practices, as described above, were willful,

intentional, unreasonable, arbitrary, and in bad faith.

84. By reason of the unlawful acts alleged herein, Defendant is liable to

Plaintiff for, and Plaintiff seeks, monetary damages, liquidated damages, prejudgment

interest, and costs, including reasonable attorney's fees as provided by the AMWA.

IX. PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, premises considered, Plaintiff Cayla Jackson, individually and on

behalf of all others similarly situated, respectfully prays as follows:

A. That Defendant be summoned to appear and answer this Complaint;

B. That Defendant be required to account to Plaintiff, the collective action

members, and the Court for all the hours worked by them and all monies paid to them;

C. A declaratory judgment that Defendant's practices alleged herein violate

the FLSA, the AMWA and the attendant regulations;

- D. Certification of, and proper notice to, together with an opportunity to participate in the litigation, all qualifying current and former employees;
- E. Judgment for damages for all unpaid overtime compensation under the FLSA, the AMWA and the attendant regulations;
- F. Judgment for liquidated damages pursuant to the FLSA, the AMWA and the attendant regulations, in an amount equal to all unpaid overtime compensation;
  - G. For a reasonable attorney's fee, costs and pre-judgment interest; and
  - H. Such other and further relief as this Court may deem just and proper.

Respectfully submitted,

CAYLA JACKSON, Individually and On Behalf of All Others Similarly Situated, PLAINTIFF

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### IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF ARKANSAS CENTRAL DIVISION

CAYLA JACKSON, Individually and on Behalf of All Others Similarly Situated

**PLAINTIFF** 

VS.

No. 4:22-cv-\_\_\_\_

PRAIRIE COUNTY, ARKANSAS

**DEFENDANT** 

#### **CONSENT TO JOIN COLLECTIVE ACTION**

I was employed as an hourly Jailer or Dispatcher for Prairie County, Arkansas, within the past three years. I understand this lawsuit is being brought under the Fair Labor Standards Act for <u>unpaid wages</u>. I consent to becoming a party-plaintiff in this lawsuit, to be represented by Sanford Law Firm, PLLC, and to be bound by any settlement of this action or adjudication by the Court.

CAYLA JACKSON February 2, 2022

Josh Sanford, Esq.
SANFORD LAW FIRM, PLLC
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Little Rock, Arkansas 72211
Telephone: (501) 221-0088
Facsimile: (888) 787-2040
josh@sanfordlawfirm.com

IS 44 (Rev. 06/17)

CIVIL COVER SHEET  $\mu: 22 - cV - 93 - JM$ The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

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I. (a) PLAINTIFFS				DEFENDANTS							
CAYLA JACKSON, Individually and on Behalf of All Others Similarly Situated				PRAIRIE COUNTY, ARKANSAS							
(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff Prairie  (EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)				County of Residence of First Listed Defendant  (IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY)  NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED.							
											Josh Santorneys (Firm Name) Josh Santord, SANFORD 10800 Financial Centre P 501-221-0088; josh@san
II. BASIS OF JURISDI		ne Box Only)	III. CI	TIZENSHIP OF (For Diversity Cases On		INCIP	AL PARTIES	(Place an "X" in			
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IV. NATURE OF SUIT	F	Click here for: Nature of Suit Code Descriptions.  ORFEITURE/PENALTY BANKRUPTCY OTHER STATUTES									
☐ 110 Insurance ☐ 120 Marine ☐ 130 Miller Act ☐ 140 Negotiable Instrument	PERSONAL INJURY  310 Airplane 315 Airplane Product Liability	PERSONAL INJUR  365 Personal Injury - Product Liability  367 Health Care/		25 Drug Related Seizure of Property 21 USC 8 90 Other		422 Appeal 28 USC 158   423 Withdrawal   28 USC 157   PROPERTY RIGHTS   820 Copyrights   830 Patent   835 Patent - Abbreviated   New Drug Application   840 Trademark		☐ 375 False Claims Act ☐ 376 Qui Tam (31 USC ☐ 3729(a)) ☐ 400 State Reapportionment ☐ 410 Antitrust ☐ 430 Banks and Banking ☐ 450 Commerce ☐ 460 Deportation ☐ 470 Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations			
☐ 150 Recovery of Overpayment & Enforcement of Judgment ☐ 151 Medicare Act ☐ 152 Recovery of Defaulted Student Loans	☐ 320 Assault, Libel & Slander ☐ 330 Federal Employers' Liability ☐ 340 Marine ☐ 345 Marine Product	Pharmaceutical Personal Injury Product Liability  368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability PERSONAL PROPER  370 Other Fraud  371 Truth in Lending 380 Other Personal Property Damage 700 Truth Damage Product Liability	1								
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VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT: CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION UNDER RULE 23, F.R.Cv.P.			N I	DEMAND \$ CHECK YES only if demanded in complaint:  JURY DEMAND:							
VIII. RELATED CASS	E(S) (See instructions):	JUDGE				_DOCI	KET NUMBER _				
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