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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

KENDRA LIBBEY, individually and on behalf of
all others similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

v.

UNILEVER UNITED STATES, INC., and
CONOPCO, INC. d/b/a UNILEVER HOME &
PERSONAL CARE USA,

Defendants.

Case No.: 3:20-cv-8075

CLASS ACTION

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT

1
2 Plaintiff, Kendra Libbey (“Plaintiff”), on behalf of herself and all others similarly situated,
3 brings this class action against Defendant Unilever United States, Inc. (“Unilever”) and Defendant
4 Conopco, Inc. d/b/a Unilever Home & Personal Care USA (“Conopco”) (collectively, “Unilever”
5 or “Defendants”), and alleges on personal knowledge, investigation of her counsel, and on
6 information and belief as follows:

7
8 **INTRODUCTION**

9 1. This is a nationwide class action brought by Plaintiff on behalf of herself and
10 other similarly situated consumers who purchased TRESemmé Keratin Hair Smoothing
11 Shampoo and/or TRESemmé Keratin Smooth Color Shampoo (collectively, the “Products” or
12 “TRESemmé Products”) for personal or household use and not for resale (“Class” or “Class
13 Members”).

14 2. Plaintiff purchased the Products because of Unilever’s uniform false
15 representation that the Products would smooth her hair and coat it with Keratin, a protein found
16 naturally in hair. Undisclosed by Defendants to Plaintiff and Class Members and therefore
17 unknown to Plaintiff and Class Members, the Products contain an ingredient or combination of
18 ingredients that causes significant hair loss and/or scalp irritation upon proper application. At
19 least one ingredient in the Products, DMDM hydantoin, is a formaldehyde donor known to
20 slowly leach formaldehyde when coming into contact with water. Formaldehyde is a well-
21 known human carcinogen that can cause cancer and other harmful reactions when absorbed into
22 skin. DMDM hydantoin has been used as a preservative in Unilever products for more than a
23 decade; however, the use of DMDM hydantoin as a preservative creates an entirely unnecessary
24 risk because various safer natural alternatives exist. As such, the Products are rendered
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1 dangerous and unsafe for sale as over-the-counter hair smoothing shampoo products.

2 3. Defendants failed to properly warn consumers of the risks and dangers attendant
3 to the use of such a strong ingredient on their hair and scalp – even well after Defendants knew
4 or should have known of the Products’ hazards. Defendants continued to conceal the dangers of
5 the Products by failing to appropriately and fully recall the Products, by continuing to claim the
6 Products were safe when properly applied, and by failing to warn consumers of the dangers
7 attendant to the Products’ use.
8

9 4. Defendants’ uniform acts and omissions in connection with the development,
10 marketing, sale and delivery of the Products violate the consumer protection laws of the states
11 of residence of Plaintiff and other members of the Class, breach Unilever’s express and implied
12 warranties to Plaintiff and the Class, and unjustly enrich Defendants.
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14 5. Unilever labeled, advertised, promoted and sold the Products targeting women
15 who wanted smooth, shiny, manageable hair with no frizz.
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1 6. The Products are marketed in large bold font on the Products' front labels as
2 "Keratin Smooth":



21 7. Through its labeling and marketing campaign, including through its website and
22 online advertisements, Unilever made a number of express warranties: that the Products contain
23 a keratin formula intended to smooth hair, add softness and shine, and prevent frizzing and
24 tangling;¹ and that the Products “deeply nourish,” “gently cleanse,” and “repair hair.”²

25
26 ¹ www.TRESemme.com/us/en/collections/keratin-smooth.html (Last Accessed October 8, 2020).

27 ² www.TRESemme.com/us/en/collections/keratin-smooth.html (“How it works”)(Last Accessed
28 October 8, 2020).

1 8. However, the Products' formula contains an ingredient, or combination of
2 ingredients, that has caused Plaintiff and thousands of consumers to experience hair loss and/or
3 scalp irritation.

4 9. At least one ingredient in the Products, DMDM hydantoin, is a formaldehyde
5 donor known to slowly leach formaldehyde when coming into contact with water.
6 Formaldehyde is a well-known human carcinogen that can cause cancer and other harmful
7 reactions when absorbed into skin. DMDM hydantoin has been used a preservative in Unilever
8 products for more than a decade; however, the use of DMDM hydantoin as a preservative is an
9 entirely unnecessary risk because various safer natural alternatives exist.

10 10. DMDM hydantoin is found in the Products as stated on the Products' back labels:

- 11 • Below is the ingredient list located on the back label of the TRESemmé
12 Keratin Smooth Color Shampoo:

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15 **INGREDIENTS:** WATER (AQUA), SODIUM LAURETH SULFATE, COCAMIDOPROPYL BETAINE, SODIUM CHLORIDE, GLYCERIN, HYDROLYZED KERATIN, SCLEROCARYA BIRREA SEED OIL, ARGANIA SPINOSA KERNEL OIL, DIMETHICONOL, FRAGRANCE (PARFUM), GLYCOL DISTEARATE, CARBOMER, GUAR HYDROXYPROPYLTRIMONIUM CHLORIDE, TEA-DODECYLBENZENESULFONATE, CITRIC ACID, PPG-9, DMDM HYDANTOIN, DISODIUM EDTA, PEG-45M, SODIUM BENZOATE, ETHYLHEXYL METHOXYCINNAMATE, METHYLCHLOROISOTHIAZOLINONE, METHYLISOTHIAZOLINONE, COCAMIDE MEA, MICA (CI 77019), TITANIUM DIOXIDE (CI 77891)

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19 • Below is the ingredient list located on the back label of the TRESemmé
20 Keratin Hair Smoothing Shampoo:

21 **INGREDIENTS:** WATER (AQUA), SODIUM LAURETH SULFATE, COCAMIDOPROPYL BETAINE, SODIUM CHLORIDE, GLYCERIN, HYDROLYZED KERATIN, SCLEROCARYA BIRREA SEED OIL, DIMETHICONOL, FRAGRANCE (PARFUM), GLYCOL DISTEARATE, CARBOMER, GUAR HYDROXYPROPYLTRIMONIUM CHLORIDE, TEA-DODECYLBENZENESULFONATE, CITRIC ACID, PPG-9, DMDM HYDANTOIN, DISODIUM EDTA, PEG-45M, SODIUM BENZOATE, METHYLCHLOROISOTHIAZOLINONE, METHYLISOTHIAZOLINONE, COCAMIDE MEA, MICA (CI 77019), TITANIUM DIOXIDE (CI 77891)

1 11. In fact, for approximately a decade or longer, Unilever has known that DMDM
2 hydantoin can cause or contribute to hair loss and scalp irritation when used as a preservative
3 in hair products, including keratin products. Specifically, DMDM hydantoin, and other
4 ingredients, were the subject of prior litigation initiated in 2012 against Unilever for hair loss
5 and scalp irritation related to its Suave Professionals Keratin Infusion products.³ In fact, the
6 Suave Keratin product was recalled in 2012 following complaints that the products caused hair
7 loss and scalp irritation, and were advertised as formaldehyde free, while containing DMDM
8 hydantoin. The \$10.2 million settlement in Unilever’s Suave case was upheld by the Seventh
9 Circuit Court of Appeals in 2016.

11 12. Despite having public knowledge since at least 2012 that DMDM hydantoin, as
12 a formaldehyde donor, can cause or contribute to hair loss and scalp irritation, Unilever
13 continued to proudly include this ingredient as a preservative in its products, and even goes so
14 far as to represent to the public that DMDM hydantoin is safe for use in its hair care products.⁴

16 13. Upon information and belief, despite Unilever’s current acknowledgment that it
17 uses DMDM hydantoin as a preservative, it has recently reformulated the Products and has
18 removed DMDM hydantoin and replaced it with several other ingredients that serve as
19 preservatives.

21 14. Although Unilever has, or should have been aware, of the high potential for
22 toxicity or allergic reaction caused by one or more of the ingredients in the TRESemmé
23 Products, it has failed and continues to fail to warn consumers about possible reactions,
24 including hair loss and scalp irritation.

26 ³ *Reid, et al. v. Unilever United States, Inc., et al.*, C.A.N. 1:12-cv-06058 (N.D. Ill.).

27 ⁴ [https://www.unilever.com/brands/our-products-and-ingredients/your-ingredient-questions-
28 answered/formaldehyde-donors.html](https://www.unilever.com/brands/our-products-and-ingredients/your-ingredient-questions-answered/formaldehyde-donors.html) (Last Accessed October 8, 2020).

1 15. Nowhere on the package labeling or on Unilever’s websites or other marketing
2 materials did Unilever warn Plaintiff and members of the Class that they were at risk of
3 significant hair loss and/or scalp irritation upon proper application of the products. Even
4 Unilever’s “Formaldehyde donors” page fails to recognize any associated risk of reaction to
5 DMDM hydantoin. Accordingly, Unilever misled and deceived the public, and placed their
6 customers in harm’s way, all for the sake of increased profits.
7

8 16. U.S. consumers reasonably expect that their hair care products will not cause
9 significant hair loss and/or scalp irritation because of defective design and manufacturing or
10 because of inadequate research of due diligence. In addition, U.S. consumers had no expectation
11 that the Products would cause scalp irritation and cause their hair to fall out.
12

13 17. Further, consumers reasonably expect that if Unilever, the company primarily
14 responsible for developing, manufacturing, marketing and distributing the Products, knew that
15 the Products would or could cause hair loss (whether by proper application or by
16 misapplication), Unilever would make a disclosure to consumers as soon as it determined there
17 was a widespread problem, rather than attempting to conceal the problem. By downplaying,
18 concealing and misrepresenting the Products and the safety and risks of their use, Unilever failed
19 in its duty to provide consumers with adequate information. Unilever continued to create and
20 perpetuate a false public perception that there was little or no risk of harm from the use of its
21 Products even knowing of the Products’ dangers. Moreover, Unilever’s efforts to conceal and
22 downplay the hundreds if not thousands of complaints of Class Members who have lost their
23 hair or endured scalp irritation, as a result of using the Products as intended, comprised a pointed
24 attack on consumers.
25

26 18. Defendants manufacture, advertise, market, distribute and sell the TRESemmé
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1 Products throughout the United States, and in California. As alleged with specificity herein,
2 Defendants did so through an extensive, uniform, nationwide advertising and marketing
3 campaign, specifically marketing the Products as “smooth” keratin-based Shampoos.

4 19. Unilever labeled, advertised, promoted and sold the Products targeting women
5 who wanted to safely nourish, cleanse, and repair hair in order to obtain smooth, shiny,
6 manageable hair with no frizz. Through an extensive marketing campaign and via its website
7 and packaging, Unilever made a number of express warranties, including that the Products were
8 formulated to safely nourish, cleanse, and repair hair in order to obtain smooth, “frizz-less”
9 results.
10

11 20. Unilever further represented through its website that, *inter alia*, its formaldehyde
12 donors, including DMDM hydantoin, “are used in personal care products as safe and efficient
13 preservatives.”⁵ It further represents that “Product safety is our top priority... People trust us to
14 provide them with products that are safe for them, their families and the environment,”⁶ and that
15 its “expert scientists use state of the art methods to ensure [Unilever] use[es] ingredients at the
16 minimum level required to be effective, without causing people to become allergic.”⁷
17

18 21. However, Unilever knew, but failed to disclose to Plaintiff and the putative Class
19 the danger of hair loss and/or scalp irritation caused by one or more ingredients in the Products,
20 including the formaldehyde donor ingredient DMDM hydantoin.
21

22 22. Defendants failed to properly warn consumers of the risks and dangers attendant
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24 ⁵ <https://www.unilever.com/brands/our-products-and-ingredients/your-ingredient-questions-answered/formaldehyde-donors.html> (Last Accessed October 8, 2020).

25 ⁶ <https://www.unilever.com/brands/our-products-and-ingredients/Our-approach-to-the-safety-of-products-and-ingredients/> (Last Accessed October 8, 2020).

26 ⁷ <https://www.unilever.com/brands/our-products-and-ingredients/> (Last Accessed October 8,
27 2020).

1 to the use of such a strong preservative and human toxicants on their hair and scalp – even well
2 after Defendants knew or should have known of its hazards. Defendants continued to conceal
3 the dangers of the Products by failing to recall the Products, and otherwise claim they are safe
4 when properly applied.

5 23. As a result of Defendants’ misconduct and misrepresentations, Plaintiff and
6 putative Class Members have suffered injury in fact, including economic damages.

7 24. Plaintiff brings this suit to halt the unlawful sales and marketing of the Products
8 by Defendants and for damages she sustained as a result. Given the massive quantities of the
9 Products sold all over the country, this class action is the proper vehicle for addressing
10 Defendants’ misconduct and for attaining needed relief for those affected.

11
12 **PARTIES**

13 25. Plaintiff Kendra Libbey is and was at all times relevant to this matter a resident
14 of the state of California residing in Oakley, California, which is in Contra Costa County.

15 26. Defendant Unilever is a subsidiary of the dual-listed company consisting of
16 Unilever N.V. in Rotterdam, Netherlands and Unilever PLC in London, United Kingdom.
17 Unilever, which includes the Suave brand, is a Delaware corporation with its principal place of
18 business located at 700 Sylvan Avenue, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 07632. Unilever
19 manufactured, marketed, designed, promoted and/or distributed the Products.
20

21 27. Defendant Conopco is a New York corporation with its principal place of
22 business located at 700 Sylvan Avenue, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 07632. Upon
23 information and belief, Conopco is responsible for the distribution of the manufactured Products
24 to retailers. At all times relevant hereto, Conopco knew or should have known that the Products
25 would be sold in the United States.
26

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

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2 28. This Court has personal jurisdiction over Defendants in this matter. The acts and
3 omissions giving rise to this action occurred in the state of California. Defendants have been
4 afforded due process because they have, at all times relevant to this matter, individually or
5 through their agents, subsidiaries, officers and/or representatives, operated, conducted, engaged
6 in and carried on a business venture in this state and/or maintained an office or agency in this
7 state, and/or marketed, advertised, distributed and/or sold products, committed a statutory
8 violation within this state related to the allegations made herein, and caused injuries to Plaintiff
9 and putative Class Members, which arose out of the acts and omissions that occurred in the state
10 of California, during the relevant time period, at which time Defendants were engaged in
11 business activities in the state of California.
12

13 29. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §
14 1332 of the Class Action Fairness Act of 2005 because: (i) there are 100 or more putative Class
15 Members, (ii) the aggregate amount in controversy exceeds \$5,000,000, exclusive of interest
16 and costs, and (iii) there is minimal diversity because at least one Plaintiff and Defendants are
17 citizens of different states. This Court has supplemental jurisdiction over Plaintiff's state law
18 claims pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1367.
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20 30. Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(a), venue is proper because a substantial part of the
21 events giving rise to the claims asserted occurred in this District. Venue is also proper pursuant
22 to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(c) because Defendants conduct substantial business in this District, have
23 sufficient minimum contacts with this District, and otherwise purposely avail themselves of the
24 markets in this District, through the promotion, sale, and marketing of the Products in this
25 District.
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INTRADISTRICT ASSIGNMENT

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2 31. Pursuant to Civil Local Rule 3-2(c-d), a substantial part of the events giving rise
3 to the claims herein arose in Contra Costa county, California and this action should be assigned
4 to the San Francisco Division or the Oakland Division.

FACTS COMMON TO ALL CLASS MEMBERS

5
6 **A. Unilever’s Business.**

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8 32. In 1930, Unilever was formed from the merger of two competitors, Margarine
9 Union and Lever Brothers Limited, who were in the business of household goods.⁸

10 33. Given the founding companies long marketing and trade histories, Unilever
11 boasts that its group has been “pioneers, innovators and future-makers for over 120 years,”⁹
12 beginning largely with the launch of the first branded soap.¹⁰

13 34. Currently, Unilever’s business consists of:¹¹

- 14 a. 400+ Unilever brands used worldwide;
- 15 b. 2.5 billion users of the products daily;
- 16 c. 190 countries where brands are sold; and
- 17 d. €52 billion turnover in 2019.

18
19 35. Unilever’s brands include numerous well-known companies in Beauty and
20 Personal Care, Foods and Refreshment, Home Care, and Water Purifiers. In addition to
21 TRESemmé, Unilever’s brands include Suave, St. Ives, Dove, Clear, Pond’s Q-tips, and Simple.

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23 _____
24 ⁸ https://www.unilever.com/Images/the-formation-of-unilever_tcm244-520314_en.pdf (Last
25 Accessed October 21, 2020).

⁹ <https://www.unilever.com/about/who-we-are/about-Unilever/> (Last Accessed October 8, 2020).

¹⁰ <https://www.unilever.com/about/who-we-are/our-history/#timeline+2D+515781+open> (Last
26 Accessed October 8, 2020).

¹¹ <https://www.unilever.com/about/who-we-are/about-Unilever/> (Last Accessed October 8,
27 2020).

1 36. In 2010, Unilever acquired US-based Alberto Culver Company for US \$3.7
2 billion in cash. The Alberto Culver acquisition included many large beauty brands, including
3 TRESemmé. At the time of the announcement, Unilever claimed that the “acquisition makes
4 Unilever the world’s leading company in hair conditioning, the second largest in shampoo and
5 the third largest in styling...”¹²

6 37. Unilever represents itself and its brands to be a global “ambassador for [its] high
7 ethical standards.”¹³

8 38. Unilever sells and distributes TRESemmé in more than a dozen countries,
9 including the US, and represents that “TRESemmé is a haircare brand offering salon-quality
10 products for men and women. It has its origins in hair salons, dating back over 60 years, and
11 now has a range of hair-styling products for use at home.”¹⁴

12 39. As part of its TRESemmé brand, Unilever sells the keratin Products at issue here.

13
14 **B. DMDM Hydantoin.**

15 40. Keratin is a type of protein found in hair and nails, and is added to hair products
16 to straighten and strengthen hair, as well as reduce frizz.

17 41. As protein is food for microbes, keratin hair products would spoil and have an
18 abbreviated shelf life without added preservatives to extend the life of the product.

19 42. There are numerous preservatives that are used in cosmetics and hair products,
20 including formaldehyde donors; many of which have been linked to the development of
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24 ¹² <https://www.unilever.com/news/press-releases/2010/10-09-27-Unilever-to-acquire-Alberto-Culvert.html>. (Last Accessed October 21, 2020).

25 ¹³ www.unilever.com/about/who-we-are/our-values-and-principles/business-integrity/ (Last
26 Accessed October 21, 2020).

27 ¹⁴ <https://www.unilever.com/brands/?category=408114&brand=412548-410037> (Last Accessed
28 October 21, 2020).

1 allergies, dermatitis, hair loss, and even cancer.

2 43. Specifically, formaldehyde donors are preservatives that are “added to water-
3 containing cosmetics (which includes personal care products/toiletries) to prevent the growth of
4 micro-organisms that may enter during manufacture or during their usage.”¹⁵

5 44. Despite having intimate knowledge of the risks of using formaldehyde donor
6 preservatives, Unilever continues to use formaldehyde donors, DMDM hydantoin (also known
7 as DMDM-h) and sodium hydroxyl, in its products.¹⁶ Until recently, DMDM hydantoin was
8 used as a preservative in the Products at issue.

9
10 45. “DMDM hydantoin (dimethyldimethyl hydantoin) is a formaldehyde donor
11 used as a preservative in cosmetic products at concentrations up to 1%.”¹⁷ In other words, it is a
12 formaldehyde-releasing preservative (“FRP”) used to lengthen the shelf life of personal care
13 products, including hair products.

14
15 46. “An important source of human skin contact with formaldehyde is the use of
16 cosmetics containing formaldehyde-releasers as preservatives.”¹⁸

17 47. In personal care products, such as shampoo, “formaldehyde can be added
18 directly, or more often, it can be released from preservatives such as... DMDM hydantoin.”

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22 ¹⁵ de Groot AC, White IR, Flyvholm MA, Lensen G, Coenraads PJ. Formaldehyde-releasers in
23 cosmetics: relationship to formaldehyde contact allergy. Part 1. Characterization, frequency and
24 relevance of sensitization, and frequency of use in cosmetics. *Contact Dermatitis*. 2010
25 Jan;62(1):2-17. doi: 10.1111/j.1600-0536.2009.01615.x. PMID: 20136875.

26 ¹⁶ [https://www.unilever.com/brands/Our-products-and-ingredients/Your-ingredient-questions-
27 answered/Formaldehyde-donors.html](https://www.unilever.com/brands/Our-products-and-ingredients/Your-ingredient-questions-answered/Formaldehyde-donors.html) (Last Accessed October 26, 2020).

28 ¹⁷ “Patch test reactivity to DMDM hydantoin, Relationship to formaldehyde allergy.” By Anton
C. DeGroot, Theodoor Van Joost, Jan D. Bos, Harrie L.M. Van Der Meeren, and J. Willem
Weyland (*Contact Dermatitis*, 1988, 18:197-201).

¹⁸ De Groot AC, *supra* note 15.

1 Specifically, the formaldehyde donor will “release small amounts of formaldehyde over time.”¹⁹

2 48. “In 1984, DMDM hydantoin ranked 9th in the list of the most frequently used
3 cosmetic preservatives in the USA.”²⁰ By 1987, DMDM hydantoin was included in
4 approximately 115 product formulas filed with the FDA, most frequently in shampoos.²¹

5 49. “DMDMH was the 21st most common allergen in the 2005-2006 NACDG
6 standard series. DMDMH is a preservative that contains 0.5% to 2% free formaldehyde and over
7 17% combined formaldehyde.”²²

8 50. For many decades, since the 1970’s, if not earlier, studies and patch tests were
9 being performed to determine human reactivity to DMDM hydantoin,²³ including specifically
10 the “relationship between contact allergy to formaldehyde,” including “test reactions to DMDM
11 hydantoin.”²⁴

12 51. One study performed in 1987 specifically examined “whether the presence of
13 DMDM hydantoin in cosmetics may cause adverse effects in patients pre-sensitized to
14 formaldehyde.”²⁵ The conclusion even more than twenty years ago was that “aqueous solutions
15 of DMDM hydantoin, in concentrations comparable to those used in cosmetic products, contain
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19 ¹⁹ <http://www.safecosmetics.org/get-the-facts/chemicals-of-concern/formaldehyde/> (Last
20 Accessed October 21, 2020).

21 ²⁰ “Patch test reactivity to DMDM hydantoin, Relationship to formaldehyde allergy.” By Anton
22 C. DeGroot, Theodoor Van Joost, Jan D. Bos, Harrie L.M. Van Der Meeren, and J. Willem
23 Weyland (Contact Dermatitis, 1988, 18:197-201).

24 ²¹ *Id.*

25 ²² <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2958195/> (citing Rietschel RL, Fowler JF., Jr
26 . Fisher's Contact Dermatitis. 5th ed. Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins; 2001).

27 ²³ Tudela E, MacPherson C, Maibach HI. Long-term trend in patch test reactions: a 32-year
28 statistical overview (1970-2002), part II. Cutan Ocul Toxicol. 2008;27(3):187-202. doi:
10.1080/15569520802143436. PMID: 18988088.

²⁴ “Patch test reactivity to DMDM hydantoin, Relationship to formaldehyde allergy.” By Anton
C. DeGroot, Theodoor Van Joost, Jan D. Bos, Harrie L.M. Van Der Meeren, and J. Willem
Weyland (Contact Dermatitis, 1988, 18:197-201).

²⁵ *Id.*

1 enough free formaldehyde to cause dermatitis....” and that despite earlier conclusions that
2 DMDM hydantoin is a safe cosmetic ingredient, “data suggest that an increase in the use of this
3 preservative may also increase the risk of cosmetic dermatitis in patients allergic to
4 formaldehyde.”²⁶ The authors further suggest that cosmetic products with FRPs should have
5 warnings that the products “‘contain formaldehyde’... whether present as free formaldehyde or
6 bound by a donor.”²⁷

7
8 52. Several more recent studies, including a 2015 study “determined that longer
9 storage time and higher temperature increase the amount of formaldehyde released from FRPs
10 and could ultimately lead to more severe health concerns.”²⁸

11 53. In other words, “reactions that generated formaldehyde occur silently as the
12 products sit on shelves in stores or bathroom cabinets.”²⁹

13 54. Formaldehyde is a known human carcinogen and is recognized as such by the
14 United States National Toxicology Program and the International Agency for Research on
15 Cancer.³⁰

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17 55. In 2009, prior to the sale of the Products, “a review of the literature on
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21 ²⁶ *Id.*

22 ²⁷ *Id.*

23 ²⁸ <http://www.safecosmetics.org/get-the-facts/chemicals-of-concern/formaldehyde/> (Last
24 Accessed October 21, 2020)(citing Lv, C., Hou, J., Xie, W., & Cheng, H. (2015). Investigation
25 on formaldehyde release from preservatives in cosmetics. International journal of cosmetic
26 science.).

27 ²⁹ <https://www.ewg.org/research/exposing-cosmetics-cover-up#formaldehyde> (Last Accessed
28 October 21, 2020).

29 ³⁰ <http://www.safecosmetics.org/get-the-facts/chemicals-of-concern/formaldehyde/> (Last
30 Accessed October 21, 2020)(citing International Agency for Research on Cancer. “IARC
31 classifies formaldehyde as carcinogenic to humans.” Press release. June 15, 2004. Accessed
32 January 9, 2009.).

1 occupational exposures and formaldehyde shows a link between formaldehyde and leukemia.”³¹

2 56. With specific regard to FRPs, like DMDM hydantoin, “the formaldehyde
3 released from FRPs has been linked to cancer, but there is little evidence that FRPs directly
4 cause cancer. However, a mixture of the FRP bromopol and amines, which form nitrosamines,
5 has been found to penetrate skin and cause cancer.”³²

6 57. Further, a study in 2010 concluded that although “[i]t has been long accepted that
7 formaldehyde-releaser sensitization is attributable to released formaldehyde. However, clinical
8 studies show the existence of patients allergic to formaldehyde-releasers but not to
9 formaldehyde itself.”³³ That same study found DMDM hydantoin to be “reactive per se.”

10 58. Consequently, it is unsurprising that DMDM hydantoin is considered by the U.S.
11 Food & Drug Administration as one of the top allergens “that cause the most allergic reactions
12 from the use of cosmetic products.”³⁴

13 59. Specifically, DMDM hydantoin can “trigger the immune system to release
14 chemical substances such as antibodies,” resulting in reactions such as itchiness, red rashes on
15 the skin, or more extreme reactions.³⁵

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20 ³¹ <http://www.safecosmetics.org/get-the-facts/chemicals-of-concern/formaldehyde/> (Last
21 Accessed October 21, 2020)(Zhang et al 2009. Meta-analysis of formaldehyde and hematologic
22 cancers in humans. Mutation Research 681: 150-168).

23 ³² <http://www.safecosmetics.org/get-the-facts/chemicals-of-concern/formaldehyde/> (Last
24 Accessed October 21, 2020)(citing to <http://www.cosmeticsinfo.org/nitrosamines>. Accessed
25 September 23, 2015).

26 ³³ Kireche M, Gimenez-Arnau E, Lepoittevin JP. Preservatives in cosmetics: reactivity of
27 allergenic formaldehyde-releasers towards amino acids through breakdown products other than
28 formaldehyde. Contact Dermatitis. 2010 Oct;63(4):192-202. doi: 10.1111/j.1600-
0536.2010.01770.x. Epub 2010 Aug 20. PMID: 20731691.

³⁴ <https://www.fda.gov/cosmetics-ingredients/allergens-cosmetics> (Last Accessed October 21,
2020).

³⁵ <https://www.fda.gov/cosmetics-ingredients/allergens-cosmetics> (Last Accessed October 21,
2020).

1 60. Further, as a person becomes more exposed to an irritant over time, including
2 DMDM hydantoin, the likelihood and severity of the reaction increase. This is called irritant
3 contact dermatitis (“ICD”), which “can occur in any person if the amount and duration of irritant
4 exposure are sufficient to cause direct epidermal keratinocyte damage.”³⁶

5 61. Likewise, the irritation of the scalp, including dermatitis, has been linked to hair
6 brittleness and hair loss. Specifically,

7
8 [A number of observations have found that premature hair loss may be caused by
9 the poor scalp health associated with either dandruff and seborrheic dermatitis, or
10 psoriasis, indicating that the effect on the preemergent hair fiber may alter the
11 anchoring force of the fiber with the follicle, as evidenced by an increased
12 proportion both of catagen and telogen, and of dysplastic anagen hairs (anagen
13 hairs devoid of hair root sheaths) in the trichogram (hair pluck).³⁷

14 62. In 2012, beauty product manufacturer Johnson & Johnson announced that it
15 would “remove a host of potentially harmful chemicals, *like formaldehyde*, from its line of
16 consumer products by the end of 2015.”³⁸ [Emphasis Added].

17 63. Like many other beauty manufacturers, Unilever has been using DMDM
18 hydantoin as a preservative in its products since at least 2011;³⁹ however, unlike many
19 manufacturers moving away from toxic ingredients, Unilever continues to use this formaldehyde
20 donor today, specifically representing:

21 We use preservatives to keep home and personal care products in good condition:
22 without them, they could be spoiled by bacteria, yeasts and molds. We choose our

23
24 ³⁶ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2958195/>

25 ³⁷ Trueeb, Ralph M., Henry, Jim P., Davis, Mike G., and Schwartz, Jim R., Scalp Condition
26 Impacts Hair Growth and Retention via Oxidative Stress, *Int J Trichology*. 2018 Nov-Dec; 10(6):
27 262–270, doi: 10.4103/ijt.ijt_57_18.

28 ³⁸ [https://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/16/business/johnson-johnson-to-remove-formaldehyde-
from-products.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/16/business/johnson-johnson-to-remove-formaldehyde-from-products.html)

³⁹ *Reid, et al. v. Unilever United States, Inc., et al.*, 1:12-cv-06058 (N.D.Ill.), Dkt. No. 60.

1 preservative ingredients carefully, making sure they are safe and effective for
2 people who use our products.⁴⁰

3 64. Notably, despite proudly continuing to use FRPs in its products, Unilever
4 specifically notes that they are not used in baby care products.⁴¹

5 65. As Unilever is aware, there is a litany of alternative preservatives that can be
6 used in shampoos and cosmetics that do not release known human carcinogens and are non-
7 synthetic, including:

- 8 a. Glyoxylic acid (or derivatives thereof);
9 b. Potassium sorbate and sorbic acid;
10 c. Citric acid and its salts;
11 d. Rosemary oil extract;
12 e. Neem oil extract;
13 f. Lavender oil;
14 g. Grapefruit seed extract;
15 h. Vinegars; and
16 i. Others.

17
18 66. In addition to these alternatives, Unilever also could have used lower levels of
19 DMDM hydantoin; however, the risk of development and exacerbation of sensitivity or allergic
20 reaction would still exist through repeated and prolonged use.

21
22 67. Upon information and belief, Unilever has recently begun to use alternative
23 preservatives in the Products; however, authorized retailers continue list DMDM hydantoin as
24

25 ⁴⁰ <https://www.unilever.com/brands/Our-products-and-ingredients/Your-ingredient-questions-answered/index.html> (Last Accessed October 21, 2020).

26 ⁴¹ <https://www.unilever.com/brands/Our-products-and-ingredients/Your-ingredient-questions-answered/Formaldehyde-donors.html> (Last Accessed October 26, 2020).

1 an ingredient on their websites.

2 **C. Unilever’s Knowledge of DMDM Hydantoin Causing Hair Loss, Rashes, and Scalp**
3 **Irritation.**

4 68. On August 1, 2012, a lawsuit was filed against Unilever related to its Suave®
5 Keratin Infusion 30-day Treatment. In part, the lawsuit involved the allegations that,

6 despite the express representation that the Treatment contains no Formaldehyde,
7 the Treatment does contain DMDM Hydantoin, a chemical that is known as a
8 “Formaldehyde-releaser.” See <http://www.safecosmetics.org/article.php?id=599>.
9 Formaldehyde releasers are sometimes used in cosmetics in place of formaldehyde
and release small amounts of Formaldehyde over time. Formaldehyde is a known
human carcinogen.⁴²

10 69. Like the TRESemmé Products at issue here, the Suave product was causing “hair
11 loss upon proper application,”⁴³ as well as scalp irritation and related conditions.

12 70. Like the TRESemmé Products at issue here, Unilever failed to warn consumers
13 that use of the Suave products could cause the scalp reactions and hair loss being reported by
14 consumers.

15 71. Accordingly, notwithstanding the fact that Unilever has been in the business of
16 manufacturing cosmetics and hair products for nearly 100 years and knew or should have known
17 of the decades-long studies on reactivity to DMDM hydantoin, at a minimum Unilever was on
18 notice since the Suave lawsuit filed in 2012 that its products containing DMDM hydantoin were
19 causing scalp irritation and hair loss.
20

21 **D. For Years, Consumers Have Voiced Their Complaints About the Products.**

22 72. Since at least 2013, Unilever became aware through consumer complaints that
23 its TRESemmé Keratin Products were causing scalp irritation and hair loss.
24

25
26 _____
27 ⁴² *Reid, et al. v. Unilever United States, Inc., et al.*, 1:12-cv-06058 (N.D.Ill.), Dkt. No. 1, ¶ 23.

28 ⁴³ *Id.* at ¶ 26.

1 73. A sample of complaints posted on Amazon.com detail scalp reactivity and hair
2 loss are as follows:

- 3 • *Star rating unknown.* **BEWARE!**
- 4 ○ Reviewed in the United States on July 28, 2013
- 5 ○ “I tried this shampoo for two weeks. I wash my hair about three times
6 a week. In that short amount of time, I lost ALOT of hair. I have
7 thick, wavy and used to have TONS of hair. After using this product,
8 I noticed a huge difference in the amount of hair I was losing daily.
9 It is now very dry, brittle and my scalp started to itch. I was using
10 Loreal sulfate free smoothing shampoo and conditioner before this. I
11 wanted to try something different as I flat iron my hair quite
12 frequently. Boy do I regret it! All I can say is BEWARE. It does
13 smoothe your hair by thinning it out! Pay close attention to the
14 amount of hair you are losing in the shower and throughout the day!
15 It DOES matter!”
- 16 • *1.0 out of 5 stars* **Hair shedding**
- 17 ○ Reviewed in the United States on November 23, 2013
- 18 ○ “This product seemed find [sic] at first. I'm trying to grow my hair
19 out and I thought that this would help keep it healthy and was doing
20 everything I was told to do but still my hair was coming out in
21 chunks. I changed shampoos and as soon as I did my hair wasn't
22 Coming out in chunks. I ran out of shampoo so I was forced to go
23 back to this one and My hair began to shed horridly again. I threw
24 this over my balcony.”
- 25 • *1.0 out of 5 stars* **garbage!!!!**
- 26 ○ Reviewed in the United States on January 14, 2015
- 27 ○ “I have kinky coily hair and they were giving this shampoo and
28 its conditioner out at my job. And I am appalled that they would
even think this stuff was good enough to give out. My hair was
nice and soft before this went in. It completely stripped my hair
of its natural oils... **My hair started falling out immediately.** I
had to pile in the shampoo to undo the mess it did to my hair.
WOW!!!”
- *1.0 out of 5 stars* **Causes Significant Hair Loss - Do not buy!**
- Reviewed in the United States on July 10, 2015
- “Absolutely horrible shampoo! At first I got it because the name
of it intrigued me. I have thin, dry, wavy hair and was looking for
something that would help control my hair's extremely frizzy
texture. At first I loved this shampoo and the scent is really nice
too. **However, within a couple weeks of use, I noticed chunks
of my hair falling out. I did some research on this shampoo**

1 **and noticed others who said similar things after trying it.** I'm
2 so disappointed because this is thinning out my already thin hair.
3 Seriously this causes a lot of hair loss, do not buy!"

- 4 • *1.0 out of 5 stars* **I dont recommend this to anyone**
5 ○ Reviewed in the United States on July 20, 2016
6 ○ "I dont recommend this to anyone. **My hair started falling down**
7 **after using this shampoo.** waste of money. I am going to throw
8 it to the dustbin. Please dont buy if you dont want your hair to be
9 fallen."
- 10 • *2.0 out of 5 stars* **Causes problems**
11 ○ Reviewed in the United States on August 23, 2018
12 ○ "Horrible products.The shampoo for color treated hair makes my
13 hair pull out and my scalp itches."

14 74. Similar complaints have been reported through www.BJs.com for at least six
15 years. A sampling of these are as follows:

- 16 • **causing sores on my scalp Submitted 5 years ago By tarah**
17 ○ I love the smell it's amazing but it's been causing sores on my
18 scalp and my hair has been falling out. I'm really concerned. It
19 makes my scalp feel weak and thinning.
- 20 • **Worst shampoo I've ever used Submitted 5 years ago By ReneeO**
21 ○ I have used alot of different shampoos from drugstore to high end
22 and this is the absolute worst! It made me lose hair and my scalp
23 dry out and itch like crazy, and its been two weeks and my scalp
24 is still recovering. My scalp is so itchy that I have been itching it
25 my sleep. I have thick, coarse, healthy hair and nothing has ever
26 made my hair and scalp feel worse. My stylist always comments
27 that my hair is healthy until I used this.
- 28 • **Terrible product Submitted 5 years ago By Mlynn5**
29 ○ I've used TRESemmé in the past. But this product was terrible,
30 my hair started breaking off and falling out after two weeks of
31 using it! My hair is now thin! I will never use TRESemmé
32 products again!
- 33 • **Worst product I've ever used! Submitted 4 years ago By Unhappycurlz**
34 ○ I decided to try out this shampoo and conditioner thinking it
35 would be good for my curly hair. Boy was I wrong! It didn't make
36 my curls look any different except for now my hair is a lot
37 thinner! Hair consistently falls out In the shower. I know it's from
38 this product because it started happening once I switched to it.

1 75. Like Amazon and BJ's, people across the world began to issue similar complaints
2 for at least three years and as recently as four months ago on PRODUCTREVIEW.COM:⁴⁴

- 3
- 4 • **“Worst i've used so far” – posted 3 years ago**
 - 5 ○ I have to usually have to switch shampoos every three months or so
 - 6 i thought TRESemmé would be the exception but i was wrong not
 - 7 only did it make my scalp itchy as hell it also has been making my
 - 8 hair fall out so now on the sides it looks like it's thinning never buying
 - 9 this product again!
 - 10 • **“Awful!!!!” – posted 3 years ago**
 - 11 ○ I used these products and they made me lose more hair and my scalp
 - 12 was so itchy (wake me up in the middle of the night itchy) I thought
 - 13 I had head lice. So I figured I was allergic and stopped using it....
 - 14 my daughter started to use it so we didn't waste it. She had the same
 - 15 reaction as well as her friends that use it. We are throwing it away
 - 16 right now
 - 17 • **“My hair is falling out!” – posted 3 years ago**
 - 18 ○ I've been using this product for roughly 3 months. I couldn't figure
 - 19 out why I started losing so much hair. Well I finally came to realize
 - 20 it's this. Thanks TRESemmé!
 - 21 • **“OMFG TEARS!” - posted 2 years ago from Shomari in Kansas City, MO**
 - 22 ○ This product caused a lot of hair loss for me. I've never had anything
 - 23 like this happen to me, I literally have a big bald spot in the middle
 - 24 of my head! And the shedding will not stop, I've only used this
 - 25 product once, about four days ago. This is the worst product I have
 - 26 ever used in my LIFE!!!
 - 27 • **“Made my hair fall out within a week!!” – posted 2 years ago**
 - 28 ○ Bought this because their classic TRESemmé (black bottle) has
 - 29 always been good. Well, after a week my hair was literally falling
 - 30 out...CLUMPS in my hand and clogged my shower 3 times in one
 - 31 shower. Also made my hair staticky and dry feeling. I'm not sure I'll
 - 32 ever use their product again!!
 - 33 • **“Terrible..Itchy scalp! Need to sue this shampoo maker!” - posted 4**
34 **months ago**
 - 35 ○ Using this shampoo since last 3 months and I realized I was feeling
 - 36 itchy scalp. However hair is smoother. Trust me it literally made my

37 ⁴⁴ <https://www.productreview.com.au/listings/TRESemmé-keratin-smooth-shampoo-and-conditioner>

1 scalp dry and itchy and sometimes I literally couldn't sleep. It took
2 me some time and I searched over web to find if others are feeling
3 the same and it's true that many others feeling the same. Worst
4 product!!

5 76. In addition to the numerous consumer complaints regarding scalp irritation and
6 hair loss, the Products have been the topic of several blogs.

7 77. In one blog, a pharmacist concludes her review and list of reactions by stating
8 "my hair was falling out pretty massively. So it wasn't just in my head. I also checked out other
9 people's opinion – and it seems that TRESemmé really causes hair loss to some."⁴⁵

10 78. Thus, Unilever was on notice of the problems with the Products since at least
11 2013 as evidenced by the plethora of consumer complaints throughout the Internet related to the
12 Products causing skin irritation and/or hair loss.

13 **E. The TRESemmé Products and the Products' Warranties.**

14 79. Unilever released TRESemmé Keratin Products more than seven years ago. The
15 Products were sold by Unilever directly and through retail shops to consumers nationwide,
16 including in California.

17 80. The Products state, on the front of the bottles' labels, that the Products are
18 formulated with lush Marula oil and Keratin to offer five smoothing benefits in one system,
19 including "anti-frizz", "detangles", "shine", "softness", and "tames fly-aways". Below that
20 statement is printed in all caps: "PRO COLLECTION SHAMPOO" or on the back of the bottles,
21 you will find the question "WHY PRO COLLECTION?" followed by the answer, "Get great
22 hair foundation, whatever your style, with our Pro Technology system." The back of the bottles
23 also state: "Smooth doesn't have to be straight. You want hair that is shiny, silky AND smooth.
24
25
26

27 ⁴⁵ <https://howtogetgreathair.com/TRESemmé-keratin-infusing-shampoo-review/>

1 You want hair that moves.”

2 81. Keratin is a protein found naturally in hair. By promoting the Products as the
3 revamped TRESemmé Keratin Smooth Collection “with powerful Keratin, specially formulated
4 to give you noticeably smooth, manageable hair that keeps frizz on the fringe for up to 72
5 Hours”, Unilever warranted the Products as safe, non-toxic hair smoothing solutions that could
6 be purchased at a fraction of the price of a salon treatment. Furthermore, Unilever explicitly
7 states “this salon-quality conditioner nourishes each strand to leave hair silky, shiny and totally
8 under your control.”
9

10 82. Plaintiff and the Class did not and would not expect that application of the
11 Products would cause hair loss and scalp irritation upon proper application.

12 83. Plaintiff and the Class reasonably expected a warning regarding any potential
13 hazard to consumers, especially because the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act regulations provide
14 that cosmetics that may be hazardous to consumers must bear appropriate warnings.⁴⁶
15

16 84. Contrary to the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act regulations, the Products also
17 failed to provide adequate directions for safe use, although Defendants knew or should have
18 known the Products would be unsafe if used incorrectly. In fact, Unilever’s website affirmatively
19 represents that it complies with all applicable labeling laws. *See* Unilever’s Code of Business
20 Principles and Code Policies, at 6.⁴⁷
21

22 85. In response to the damage customers have suffered after using the Products,
23 consumers complained as described *supra*.
24

25 ⁴⁶ See <http://www.fda.gov/Cosmetics/CosmeticLabelingLabelClaims>.

26 ⁴⁷ See https://www.unilever.com/Images/code-of-business-principles-and-code-policies_tcm244-409220_en.pdf. (noting “Unilever companies and employees are required to comply with the laws and regulations of the countries in which we operate.”) (last accessed on November 16, 2020).
27

1 86. There are hundreds of posts highlighting the “horror stories” of women who used
2 the Products. These stories are strikingly similar to Plaintiff’s experiences. These consumers
3 describe how they were misled by Unilever’s representations about the Products, expecting
4 salon-quality, Keratin-based, smoothing shampoo whose effects would: (1) give consumers
5 noticeably smooth, manageable hair that keeps frizz on the fringe for up to 72 Hours; and (2)
6 nourish each strand to leave hair silky, shiny and totally under the consumer’s control. Instead,
7 consumers received a toxic Product that caused hair loss and other adverse effects.
8

9 87. Unilever continues to this day to advise consumers that these Products are safe
10 to use as directed, without providing any disclosure concerning the complaints of hair loss and
11 with no warnings regarding the hair loss that may result from their continued use. Indeed, despite
12 Unilever’s knowledge and awareness of hundreds if not thousands of complaints of significant
13 hair loss and breakage caused by the Products, Unilever continues to claim the use of DMDM
14 hydantoin it is safe and permits them to be sold to this day — without providing consumers with
15 *any* revised warnings or disclosures.
16

17 88. The Products are marketed as providing five smoothing benefits in one system,
18 and are sold at retail stores such as CVS, Target, Walgreens, and Walmart, and through e-
19 commerce websites such as [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com), [CVS.com](https://www.cvs.com), [Target.com](https://www.target.com), [Walgreens.com](https://www.walgreens.com), and
20 [Walmart.com](https://www.walmart.com).
21

22 89. Defendants manufacture, advertise, market, distribute and sell the Products
23 throughout the United States, including in California. The Products are sold in one size only
24 — 22 fl. oz.

25 **F. Defendants’ False and Deceptive Advertising and Labeling of the Products.**

26 90. In violation of 21 U.S.C. § 362(a) and 21 C.F.R. § 701.1(b), Defendants have
27
28

1 consistently, falsely and deceptively advertised and labeled the Products in an effort to make
2 consumers believe that the Products' ingredients, including DMDM hydantoin, were safe for
3 use.

4 91. Since launching the Products, Defendants have consistently conveyed their
5 uniform, deceptive message to consumers throughout the United States, including the state of
6 California, that the Products formulated with formaldehyde donors, including DMDM
7 hydantoin, are safe for use.
8

9 92. These uniform deceptive claims have been made and repeated across a variety of
10 media including Defendants' Products' labels, websites and online promotional materials, and
11 at the point-of-purchase, where they cannot be missed by consumers. In truth, Defendants'
12 claims that DMDM hydantoin is a safe ingredient is false, misleading, and deceptive because
13 the Products' ingredients, including DMDM hydantoin, were not safe, caused serious scalp
14 irritation and hair loss, and do not safely smooth, nourish, cleanse, and/or repair hair.
15

16 93. Upon information and belief, Unilever knowingly permitted the manufacture and
17 sale of the Products that were dangerous and unfit for sale as temporary hair "smoothing"
18 products.
19

20 94. Prior to placing the Products into the stream of commerce for sale to Plaintiff and
21 the putative Class, Defendants were aware or should have been aware that the Products
22 contained one or more unsafe ingredients, including DMDM hydantoin, that caused significant
23 hair loss and scalp irritation upon proper application and that any instructions and warnings
24 provided with the Products directly to consumers were materially insufficient.
25

26 95. Defendants, including Unilever, knew or but for their reckless indifference
27 would have known, prior to Plaintiff and the putative Class's purchases of the Products that they
28

1 would continue to receive complaints of hair loss attributed to the Products. Based on their
2 experience and the prior *Suave* litigation, Defendants knew or should have known that even if
3 they diligently investigated the problem, it would be difficult if not impossible to remediate the
4 problem.

5 96. Defendants, including Unilever knew, or but for their reckless indifference
6 would have known, that: (a) the risk of scalp irritation and hair loss was substantial, if not a
7 certainty, (b) Unilever's customers were unaware of that substantial risk, and (c) those
8 customers had a reasonable expectation that Unilever would not sell the Products under those
9 conditions.
10

11 97. Despite such knowledge, Defendants did not disclose to prospective purchasers,
12 that there was a substantial risk of scalp irritation and hair loss associated with use of the
13 Products. Defendants instead continued to claim that the Products' ingredients, including
14 DMDM hydantoin, were safe, while concealing all the adverse reports filed by consumers.
15

16 98. The labels on the back of each Product perpetuate the false, deceptive and
17 misleading representations and claims. Specifically, the back labels of the Products represent
18 "Our Keratin Smooth system, with **MARULA OIL**, *gently cleanses* and nourishes hair."
19 (Emphasis Added).
20

21 99. However, despite the representation that the Products "gently" cleanse, they
22 contain one or more ingredients, including DMDM hydantoin, that cause scalp irritation and
23 hair loss.

24 100. Defendants further represent that DMDM hydantoin is safe for use in its
25 products; however, Defendants simultaneously acknowledge that these FRPs are not used in
26
27
28

1 baby care products.⁴⁸

2 101. Defendants reinforce the false and deceptive claims that the Products “nourish”
3 the hair and leave it in good condition through the websites of various authorized retailers:

4 **KERATIN SMOOTH COLOR SHAMPOO**

5 Our revamped TRESemmé Keratin Smooth system now features a color-
6 treated option with luxurious Moroccan oil and delivers not one but five
7 smoothing benefits so you can forget the frizz and indulge in gorgeously silky
8 hair for up to 72 hours.*

8 **Product Details**

9 Silky smoothness with bountiful body? Who says you can’t have
10 it all? Our unique TRESemmé Keratin Smooth Color System,
11 with Keratin and Moroccan Argan Oil, helps to control frizz
12 while keeping your style effortlessly smooth. Not to mention, this
13 double-duty system helps protect your color-treated hair, leaving
14 it gorgeously sleek and vibrant.

15 Start your routine with the TRESemmé Keratin Smooth Color
16 Shampoo, formulated with rich Moroccan Argan oil and Keratin. This low-
17 sulfate shampoo cleanses gently your colored hair, smoothing frizz from root
18 to tip, while sealing in shine to keep your colored hair vibrant.

14 **HOW TO USE**

- 15 • Apply to wet hair, gently massage the scalp and roots with
16 fingertips to work into a lather.
- 17 • Lightly squeeze the shampoo from roots to ends and rinse
18 thoroughly.
- 19 • Finish with TRESemmé Keratin Smooth Color Conditioner and
20 style with your favorite TRESemmé products.
- 21 • For protections from heat styling tools, us TRESemmé Keratine
22 Smooth Heat Protection Spray before you style.

20 **How It Works**

21 Keratin Color Shampoo is formulated to leave your hair
22 gorgeously sleek and control frizz.

22 <https://www.tresemme.com/us/en/products/shampoo/keratin-smooth-color-shampoo.html>

23 (emphasis added) (last visited October 28, 2020).

24
25
26
27 ⁴⁸ [https://www.unilever.com/brands/Our-products-and-ingredients/Your-ingredient-questions-
28 answered/Formaldehyde-donors.html](https://www.unilever.com/brands/Our-products-and-ingredients/Your-ingredient-questions-answered/Formaldehyde-donors.html) (Last Accessed October 27, 2020).

1 103. Consumers lack the ability to test or independently ascertain the genuineness of
2 product claims of normal everyday consumer products, especially at the point-of-sale.
3 Reasonable customers must therefore rely on consumer product companies, such as Defendants,
4 to honestly represent their Products and the Products’ attributes on the Products’ labels.

5 104. At all relevant times, Defendants directed the above-referenced Products’ labels,
6 statements, claims and innuendo – including that the Products “gently” smoothed, cleansed,
7 nourished, and repaired the hair, that the ingredients were safe – to consumers in general and
8 Plaintiff and all Class Members in particular, as evidenced by their eventual purchases of the
9 Products.
10

11 105. Plaintiff and Class Members did reasonably rely on Defendants’ Product labels,
12 statements, claims and innuendo in deciding to purchase the Products and were thereby
13 deceived.
14

15 106. As a result of Defendants’ deceptive labeling and/or marketing campaign,
16 Defendants have caused Plaintiff and putative Class Members to purchase the Products, which
17 contained one or more unsafe ingredients, including DMDM hydantoin, and do not safely
18 smooth, nourish, cleanse, and/or repair hair. Plaintiff and putative Class Members have been
19 harmed, as they would not have purchased the Products had they known the Products were not
20 safe and would cause scalp irritation and hair loss.
21

22 107. As a result of Defendants’ misconduct, Defendants were able to sell the Products
23 to at least thousands of consumers throughout the United States— including Plaintiff and
24 putative Class Members—and realized sizeable profits.

25 108. Plaintiff and putative Class Members were harmed and suffered actual damages
26 in that Plaintiff and putative Class Members did not receive the benefit of their bargain as
27

1 purchasers of the Products, which were represented as safe and can safely smooth, nourish,
2 cleanse, and/or repair hair. Indeed, Plaintiff and putative Class Members did not receive the
3 benefit of their bargain after purchasing the Products, as Plaintiff and putative Class Members
4 paid for Products that were unsafe, cause scalp irritation and hair loss, and do not safely smooth,
5 nourish, cleanse, and/or repair hair.

6 109. Defendants developed and knowingly employed a labeling, advertising and/or
7 marketing strategy designed to deceive consumers into believing that the Products contain safe
8 ingredients and can safely smooth, nourish, cleanse, and/or repair hair.

9 110. The purpose of Defendants' scheme is to stimulate sales and enhance Defendants'
10 profits.

11 111. As the manufacturers, marketers, advertisers, distributors and/or sellers of the
12 Products, Defendants possess specialized knowledge regarding the Products and the content of
13 the ingredients contained therein. In other words, Defendants know exactly what is – and is not
14 – contained in the Products, at what levels, and are safe or unsafe.

15 112. Defendants knew or should have known, but failed to disclose, that the Products
16 contain one or more unsafe ingredients, including DMDM hydantoin, and do not safely smooth,
17 nourish, cleanse, and/or repair hair, as labeled and/or marketed by Defendants.

18 113. Plaintiff and putative Class Members were, in fact, misled by Defendants'
19 labeling, representations and marketing of the Products.

20 114. The unsafe ingredient(s) and the inability of the Products to safely smooth,
21 nourish, cleanse, and/or repair hair, leave consumers, such as Plaintiff and the putative Class
22 with no reason to purchase these Products at all, since other proven and safer comparably priced
23 products exist.

1 115. The Products are defined as “cosmetics” under 21 U.S.C.S. § 321(i) of the Federal
2 Food Drug & Cosmetic Act (“FDCA”).

3 116. Defendants’ deceptive statements violate 21 U.S.C.S. § 362(a), which deems a
4 cosmetic product misbranded when the label contains a statement that is “false or misleading in
5 any particular.”

6 117. Defendant’s conduct is also deceptive, unfair, and unlawful in that it violates the
7 prohibition against the sale of adulterated and misbranded products under California’s Sherman
8 Laws, which adopt the federal labeling regulations as the food labeling requirements of the state.
9 Cal. Health & Safety Code § 110100.

10 118. The FDA promulgated regulations for compliance with the FDCA at 21 C.F.R.
11 §§ 701 *et seq.* (for cosmetics).

12 119. The introduction of misbranded cosmetics into interstate commerce is prohibited
13 under the FDCA and all parallel state statutes cited in this Complaint.

14 120. Plaintiff and putative Class Members would not have purchased the Products had
15 they known the Products contained one or more unsafe ingredients and are incapable of safely
16 smoothing, nourishing, cleansing, and/or repairing hair.

17
18
19 **PLAINTIFF LIBBEY’S FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS**

20 121. Plaintiff, Kendra Libbey, purchased the Products in approximately June or July
21 2020 from a Target brick and mortar store in Antioch, California for approximately \$8.99.
22 Before purchasing the Products, Plaintiff Libbey reviewed information about the Products on
23 the Products’ labels and the fact that the Products were being sold for personal use, and not
24 resale. At the time of purchasing her Products, Plaintiff Libbey also reviewed the accompanying
25 disclosures, warranties, and marketing materials, and understood them as representations and
26
27

1 warranties by Defendants that the Products were safe to smooth, nourish, cleanse, and/or repair
2 hair. Plaintiff Libbey relied on these representations and warranties in deciding to purchase
3 Defendants' Products. Accordingly, these representations and warranties were part of the basis
4 of the bargain, in that she would not have purchased the Products had she known these
5 representations were not true. Here, Plaintiff did not receive the benefit of her bargain because
6 Defendants' Products are not safe to smooth, nourish, cleanse, and/or repair hair.

7
8 122. Plaintiff Libbey purchased the Products because she wanted smooth hair.

9 123. Before using the Products, Plaintiff Libbey followed the instructions on the
10 Products' labels, as directed by Defendants.

11 124. Shortly after using the Products as intended by Defendants, Plaintiff Libbey
12 noticed her hair falling out.

13 125. Plaintiff Libbey used the Products for approximately three to four weeks. After
14 she began experiencing sustained hair loss, she stopped using the Products.

15 126. Once Plaintiff stopped using the Products, she no longer experienced hair loss.

16 127. Plaintiff Libbey reasonably expected that the Products she purchased would not
17 cause hair loss. Further, Plaintiff Libbey reasonably expected that if Unilever, the company
18 primarily responsible for developing, manufacturing, marketing and distributing the Products,
19 knew that the Products would or could cause hair loss, Unilever would make a disclosure to
20 consumers as soon as it determined there was a widespread problem, rather than attempting to
21 conceal the problem.

22 128. As a result of Unilever's concealment, misrepresentations and omissions, Plaintiff
23 Libbey purchased the Products. Had Plaintiff known the true nature of the Products, she would
24 not have purchased the Products.
25
26
27

1 129. Plaintiff provided pre-suit notice to Defendants of her warranty claims, and
2 Defendants had actual notice of the alleged defect and harm caused by the Products.

3 **ESTOPPEL FROM PLEADING AND**
4 **TOLLING OF APPLICABLE STATUTES OF LIMITATIONS**

5 130. Plaintiff and members of the putative Classes are within the applicable statute of
6 limitation for the claims presented here. Defendants had knowledge and information detailing
7 the Products' propensity to cause or contribute to hair loss and/or scalp irritation, but failed to
8 disclose this information to consumers. Plaintiff and members of the putative Classes, therefore,
9 could not reasonably have known that the Products would cause or contribute to hair loss and
10 scalp irritation. Rather, consumers relied upon Defendants' misrepresentations and omissions,
11 including the statements on the Products' labeling as set forth above.

12 131. Once Plaintiff incurred damages, she promptly acted to preserve her rights, filing
13 this action. Defendants are estopped from asserting any statute of limitation defense that might
14 otherwise be applicable to the claims asserted herein.

15 **CLASS ACTION ALLEGATIONS**

16 132. Plaintiff brings this action on behalf of herself and the following Classes pursuant
17 to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 23(a), (b)(2) and/or (b)(3). Specifically, the Classes are
18 defined as:
19

20 **National Class:** All persons in the United States who purchased
21 the Products.

22 In the alternative, Plaintiff brings this action on behalf of the following
23 State Sub-Class:

24 **California Sub-Class:** All persons in the State of California who
25 purchased the Products.

26 133. Excluded from the Classes are (a) any person who purchased the Products for
27

1 resale and not for personal or household use, (b) any person who signed a release of any
2 Defendant in exchange for consideration, (c) any officers, directors or employees, or immediate
3 family members of the officers, directors or employees, of any Defendant or any entity in which
4 a Defendant has a controlling interest, (d) any legal counsel or employee of legal counsel for
5 any Defendant, and (e) the presiding Judge in this lawsuit, as well as the Judge's staff and their
6 immediate family members.

7
8 134. Plaintiff reserves the right to amend the definition of the Classes if discovery or
9 further investigation reveals that the Classes should be expanded or otherwise modified.

10 135. **Numerosity – Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 23(a)(1).** Class Members are
11 so numerous and geographically dispersed that joinder of all Class Members is impracticable.
12 While the exact number of Class Members remains unknown at this time, upon information and
13 belief, there are thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of putative Class Members. Moreover,
14 the number of members of the Classes may be ascertained from Defendants' books and records.
15 Class Members may be notified of the pendency of this action by mail and/or electronic mail,
16 which can be supplemented if deemed necessary or appropriate by the Court with published
17 notice.
18

19 136. **Predominance of Common Questions of Law and Fact – Federal Rule of**
20 **Civil Procedure 23(a)(2) and 23(b)(3).** Common questions of law and fact exist as to all Class
21 Members and predominate over any questions affecting only individual Class Members. These
22 common legal and factual questions include, but are limited to, the following:
23

- 24 a. Whether the Products contain the defect alleged herein;
- 25 b. Whether Defendants failed to appropriately warn Class Members of the
26 damage that could result from use of the Products;
- 27 c. Whether Defendants had actual or imputed knowledge of the defect but did
28

not disclose it to Plaintiff and the Classes;

- d. Whether Defendants promoted the Products with false and misleading statements of fact and material omissions;
- e. Whether Defendants’ marketing, advertising, packaging, labeling, and/or other promotional materials for the Products are deceptive, unfair or misleading;
- f. Whether Defendants’ actions and omissions violate California law;
- g. Whether Defendants’ conduct violates public policy;
- h. Whether Defendants breached express warranties in connection with the Products;
- i. Whether Defendants breached implied warranties in connection with the Products;
- j. Whether Defendants’ acts, omissions or misrepresentations of material facts constitute fraud;
- k. Whether Defendants’ acts, omissions or misrepresentations of material facts constitute a breach of contract or common law warranty;
- l. Whether Plaintiff and putative members of the Classes have suffered an ascertainable loss of monies or property or other value as a result of Defendants’ acts, omissions or misrepresentations of material facts;
- m. Whether Defendants were unjustly enriched at the expense of Plaintiff and members of the putative Classes in connection with the Products;
- n. Whether Plaintiff and members of the putative Classes are entitled to monetary damages and, if so, the nature of such relief; and
- o. Whether Plaintiff and members of the putative Classes are entitled to equitable, declaratory or injunctive relief and, if so, the nature of such relief.

137. Pursuant to Rule 23(b)(2), Defendants have acted or refused to act on grounds generally applicable to the putative Classes, thereby making final injunctive or corresponding declaratory relief appropriate with respect to the putative Classes as a whole. In particular, Defendants have manufactured, marketed, advertised, distributed and sold Products that are

1 deceptively misrepresented as being able to safely smooth, nourish, cleanse, and/or repair hair.

2 **138. Typicality – Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 23(a)(3).** Plaintiff's claims are
3 typical of those of the absent Class Members in that Plaintiff and the Class Members each
4 purchased and used the Products and each sustained damages arising from Defendants' wrongful
5 conduct, as alleged more fully herein. Plaintiff shares the aforementioned facts and legal claims
6 or questions with putative members of the Classes, and Plaintiff and all members of the putative
7 Classes have been similarly affected by Defendants' common course of conduct alleged herein.
8 Plaintiff and all members of the putative Classes sustained monetary and economic injuries
9 including, but not limited to, ascertainable loss arising out of Defendants' deceptive
10 misrepresentations regarding the ability of the Products to safely smooth, nourish, cleanse,
11 and/or repair hair, as alleged herein.

12
13 **139. Adequacy – Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 23(a)(4).** Plaintiff will fairly and
14 adequately represent and protect the interests of the members of the putative Classes. Plaintiff
15 has retained counsel with substantial experience in handling complex class action litigation,
16 including complex questions that arise in this type of consumer protection litigation. Further,
17 Plaintiff and her counsel are committed to the vigorous prosecution of this action. Plaintiff does
18 not have any conflicts of interest or interests adverse to those of putative Classes.

19
20 **140. INSUFFICIENCY OF SEPARATE ACTIONS – FEDERAL RULE OF**
21 **CIVIL PROCEDURE 23(B)(1).**

22 Absent a class action, Plaintiff and members of the Classes will continue to suffer the harm
23 described herein, for which they would have no remedy. Even if separate actions could be brought
24 by individual consumers, the resulting multiplicity of lawsuits would cause undue burden and
25 expense for both the Court and the litigants, as well as create a risk of inconsistent rulings and
26 adjudications that might be dispositive of the interests of similarly situated consumers,
27

1 substantially impeding their ability to protect their interests, while establishing incompatible
2 standards of conduct for Defendants. Accordingly, the proposed Classes satisfy the requirements
3 of Fed. R. Civ. P. 23(b)(1).

4 **141. DECLARATORY AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF – FEDERAL RULE OF**
5 **CIVIL PROCEDURE 23(B)(2).**

6 Defendants have acted or refused to act on grounds generally applicable to Plaintiff and all
7 Members of the Classes, thereby making appropriate final injunctive relief and declaratory
8 relief, as described below, with respect to the members of the Classes as a whole.

9 **142. Superiority – Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 23(b)(3).** A class action is
10 superior to any other available methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of the present
11 controversy for at least the following reasons:
12

- 13 a. The damages suffered by each individual members of the putative Classes
14 do not justify the burden and expense of individual prosecution of the
15 complex and extensive litigation necessitated by Defendants' conduct;
- 16 b. Even if individual members of the Classes had the resources to pursue
17 individual litigation, it would be unduly burdensome to the courts in which
18 the individual litigation would proceed;
- 19 c. The claims presented in this case predominate over any questions of law or
20 fact affecting individual members of the Classes;
- 21 d. Individual joinder of all members of the Classes is impracticable;
- 22 e. Absent a Class, Plaintiff and members of the putative Classes will continue
23 to suffer harm as a result of Defendants' unlawful conduct; and
- 24 f. This action presents no difficulty that would impede its management by the
25 Court as a class action, which is the best available means by which Plaintiff
26 and members of the putative Classes can seek redress for the harm caused by
27 Defendants.

28 **143.** In the alternative, the Classes may be certified for the following reasons:

- a. The prosecution of separate actions by individual members of the Classes
would create a risk of inconsistent or varying adjudication with respect to

individual members of the Classes, which would establish incompatible standards of conduct for Defendants;

- b. Adjudications of claims of the individual members of the Classes against Defendants would, as a practical matter, be dispositive of the interests of other members of the putative Classes who are not parties to the adjudication and may substantially impair or impede the ability of other putative Class Members to protect their interests; and
- c. Defendants have acted or refused to act on grounds generally applicable to the members of the putative Classes, thereby making appropriate final and injunctive relief with respect to the putative Classes as a whole.

CLAIMS FOR RELIEF

COUNT I

**California’s Unfair Competition Law
Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 17200 et seq. (“UCL”)
(On Behalf of the California Sub-Class)**

144. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates by reference the allegations contained in Paragraphs 1 through 143, as though set forth fully herein.

145. The UCL prohibits any “unlawful, unfair or fraudulent business act or practice.” Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 17200.

146. The acts, omissions, misrepresentations, practices, and non-disclosures of Defendants as alleged herein constitute business acts and practices.

147. Unlawful: The acts alleged herein are “unlawful” under the UCL in that they violate at least the following laws:

- a. The False Advertising Law, Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code §§ 17500 et seq.;
- b. The Consumers Legal Remedies Act, Cal. Civ. Code §§ 1750 et seq.;
- c. The Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, 21 U.S.C. §§ 301 et seq.; and
- d. The California Sherman Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Law, Cal. Health & Safety Code §§ 110100 et seq.

1 on the Products’ packaging. Thus, injunctive relief enjoining Defendants’ deceptive practices is
2 proper.

3 155. Defendants’ conduct caused and continues to cause substantial injury to Plaintiff
4 and the other Class Members. Plaintiff has suffered injury in fact as a result of Defendants’
5 unlawful conduct.

6 156. In accordance with Bus. & Prof. Code § 17203, Plaintiff seeks an order enjoining
7 Defendants from continuing to conduct business through unlawful, unfair, and/or fraudulent acts
8 and practices, and to commence a corrective advertising campaign.

9 157. Plaintiff and the Class also seek an order for and restitution of all monies from
10 the sale of the Products, which were unjustly acquired through acts of unlawful competition.
11

12 **COUNT II**
13 **California’s False Advertising Law**
14 **Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 17500 (“FAL”)**
15 **(On Behalf of the California Sub-Class)**

16 158. Plaintiff repeats and realleges the allegations in paragraphs 1 through 157 as if
17 fully set forth herein.

18 159. The FAL provides that “[i]t is unlawful for any person, firm, corporation or
19 association, or any employee thereof with intent directly or indirectly to dispose of real or
20 personal property or to perform services” to disseminate any statement “which is untrue or
21 misleading, and which is known, or which by the exercise of reasonable care should be known,
22 to be untrue or misleading.” Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 17500.

23 160. It is also unlawful under the FAL to disseminate statements concerning property
24 or services that are “untrue or misleading, and which is known, or which by the exercise of
25 reasonable care should be known, to be untrue or misleading.” *Id.*
26

1 161. As alleged herein, the advertisements, labeling, policies, acts, and practices of
2 Defendants relating to the Products misled consumers acting reasonably as to the safety of the
3 ingredients and the Products’ ability to safely smooth, nourish, cleanse, and/or repair hair

4 162. Plaintiff suffered injury in fact as a result of Defendants’ actions as set forth
5 herein because she purchased the Products in reliance on Defendants’ false and misleading
6 labeling claims that the Products, among other things, are safe and can safely smooth, nourish,
7 cleanse, and/or repair hair.
8

9 163. Defendants’ business practices as alleged herein constitute deceptive, untrue, and
10 misleading advertising pursuant to the FAL because Defendants have advertised the Products in
11 a manner that is untrue and misleading, which Defendants knew or reasonably should have
12 known, and omitted material information from its advertising.
13

14 164. Defendants profited from their sale of the falsely and deceptively advertised
15 Products to unwary consumers.

16 165. As a result, Plaintiff, the California Sub-Class members, and the general public
17 are entitled to injunctive and equitable relief, restitution, and an order for the disgorgement of
18 the funds by which Defendants were unjustly enriched.

19 166. Pursuant to Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 17535, Plaintiff, on behalf of herself and
20 the California Sub-Class, seeks an order enjoining Defendants from continuing to engage in
21 deceptive business practices, false advertising, and any other act prohibited by law, including
22 those set forth in this Complaint.
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COUNT III

**California’s Consumer Legal Remedies Act
Cal. Civ. Code § 1750 et seq. (“CLRA”)
(On Behalf of the California Sub-Class)**

1
2
3
4 167. Plaintiff repeats and realleges the allegations in paragraphs 1 through 166 as if
5 fully set forth herein.

6 168. The CLRA prohibits deceptive practices in connection with the conduct of a
7 business that provides goods, property, or services primarily for personal, family, or household
8 purposes.

9 169. Defendants’ false and misleading labeling and other policies, acts, and practices
10 were designed to, and did, induce the purchase and use of the Products for personal, family, or
11 household purposes by Plaintiff and Class Members, and violated and continue to violate the
12 following sections of the CLRA:
13

14 a. § 1770(a)(5): representing that goods have characteristics, uses, or
15 benefits which they do not have;

16 b. § 1770(a)(7): representing that goods are of a particular standard,
17 quality, or grade if they are of another;

18 c. § 1770(a)(9): advertising goods with intent not to sell them as
19 advertised; and

20 d. § 1770(a)(16): representing the subject of a transaction has been
21 supplied in accordance with a previous representation when it has not.
22

23 170. Defendants profited from the sale of the falsely, deceptively, and unlawfully
24 advertised Products to unwary consumers.

25 171. Defendants’ wrongful business practices constituted, and constitute, a continuing
26 course of conduct in violation of the CLRA.
27

1 172. Pursuant to the provisions of Cal. Civ. Code § 1782(a), Plaintiff will provide a
2 letter to Defendants concurrently with the filing of this Class Action Complaint or shortly
3 thereafter with notice of its alleged violations of the CLRA, demanding that Defendants correct
4 such violations, and providing them with the opportunity to correct their business practices. If
5 Defendants do not thereafter correct their business practices, Plaintiff will amend (or seek leave
6 to amend) the complaint to add claims for monetary relief, including restitution and actual
7 damages under the Consumers Legal Remedies Act.
8

9 173. Pursuant to California Civil Code § 1780, Plaintiff seeks injunctive relief, her
10 reasonable attorney fees and costs, and any other relief that the Court deems proper.

11 **COUNT IV**
12 **Breach of Express Warranties**
13 **Cal. Com. Code § 2313(1)**
(On Behalf of the California Sub-Class)

14 174. Plaintiff Libbey repeats and realleges the allegations in paragraphs 1 through 173
15 as if fully set forth herein.

16 175. Through the Products’ labels and advertising, Defendants made affirmations of
17 fact or promises, or description of goods, described above, which were “part of the basis of the
18 bargain,” in that Plaintiff and the Class purchased the Products in reasonable reliance on those
19 statements. Cal. Com. Code § 2313(1).
20

21 176. Defendants breached the express warranties by selling Products that do not and
22 cannot provide the promised benefits and moreover by selling Products that are unsafe and
23 cannot provide the promised benefits of safely smoothing, nourishing, cleansing, and/or
24 repairing hair.
25

26 177. Plaintiff and the Class Members would not have purchased the Products had they
27
28

1 known the true nature of the Products' ingredients and that the Products are unsafe and cannot
2 safely smooth, nourish, cleanse, and/or repair hair.

3 178. That breach actually and proximately caused injury in the form of the lost
4 purchase price that Plaintiff and Class members paid for the Products.

5 179. On October 30, 2020, Plaintiff Libbey mailed a notice letter to Defendants
6 Unilever and Conopco. The letter was sent on behalf of Plaintiff and all other persons similarly
7 situated. Defendants responded and denied the allegations contained herein.
8

9 180. Furthermore, Defendants had actual knowledge of the defect in the Products
10 purchased by Plaintiff, as well as the Products purchased by other members of the National
11 Class, because: (a) it has knowledge of various studies concluding the inefficacy of the
12 ingredients included in the formulation of the Products; (b) it has knowledge of the complaints
13 made by consumers who purchased the Products; and (c) it had knowledge since at least 2012
14 based on the lawsuit styled *Reid, et al. v. Unilever United States, Inc., et al.*, 1:12-cv-06058
15 (N.D.Ill.).
16

17 181. As a result of Defendants' breach of warranty, Plaintiff and Class Members have
18 been damaged in the amount of the purchase price of the Products and any consequential
19 damages resulting from the purchases.
20

21 **COUNT V**
22 **Breach of Implied Warranty of Merchantability**
23 **Cal. Com. Code § 2314**
24 **(On Behalf of the California Sub-Class)**

25 182. Plaintiff repeats and realleges the allegations in paragraphs 1 through 181 as if
26 fully set forth herein.

27 183. Defendants, through their acts and omissions set forth herein, in the sale,
28

1 marketing, and promotion of the Products, made representations to Plaintiff and the Class that,
2 among other things, are safe and can safely smooth, nourish, cleanse, and/or repair hair .

3 184. Plaintiff and the Class bought the Products manufactured, advertised, and sold
4 by Defendants, as described herein.

5 185. Defendants are a merchant with respect to the goods of this kind which were sold
6 to Plaintiff and the Class, and there was, in the sale to Plaintiff and other consumers, an implied
7 warranty that those goods were merchantable.
8

9 186. However, Defendants breached that implied warranty in that the Products
10 provide no benefits, as set forth in detail herein, and are not safe and cannot safely smooth,
11 nourish, cleanse, and/or repair hair

12 187. As an actual and proximate result of Defendants' conduct, Plaintiff and the Class
13 did not receive goods as impliedly warranted by Defendants to be merchantable in that they did
14 not conform to promises and affirmations made on the container or label of the goods nor are
15 they fit for their ordinary purpose of providing the benefits as promised.
16

17 188. Plaintiff and the Class have sustained damages as a proximate result of the
18 foregoing breach of implied warranty in the amount of the Products' purchase prices.

19 189. On October 30, 2020, Plaintiff Libbey mailed a notice letter to Defendants
20 Unilever and Conopco. The letter was sent on behalf of Plaintiff and all other persons similarly
21 situated. Defendants responded and denied the allegations contained herein.
22

23 190. Furthermore, Defendants had actual knowledge of the defect in the Products
24 purchased by Plaintiff, as well as the Products purchased by other members of the National
25 Class, because: (a) it has knowledge of various studies concluding the inefficacy of the
26 ingredients included in the formulation of the Products; (b) it has knowledge of the complaints
27

1 made by consumers who purchased the Products; and (c) it had knowledge since at least 2012
2 based on the lawsuit styled *Reid, et al. v. Unilever United States, Inc., et al.*, 1:12-cv-06058
3 (N.D.Ill.).

4 **COUNT VI**
5 **Fraud**
6 **(On Behalf of the Nationwide and/or**
7 **California Sub-Class)**

8 191. Plaintiff repeats and realleges the allegations in paragraphs 1 through 190 as if
9 fully set forth herein.

10 192. Plaintiff brings this cause of action on behalf of herself, the Nationwide Class
11 and/or the California Class against Defendants.

12 193. As alleged herein, Defendants knowingly made material misrepresentations and
13 omissions regarding the Products on the Products' labeling and packaging in the Products'
14 advertisements, and/or on their website.

15 194. Defendants made these material misrepresentations and omissions in order to
16 induce Plaintiff and putative Class Members to purchase the Products.

17 195. Rather than inform consumers that the Products contained a defect that caused
18 hair loss upon proper application and did not otherwise perform as represented and for the
19 particular purpose for which it was intended, Defendants claim in marketing materials and their
20 marketing campaign for the Products that the Products would "smooth," "deeply nourish,"
21 "gently cleanse," and "repair hair,"⁴⁹ in order to mislead consumers that the Products have the
22 ability to safely smooth, nourish, cleanse, and/or repair hair.
23

24 196. The inclusion of the defect that causes hair loss and/or scalp irritation upon
25

26
27 ⁴⁹ <https://www.tresemme.com/us/en/collections/keratin-smooth.html> ("How it Works")

1 proper application renders the Products unable to safely smooth, nourish, cleanse, and repair
2 hair.

3 197. Defendants knew the Products were incapable of safely smoothing, nourishing,
4 cleansing, and/or repairing hair, but nevertheless made such representations through the
5 marketing, advertising and on the Products' labeling. In reliance on these and other similar
6 misrepresentations, Plaintiff and putative Class Members were induced to, and did, pay monies
7 to purchase the Products.
8

9 198. Had Plaintiff and the Class known the truth about the Products, they would not
10 have purchased the Products.

11 199. As a proximate result of the fraudulent conduct of Defendants, Plaintiff and the
12 putative Class paid monies to Defendants, through their regular retail sales channels, to which
13 Defendants are not entitled, and have been damaged in an amount to be proven at trial.
14

15 **COUNT VII**
16 **Unjust Enrichment**
17 **(On Behalf of the Nationwide and/or**
18 **California Sub-Class)**

19 200. Plaintiff repeats and realleges the allegations in paragraphs 1 through 199 as if
20 fully set forth herein.

21 201. Plaintiff brings this cause of action on behalf of herself, and the putative Classes
22 against Defendants.

23 202. Plaintiff and putative Class Members conferred a benefit on Defendants when
24 they purchased the Products, of which Defendants had knowledge. By their wrongful acts and
25 omissions described herein, including selling the Products, which contain a defect that caused
26 hair loss upon proper application and did not otherwise perform as represented and for the
27

1 particular purpose for which they were intended, Defendants were unjustly enriched at the
2 expense of Plaintiff and putative Class Members.

3 203. Plaintiff's detriment and Defendants' enrichment were related to and flowed
4 from the wrongful conduct challenged in this Complaint.

5 204. Defendants have profited from their unlawful, unfair, misleading, and deceptive
6 practices at the expense of Plaintiff and putative Class Members under circumstances in which
7 it would be unjust for Defendants to be permitted to retain the benefit. It would be inequitable
8 for Defendants to retain the profits, benefits, and other compensation obtained from their
9 wrongful conduct as described herein in connection with selling the Products.
10

11 205. Defendants have been unjustly enriched in retaining the revenues derived from
12 Class Members' purchases of the Products, which retention of such revenues under these
13 circumstances is unjust and inequitable because Defendants manufactured defective Products,
14 and Unilever misrepresented the nature of the Products, misrepresented their ingredients, and
15 knowingly marketed and promoted dangerous and defective Products, which caused injuries to
16 Plaintiff and the Class because they would not have purchased the Products based on the same
17 representations if the true facts concerning the Products had been known.
18

19 206. Plaintiff and putative Class Members have been damaged as a direct and
20 proximate result of Defendants' unjust enrichment because they would not have purchased the
21 Products on the same terms or for the same price had they known the true nature of the Products
22 and the mis-statements regarding what the Products were and what they contained.
23

24 207. Defendants either knew or should have known that payments rendered by
25 Plaintiff and putative Class Members were given and received with the expectation that the
26 Products were able to safely nourish, cleanse, and repair hair as represented by Defendants in
27

1 advertising, on Defendants' websites, and on the Products' labels and packaging. It is
2 inequitable for Defendants to retain the benefit of payments under these circumstances.

3 208. Plaintiff and putative Class Members are entitled to recover from Defendants all
4 amounts wrongfully collected and improperly retained by Defendants.

5 209. When required, Plaintiff and Class Members are in privity with Defendants
6 because Defendants' sale of the Products was either direct or through authorized sellers.
7 Purchase through authorized sellers is sufficient to create such privity because such authorized
8 sellers are Defendants' agents for the purpose of the sale of the Products.
9

10 210. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' wrongful conduct and unjust
11 enrichment, Plaintiff and putative Class Members are entitled to restitution of, disgorgement of,
12 and/or imposition of a constructive trust upon all profits, benefits, and other compensation
13 obtained by Defendants for their inequitable and unlawful conduct.
14

15 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

16 WHEREFORE, Plaintiff, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated
17 members of the Classes, pray for relief and judgment, including entry of an order:

- 18 A. Declaring that this action is properly maintained as a class action, certifying the proposed
19 Class(es), appointing Plaintiff as Class Representative and appointing Plaintiff's counsel
20 as Class Counsel;
- 21 B. Directing that Defendants bear the costs of any notice sent to the Class(es);
- 22 C. Declaring that Defendants must disgorge, for the benefit of the Class(es), all or part of
23 the ill-gotten profits they received from the sale of the Products, or order Defendants to
24 make full restitution to Plaintiff and the members of the Class(es) except that no monetary
25 relief is presently sought for violations of the Consumers Legal Remedies Act;
- 26 D. Awarding restitution and other appropriate equitable relief;
- 27 E. Granting an injunction against Unilever to enjoin it from conducting its business through
28 the unlawful, unfair and fraudulent acts or practices set forth herein;

- 1 F. Granting an Order requiring Unilever to fully and appropriately recall the Products, to
2 remove the claims on its website and elsewhere that the Products are safe to use, and to
3 fully and properly disclose the safety risks associated with the Products to anyone who
4 may still be at risk of buying and using the Products;
- 5 G. Ordering a jury trial and damages according to proof;
- 6 H. Awarding Plaintiff and members of the Class(es) statutory damages, as provided by the
7 applicable state consumer protection statutes invoked above, except that no monetary
8 relief is presently sought for violations of the Consumers Legal Remedies Act;
- 9 I. Enjoining Defendants from continuing to engage in the unlawful and unfair business acts
10 and practices as alleged herein;
- 11 J. Awarding attorneys' fees and litigation costs to Plaintiff and members of the Class(es);
- 12 K. Awarding civil penalties, prejudgment interest and punitive damages as permitted by law;
13 and
- 14 L. Ordering such other and further relief as the Court deems just and proper.

15 **JURY DEMAND**

16 Plaintiff demands a trial by jury of all claims in this Complaint so triable.

17 Dated: November 16, 2020

18 Respectfully submitted,

19 */s/ Alex Straus*

20 Alex R. Straus (SBN 321366)

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**Pro Hac Vice Application Forthcoming
Attorneys for Plaintiff and Putative Class Members*

CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS-CAND 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 in its original form by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the Clerk of Court to initiate the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS

KENDRA LIBBEY, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated

(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff CONTRA COSTA (EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)

(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, Address, and Telephone Number)

Alex R. Straus, WHITFIELD BRYSON LLP
16748 McCormick Street, Los Angeles, CA 91436 (917) 471-1894

DEFENDANTS

UNILEVER UNITED STATES, INC., and CONOPCO, INC. d/b/a UNILEVER HOME & PERSONAL CARE USA

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.

Attorneys (If Known)

II. BASIS OF JURISDICTION (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

1 U.S. Government Plaintiff 3 Federal Question (U.S. Government Not a Party)

2 U.S. Government Defendant X 4 Diversity (Indicate Citizenship of Parties in Item III)

III. CITIZENSHIP OF PRINCIPAL PARTIES (Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintiff and One Box for Defendant)

Table with columns for Plaintiff (PTF) and Defendant (DEF) citizenship and incorporation status. Includes rows for Citizen of This State, Citizen of Another State, Citizen or Subject of a Foreign Country, and Incorporated or Principal Place of Business.

IV. NATURE OF SUIT (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

Large table with columns for CONTRACT, REAL PROPERTY, TORTS, CIVIL RIGHTS, PRISONER PETITIONS, FORFEITURE/PENALTY, LABOR, IMMIGRATION, BANKRUPTCY, SOCIAL SECURITY, FEDERAL TAX SUITS, and OTHER STATUTES. Includes various legal categories and codes.

V. ORIGIN (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

X 1 Original Proceeding 2 Removed from State Court 3 Remanded from Appellate Court 4 Reinstated or Reopened 5 Transferred from Another District (specify) 6 Multidistrict Litigation-Transfer 8 Multidistrict Litigation-Direct File

VI. CAUSE OF ACTION

Cite the U.S. Civil Statute under which you are filing (Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity): 28 USC § 1332 - Diversity of Citizenship

Brief description of cause:

Consumer Class Action for misrepresentations on shampoo products

VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:

CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION UNDER RULE 23, Fed. R. Civ. P. DEMAND \$ 5,000,000.00

CHECK YES only if demanded in complaint: JURY DEMAND: X Yes No

VIII. RELATED CASE(S), IF ANY (See instructions):

JUDGE

DOCKET NUMBER

IX. DIVISIONAL ASSIGNMENT (Civil Local Rule 3-2)

(Place an "X" in One Box Only) X SAN FRANCISCO/OAKLAND SAN JOSE EUREKA-MCKINLEYVILLE

DATE 11/16/2020

SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY OF RECORD

/s/ Alex R. Straus

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ATTORNEYS COMPLETING CIVIL COVER SHEET FORM JS-CAND 44

Authority For Civil Cover Sheet. The JS-CAND 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replaces nor supplements the filings and service of pleading or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved in its original form by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the Clerk of Court to initiate the civil docket sheet. Consequently, a civil cover sheet is submitted to the Clerk of Court for each civil complaint filed. The attorney filing a case should complete the form as follows:

- I. a) Plaintiffs-Defendants.** Enter names (last, first, middle initial) of plaintiff and defendant. If the plaintiff or defendant is a government agency, use only the full name or standard abbreviations. If the plaintiff or defendant is an official within a government agency, identify first the agency and then the official, giving both name and title.
- b) County of Residence.** For each civil case filed, except U.S. plaintiff cases, enter the name of the county where the first listed plaintiff resides at the time of filing. In U.S. plaintiff cases, enter the name of the county in which the first listed defendant resides at the time of filing. (NOTE: In land condemnation cases, the county of residence of the “defendant” is the location of the tract of land involved.)
- c) Attorneys.** Enter the firm name, address, telephone number, and attorney of record. If there are several attorneys, list them on an attachment, noting in this section “(see attachment).”
- II. Jurisdiction.** The basis of jurisdiction is set forth under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 8(a), which requires that jurisdictions be shown in pleadings. Place an “X” in one of the boxes. If there is more than one basis of jurisdiction, precedence is given in the order shown below.
- (1) United States plaintiff. Jurisdiction based on 28 USC §§ 1345 and 1348. Suits by agencies and officers of the United States are included here.
 - (2) United States defendant. When the plaintiff is suing the United States, its officers or agencies, place an “X” in this box.
 - (3) Federal question. This refers to suits under 28 USC § 1331, where jurisdiction arises under the Constitution of the United States, an amendment to the Constitution, an act of Congress or a treaty of the United States. In cases where the U.S. is a party, the U.S. plaintiff or defendant code takes precedence, and box 1 or 2 should be marked.
 - (4) Diversity of citizenship. This refers to suits under 28 USC § 1332, where parties are citizens of different states. When Box 4 is checked, the citizenship of the different parties must be checked. (See Section III below; **NOTE: federal question actions take precedence over diversity cases.**)
- III. Residence (citizenship) of Principal Parties.** This section of the JS-CAND 44 is to be completed if diversity of citizenship was indicated above. Mark this section for each principal party.
- IV. Nature of Suit.** Place an “X” in the appropriate box. If the nature of suit cannot be determined, be sure the cause of action, in Section VI below, is sufficient to enable the deputy clerk or the statistical clerk(s) in the Administrative Office to determine the nature of suit. If the cause fits more than one nature of suit, select the most definitive.
- V. Origin.** Place an “X” in one of the six boxes.
- (1) Original Proceedings. Cases originating in the United States district courts.
 - (2) Removed from State Court. Proceedings initiated in state courts may be removed to the district courts under Title 28 USC § 1441. When the petition for removal is granted, check this box.
 - (3) Remanded from Appellate Court. Check this box for cases remanded to the district court for further action. Use the date of remand as the filing date.
 - (4) Reinstated or Reopened. Check this box for cases reinstated or reopened in the district court. Use the reopening date as the filing date.
 - (5) Transferred from Another District. For cases transferred under Title 28 USC § 1404(a). Do not use this for within district transfers or multidistrict litigation transfers.
 - (6) Multidistrict Litigation Transfer. Check this box when a multidistrict case is transferred into the district under authority of Title 28 USC § 1407. When this box is checked, do not check (5) above.
 - (8) Multidistrict Litigation Direct File. Check this box when a multidistrict litigation case is filed in the same district as the Master MDL docket. Please note that there is no Origin Code 7. Origin Code 7 was used for historical records and is no longer relevant due to changes in statute.
- VI. Cause of Action.** Report the civil statute directly related to the cause of action and give a brief description of the cause. **Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity.** Example: U.S. Civil Statute: 47 USC § 553. Brief Description: Unauthorized reception of cable service.
- VII. Requested in Complaint.** Class Action. Place an “X” in this box if you are filing a class action under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 23. Demand. In this space enter the actual dollar amount being demanded or indicate other demand, such as a preliminary injunction. Jury Demand. Check the appropriate box to indicate whether or not a jury is being demanded.
- VIII. Related Cases.** This section of the JS-CAND 44 is used to identify related pending cases, if any. If there are related pending cases, insert the docket numbers and the corresponding judge names for such cases.
- IX. Divisional Assignment.** If the Nature of Suit is under Property Rights or Prisoner Petitions or the matter is a Securities Class Action, leave this section blank. For all other cases, identify the divisional venue according to Civil Local Rule 3-2: “the county in which a substantial part of the events or omissions which give rise to the claim occurred or in which a substantial part of the property that is the subject of the action is situated.”
- Date and Attorney Signature.** Date and sign the civil cover sheet.

1 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
2 NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

3 KENDRA LIBBEY, individually and on behalf of
4 all others similarly situated,

Case No.: 3:20-cv-8075

5 Plaintiff,

6 v.

7 UNILEVER UNITED STATES, INC., and
8 CONOPCO, INC. d/b/a UNILEVER HOME &
9 PERSONAL CARE USA,

10 Defendants.

11 **CLRA Venue Declaration Pursuant to California Civil Code Section 1780(d)**

12
13 I, Alex Straus, declare as follows:

14 1. I am an attorney at law licensed to practice in the State of California and a member
15 of the bar of this Court. I am an attorney at Whitfield Bryson LLP, counsel of record for Plaintiff
16 in this action. I have personal knowledge of the facts set forth in this declaration and, if call as a
17 witness, I could and would competently testify thereto under oath.

18
19 2. The Complaint filed in this action is filed in the proper place for trial under Civil
20 Code Section 1780(d) in that a substantial portion of the events alleged in the Complaint occurred
21 in the Northern District of California.

22 I declare under the penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California and the
23 United States that the foregoing is true and correct and that this declaration was executed at Los
24 Angeles, California this 16th day of November, 2020.

25
26 /s/ Alex R. Straus
27 Alex R. Straus