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1	HNP LLC, d/b/a W8-B-Gone, and d/b/a Quick &				
2	Easy;				
3	HOWARD RAFF, a/k/a HOWARD BRUCE, individually and as an officer or director of Health				
4	Nutrition Products, LLC;				
5	DAVID RAFF, individually and as a <i>de facto</i>				
6	officer or director of Health Nutrition Products, LLC;				
7 8	OMNI PROCESSING CENTER, a Nevada company;				
9	MBE MANAGEMENT LLC, a Nevada limited				
10	liability company;				
11	SHIRLEY MURPHY, individually and as a director or officer of Omni Processing Center;				
12					
13	and				
14	RONALD BOYDE, individually and as a director or officer of Omni Processing Center and a <i>de</i>				
15	facto director or officer of MBE Management LLC,				
16	Defendants.				
17	Detendants.				
18					
19	Plaintiff, the Federal Trade Commission ("FTC"), for its Complaint alleges:				
20	1. The FTC brings this action under Section 13(b) of the Federal Trade Commission				
21	Act ("FTC Act"), 15 U.S.C. § 53(b), to obtain permanent injunctive relief, rescission of				
22	contracts, restitution, the refund of monies paid, disgorgement of ill-gotten monies, and other				
23	equitable relief for Defendants' acts or practices in violation of Sections 5(a) and 12 of the FTC				
24	Act, 15 U.S.C. §§ 45(a) and 52, in connection with the advertising, marketing, and sale of				
25	purported weight loss pills "W8-B-Gone" and/or "Quick & Easy."				
26					

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 2. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331, 1337(a), and 1345, and 15 U.S.C. §§ 45(a) and 53(b).
- 3. Venue is proper in this district under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1391(b)(1), (b)(2), (c)(1), (c)(2), and 15 U.S.C. § 53(b).

PLAINTIFF

- 4. The FTC is an independent agency of the United States Government created by statute. 15 U.S.C. §§ 41-58. The FTC enforces Section 5(a) of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 45(a), which prohibits unfair or deceptive acts or practices in or affecting commerce. The FTC also enforces Section 12 of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 52, which prohibits false advertisements for food, drugs, devices, services, or cosmetics in or affecting commerce.
- 5. The FTC is authorized to initiate federal district court proceedings, by its own attorneys, to enjoin violations of the FTC Act and to secure such equitable relief as may be appropriate in each case, including rescission or reformation of contracts, restitution, the refund of monies paid, and the disgorgement of ill-gotten monies. 15 U.S.C. § 53(b).

DEFENDANTS

6. Defendant Crystal Ewing, a Las Vegas, Nevada resident, in her individual capacity and as the sole officer of Defendant Classic Productions, LLC, played a significant role in the W8-B-Gone operation, including but not limited to registering and operating 123w8bgone.com and w8-b-gone.com (collectively "the W8-B-Gone website"). Defendant Ewing also had signatory authority over Classic Production's bank accounts. Defendants Ewing, Boyde, Murphy, and Classic Productions opened W8-B-Gone's PO Box in Las Vegas, Nevada,

and maintained the box with Defendant Omni. At times relevant to this Complaint, Defendant Ewing, acting alone or in concert with others, formulated, directed, or controlled, had authority to control, or participated in the acts or practices set forth herein. Defendant Ewing, in connection with the matters alleged herein, transacts or has transacted business in this district and throughout the United States.

- 7. Defendant Classic Productions, LLC, was, or is, until at least October 2011 a
 Nevada limited liability company with its principal place of business at 4330 West Cheyenne
 Avenue, North Las Vegas, Nevada 89032. Classic Productions played a significant role in the
 W8-B-Gone operation, including, but not limited to, registering the 123w8bgone.com website
 and also received money for W8-B-Gone sales. At times material to this Complaint, acting alone
 or in concert with others, Classic Productions transacted business in this district and throughout
 the United States.
- 8. Defendant Health Nutrition Products, LLC ("HNP"), also doing business as HNP LLC, W8-B-Gone, and Quick & Easy, is a Delaware company with its principal place of business at 7434 Viale Caterina, Delray Beach, Florida 33446. HNP paid for Quick & Easy and W8-B-Gone direct mail advertisements and also received consumers' money for these products. From 2010 through 2013, HNP's PayPal account received over \$1,344,000 in online purchases of W8-B-Gone. At times material to this Complaint, acting alone or in concert with others, HNP transacts or has transacted business in this district and throughout the United States.
- 9. Defendant Howard Raff, a/k/a Howard Bruce, is a Florida resident and a manager of Defendant HNP. Through HNP, Howard Raff has participated significantly in the W8-B-Gone and Quick & Easy operation, including but not limited to operating the PayPal account to

Omni the funds. HNP also paid Omni for similar tasks involving Quick & Easy, including handling customer calls and order fulfillment. At times material to this Complaint, acting alone or in concert with others, Omni transacts or has transacted business in this district and throughout the United States.

- 12. Defendant MBE Management LLC ("MBE") was, or is, a Nevada limited liability company with its principal place of business at 320 Stanford Street, Las Vegas, Nevada 89107. Defendant MBE acts or acted as the public face of W8-B-Gone on direct mail advertisements and collected consumers' money for their W8-B-Gone purchases. At times material to this Complaint, acting alone or in concert with others, MBE transacts or has transacted business in this district and throughout the United States.
- 13. Defendant Shirley Murphy, a Las Vegas, Nevada resident, was Defendant Classic Productions' long-time office manager and is Defendant Omni's Secretary. Murphy, individually and through Omni as one of its only two officers, participated significantly in the W8-B-Gone and Quick & Easy operation, including but not limited to operating W8-B-Gone's PO Box. At times relevant to this Complaint, Defendant Murphy, acting alone or in concert with others, formulated, directed, or controlled, had authority to control, or participated in the acts or practices set forth herein. Defendant Murphy, in connection with the matters alleged herein, transacts or has transacted business in this district and throughout the United States.
- 14. Defendant Ronald Boyde, a Las Vegas, Nevada, resident, is Defendant MBE's registered agent and Defendant Omni's President. Boyde, a long-time employee of Defendant Classic Productions, individually and through MBE and Omni, participated significantly in the W8-B-Gone and Quick & Easy operation. Among other things, Boyde had signatory authority

- 22. To induce consumers to purchase over \$2 million of W8-B-Gone, Defendants disseminated, or caused to be disseminated, advertisements, including, but not limited to, a direct mail advertisement, attached as Exhibit A, that contains the following statements, among others:
 - "The INCREDIBLE '5 pounds per capsule'
 Molecular weight-loss formula from SWEDEN!" Ex. A at 1
 (emphasis in original);
 - "W8-B-Gone's 4 Hi-Potency '4 pack' lets you lose 20 pounds <u>GUARANTEED</u>" <u>Id.</u> (emphasis in original);
 - W8-B-Gone "achieves these CLINICALLY-PROVEN results:
 - o Take just one capsule and lose up to 5 pounds in 4 days
 - Take another capsule and in 4 more days lose 5 more pounds (10 pounds total)
 - Take a third capsule and in 4 more days lose 5 more pounds (15 pounds total)
 - With the convenient W8-B-Gone 4-capsule pack, you can lose up to 20 pounds in only 16 days!" <u>Id.</u> at 4 (emphasis in original);
 - "[I]t works without dieting! You continue to eat your favorite foods." <u>Id.</u>;
 - "Amazing RAPID FAT meltdown diet program with scientifically proven capsule ATTACKS and MELTS AWAY years of BUILT UP FAT and CELLULITE" <u>Id.</u> at 5 (emphasis in original);
 - "With no dieting eat as you always have, knowing W8-B-Gone is at work, 'around the clock' attacking the fat in your body." <u>Id.</u>; and
 - "W8-B-Gone always works!" Id. at 6 (emphasis in original).

23. A consumer visiting 123w8bgone.com was immediately redirected to w8-b-gone.com. Through the W8-B-Gone website, a copy of which is attached as Exhibit B,

Defendants disseminated, or caused to be disseminated, the following statements, among others:

- "With W8-B-Gone you can be sure that a single capsule is capable of dislodging all localized fat deposits." Ex. B at 1;
- "Never before has ONE HIGH POTENCY CAPSULE had the power to bring about a 5-pound weight loss. Only W8-B-Gone achieves this." <u>Id.</u> (emphasis added); and
- "W8-B-Gone takes weight off automatically whatever the cause of your weight problem by acting directly on fat deposits in muscle areas (belly, thighs, and hips) removing and expelling the fat day after day." Id.
- 24. The Quick & Easy Defendants disseminated, or caused to be disseminated, substantially similar claims in their direct mail advertisements, inducing consumers to purchase over \$400,000 of Quick & Easy, including, but not limited to, claims in the attached Exhibits C and D.
- 25. For instance, the Quick & Easy Defendants' direct mail advertisements contain the following statements, among others:
 - a. Ex. C (emphasis in original)
 - "Quick & Easy's high potency 4 pack lets you lose 20 pounds that's an incredible 5 pounds per capsule with no dieting & no strenuous exercise." Ex. C. at 1;
 - "Each single Quick & Easy capsule is guaranteed to melt away up to 5 pounds of built-up fat every 4 days. You will lose up to 20 pounds in just 16 days!" <u>Id.</u>;
 - "It's the only way to lose up to 20 pounds in 16 days with absolute certainty." <u>Id.</u>;

- "Amazing Rapid Fat Meltdown Diet Program with Scientifically Proven Capsule Attacks and Melts Away Years of Built Up Fat and Cellulite" Id. at 2; and
- "Never before has one high potency capsule had the power to bring about a 5-pound weight loss. Only Quick & Easy achieves this." Id.
- b. Ex. D (emphasis in original)
 - "Quick & Easy was originally developed in Sweden. A super powerful high potency molecular formula that removes fat from the system instantly, removing and expelling it naturally over a period of just four days." Ex. D at 1; and
 - "[Quick & Easy] achieves these Clinically Proven results:
 - o Take just **one capsule** and lose up to 5 pounds in 4 days
 - o Take **another capsule** and in 4 more days lose 5 more pounds (10 pounds total)
 - o Take **a third capsule** and in 4 more days lose 5 more pounds (15 pounds total)
 - o With the convenient **Quick & Easy 4-capsule** pack, you can lose up to 20 pounds in only 16 days!" <u>Id.</u> at 2.
- 26. On numerous direct mail advertisements, Defendants claim that Dr. Brantley Juergen, W8-B-Gone's purported creator and "Sweden's most famous and respected weight-loss specialist," endorses the product. On both the W8-B-Gone website and certain direct mail advertisements, Defendants prominently feature a picture of a smiling Dr. Juergen, language attributed to the purported doctor, and purported consumer testimonials thanking him for his miracle cure. Ex. A at 1-2, 6, Ex. B at 2-3. Defendants attribute the following false and unsubstantiated statements, among others, to Dr. Juergen:
 - "I have all the results of tests conducted in Sweden and across Europe on individuals of both sexes and all ages. All of them automatically lost between 4 and 6 pounds over the 4 days, making an average

weight loss of 5 pounds. That is how we can safely claim this figure. It simply corresponds to the facts." Ex. A at 6, Ex. B at 2.

- "I actively discourage [a special diet] simply due to the fact that if you follow a restrictive diet at the same time you take W8-B-Gone, you could mistakenly believe the weight loss is due to the diet. So continue to eat as you normally do, and you will observe daily progress in terms of weight loss." <u>Id.</u>
- 27. In fact, Dr. Juergen—purportedly "Sweden's most famous and respected weightloss specialist"—does not exist. The purported photograph of "Juergen" is actually a stock photousing a picture of a model.
- 28. Despite Defendants' claims that its products are supported by European tests demonstrating average weight loss of 5 pounds every four days, there are no such studies, and W8-B-Gone does not work as advertised.
- 29. The Quick & Easy Defendants similarly claim that "Sweden's most famous and respected weight-our dayio -1hs of-1hs of-1hs of-1hs a work aswJ-ryo

"I actively dis2']T Tcuch stual dheve Tcthe d3dulthere .0009 all clsJ(2." s and s006 acrh[a 0003 T)TjTictiv picture2ve the facts." Ex. A at 6, Ex. B at 2. Tw0078\(\mathbb{T}\)j/TT2 177f1.5 0 TD.0003 Tc-.0004 Tw[("I actively local to the facts." Ex. A at 6, Ex. B at 2. Tw0078\(\mathbb{T}\)j/TT2 177f1.5 0 TD.0003 Tc-.0004 Tw[("I actively local to the facts.")

So continue to eat as you normally do, and you will observe daily progress in terms of weight loss." Id.

- 30. In fact, despite the Quick & Easy Defendants' claims of "astonishing clinical tests [that] prove [Quick & Easy] really is 'miracle capsule'!" there are no such studies and Quick & Easy does not work as advertised. Ex. D at 2 (emphasis in original).
- 31. Finally, in both print and online advertisements, Defendants promise consumers a no strings attached refund:

You risk absolutely nothing when you order. Your decision to try this revolutionary breakthrough weight loss program is backed by a 100%, no-strings-attached, moneyback guarantee. If after 20 days, you are not satisfied by all the weight you have lost, return it and you will get a 100% refund of your purchase price (minus shipping), absolutely guaranteed.

Ex. A at 5, Ex. B at 1.

- 32. The Quick & Easy Defendants make the same guarantee to their customers. Ex. C at 2, Ex. D at 4.
- 33. Despite these guarantees, in numerous instances, there were many "strings" attached to customers obtaining refunds. Defendants and Quick & Easy Defendants provided refunds only after their customers made repeated demands, sometimes over the course of many months, and/or filed complaints with the Better Business Bureau. Defendants and Quick & Easy Defendants paid a total of less than \$90,000 in refunds for products that do not work as advertised.

VIOLATIONS OF THE FTC ACT

- 35. Misrepresentations or deceptive omissions of material fact constitute deceptive acts or practices prohibited by Section 5(a) of the FTC Act.
- 36. Section 12 of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 52, prohibits the dissemination of any false advertisement in or affecting commerce for the purpose of inducing, or which is likely to induce, the purchase of food, drugs, devices, services, or cosmetics.
- 37. For the purposes of Section 12 of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 52, W8-B-Gone and Quick & Easy are either a "food" or "drug" as defined in Section 15(b) and (c) of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 55(b), (c).

COUNT I (ALL DEFENDANTS)

FALSE OR MISLEADING CLAIMS

- 38. Through the means described in Paragraphs 20-33, Defendants have represented, directly or indirectly, expressly or by implication, that:
 - a. W8-B-Gone causes rapid and substantial weight loss including but not limited to:
 - "5 pounds per capsule"
 - "W8-B-Gone's 4 Hi-Potency '4 pack' lets you lose 20 pounds GUARANTEED"
 - "Amazing RAPID FAT meltdown diet program with scientifically proven capsule ATTACKS and MELTS AWAY years of BUILT UP FAT and CELLULITE"
 - "With W8-B-Gone you can be sure that a single capsule is capable of dislodging all localized fat deposits."
 - "Never before has ONE HIGH POTENCY CAPSULE had the power to bring about a 5-pound weight loss. Only W8-B-Gone achieves this."
 - b. Consumers taking W8-B-Gone as directed did not need to diet or exercise to achieve the promised rapid and substantial weight loss;

- c. Defendants would refund 100% of the purchase price with no strings attached to unsatisfied consumers; and
- d. Dr. Brantley Juergen is "Sweden's most famous and respected weight-loss specialist," W8-B-Gone's creator, and endorsed its use for rapid and substantial weight loss.

39. In truth and in fact:

- a. W8-B-Gone does not cause rapid and substantial weight loss, including but not limited to:
 - "5 pounds per capsule"
 - "W8-B-Gone's 4 Hi-Potency '4 pack' lets you lose 20 pounds GUARANTEED"
 - "Amazing RAPID FAT meltdown diet program with scientifically proven capsule ATTACKS and MELTS AWAY years of BUILT UP FAT and CELLULITE"
 - "With W8-B-Gone you can be sure that a single capsule is capable of dislodging all localized fat deposits."
 - "Never before has ONE HIGH POTENCY CAPSULE had the power to bring about a 5-pound weight loss. Only W8-B-Gone achieves this."
- b. Consumers taking W8-B-Gone as directed cannot achieve the promised rapid and substantial weight loss without diet and/or exercise;
- c. Defendants did not provide unsatisfied consumers with a no strings attached refund for 100% of the purchase price; and
- d. Dr. Brantley Juergen, "Sweden's most famous and respected weight-loss specialist," does not exist.
- 40. Therefore, the making of the representations as set forth in Paragraph 38 of this Complaint constitutes a deceptive act or practice and the making of false advertisements, in or affecting commerce in violation of Sections 5(a) and 12 of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. §§ 45(a) and 52.

COUNT II (ALL DEFENDANTS)

UNSUBSTANTIATED CLAIMS

- 41. Through the means described in Paragraphs 20-33, Defendants have represented, directly or indirectly, expressly or by implication, that they possessed and relied upon a reasonable basis that substantiated the representations set forth in Paragraph 38(a) and (b) at the time the representations were made.
- 42. In truth and in fact, Defendants did not possess and rely upon a reasonable basis that substantiated the representations set forth in Paragraph 38(a) and (b), at the time the representations were made.
- 43. Therefore, the making of the representations set forth in Paragraph 38(a) and (b) of this Complaint constitutes a deceptive act or practice and the making of false advertisements, in or affecting commerce in violation of Sections 5(a) and 12 of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. §§ 45(a) and 52.

COUNT III (ALL DEFENDANTS)

FALSE PROOF CLAIMS

- 44. Through the means described in Paragraphs 20-33, Defendants have represented, directly or indirectly, expressly or by implication, that clinical tests on W8-B-Gone conducted in Sweden and other European locales on men and women of all ages, show an average weight loss of 5 pounds every four days.
 - 45. The representation set forth in Paragraph 44 is false.

46. Therefore, the making of the representations as set forth in Paragraph 44 constitutes a deceptive act or practice and the making of false advertisements, in or affecting commerce, in violation of Sections 5(a) and 12 of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. §§ 45(a) and 52.

COUNT IV (QUICK & EASY DEFENDANTS ONLY)

FALSE OR MISLEADING CLAIMS

- 47. Through the means described in Paragraphs 20-33, the Quick & Easy Defendants have represented, directly or indirectly, expressly or by implication, that:
 - a. Quick & Easy causes rapid and substantial weight loss including but not limited to:
 - "5 pounds per capsule"
 - "Quick & Easy's high potency 4 pack lets you lose 20 pounds"
 - "Each single Quick & Easy capsule is guaranteed to melt away up to 5 pounds of built-up fat every 4 days.
 - "Amazing Rapid Fat Meltdown Diet Program with Scientifically Proven Capsule Attacks and Melts Away Years of Built Up Fat and Cellulite"
 - "Never before has one high potency capsule had the power to bring about a 5-pound weight loss. Only Quick & Easy achieves this."
 - b. Consumers taking Quick & Easy as directed did not need to diet or exercise to achieve the promised rapid and substantial weight loss;
 - c. Defendants would refund 100% of the purchase price with no stringsv.rst lbss;

- Quick & Easy does not cause rapid and substantial weight loss, including

 - "Quick & Easy's high potency 4 pack lets you lose 20 pounds"
 - "Each single Quick & Easy capsule is guaranteed to melt away up to 5 pounds of built-up fat every 4 days.
 - "Amazing Rapid Fat Meltdown Diet Program with Scientifically Proven Capsule Attacks and Melts Away Years of Built Up Fat and
 - "Never before has one high potency capsule had the power to bring about a 5-pound weight loss. Only Quick & Easy achieves this."
- Consumers taking Quick & Easy cannot achieve the promised rapid and substantial weight loss without diet and/or exercise;
- Defendants did not provide unsatisfied consumers with a no strings attached refund for 100% of the purchase price;
- Dr. Brantley Juergen, "Sweden's most famous and respected weight-loss specialist," does not exist; and
- Dr. Edvard Johansson, "Sweden's most famous and respected weight-loss
- Therefore, the making of the representations as set forth in Paragraph 47 of this Complaint constitutes a deceptive act or practice and

55. Therefore, the making of the representations as set forth in Paragraph 53 constitutes a deceptive act or practice and the making of false advertisements, in or affecting commerce, in violation of Sections 5(a) and 12 of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. §§ 45(a) and 52.

CONSUMER INJURY

56. Consumers have suffered and will continue to suffer substantial injury as a result of Defendants' violations of the FTC Act. In addition, Defendants have been unjustly enriched as a result of their unlawful acts or practices. Absent injunctive relief by this Court, Defendants are likely to continue to injure consumers, reap unjust enrichment, and harm the public interest.

THIS COURT'S POWER TO GRANT RELIEF

57. Section 13(b) of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 53(b), empowers this Court to grant injunctive and such other relief as the Court may deem appropriate to halt and redress violations of any provision of law enforced by the FTC. The Court, in the exercise of its equitable jurisdiction, may award ancillary relief, including rescission or reformation of contracts, restitution, the refund of monies paid, and the disgorgement of ill-gotten monies, to prevent and remedy any violation of any provision of law enforced by the FTC.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

Wherefore, Plaintiff FTC, pursuant to Sections 13(b) of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 53(b), and the Court's own equitable powers, requests that the Court:

- A. Enter a permanent injunction to prevent future violations of the FTC Act by Defendants;
- B. Award such relief as the Court finds necessary to redress injury to consumers resulting from Defendants' violations of the FTC Act, including, but not limited to, rescission or

1 reformation of contracts, restitution, the refund of monies paid, and the disgorgement of ill-2 gotten monies; and 3 C. Award Plaintiff the costs of bringing this action, as well as such other and 4 additional relief as the Court may determine to be just and proper. 5 6 Respectfully submitted, 7 8 /s/ Roger W. Wenthe 9 ROGER W. WENTHE 10 **Assistant United States Attorney** Nevada Bar No. 8920 11 333 Las Vegas Boulevard South, Suite 5000 Las Vegas, Nevada 89101 12 702-388-6336 702-388-6787 (fax) 13 Email roger.wenthe@usdoj.gov 14 Dated: May 1, 2014 JONATHAN E. NUECHTERLEIN 15 General Counsel 16 KORIN EWING FELIX 17 ELSIE KAPPLER ALEJANDRO G. ROSENBERG 18 Federal Trade Commission 19 600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW Maildrop M-8102B 20 Washington, D.C. 20580 202-326-3556 (Felix) 21 202-326-2466 (Kappler) 202-326-2698 (Rosenberg) 22 202-326-2558 (fax) 23 Email: kfelix@ftc.gov; ekappler@ftc.gov; arosenberg@ftc.gov 24 25 Attorneys for Plaintiff 26