

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF INDIANA
SOUTH BEND DIVISION

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In re FEDEX GROUND PACKAGE)	Cause No. 3:05-MD-527-RM
SYSTEM, INC., EMPLOYMENT)	(MDL 1700)
PRACTICES LITIGATION)	
)	
-----)	
THIS DOCUMENT RELATES TO:)	
)	
<i>Tim Johnson v. FedEx Ground</i>)	
<i>Package System, Inc.,</i>)	
Civil No. 3:05-cv-00652-RLM-CAN (IA))	
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AMENDED CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT

Plaintiff, on behalf of himself and a Class of persons similarly situated, for his Amended Complaint against the Defendant, states and alleges as follows:

PARTIES

1. Plaintiff Tim Johnson was previously employed by Defendant and was Classified as an independent contractor.

2. Defendant FedEx Ground Package System, Inc. (“FEG”), and its division, FedEx Home Delivery (“FHD”) (hereinafter together referred to as “Defendant” or “FedEx Ground” or “FEG”), is a Delaware corporation doing business as two national companies, affiliated with the Federal Express Corporation. At all relevant times, and within six years of the filing of this Complaint, Defendant was engaged in providing small package information, transportation and delivery services in the United States, including in the State of Iowa.

3. Defendant is qualified to, and does, transact business in the State of Iowa, including locations in Polk County.

4. Defendant employs local package delivery drivers for FEG and FHD, all of whom, at FEG's and FHD's direction and control, perform package delivery to local businesses and residences.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

5. This is an action alleging illegal deductions from wages in violation of Iowa Code § 91A.5, fraud and rescission. This action also requests declaratory and injunctive relief.

6. Venue herein is proper pursuant to the order of the Judicial Panel for Multidistrict Litigation transferring this action to this Court.

CLASS ACTION ALLEGATIONS

7. This action is brought on behalf of a Class of persons currently and formerly employed by Defendant as employees within the definition of "employee" in the common and statutory law, but who, similar to the named Plaintiffs, are or were erroneously Classified as "contractors" or "independent contractors." Occupations or jobs in which Class Members worked or work include route delivery drivers for FEG and FHD. The Class includes all such persons employed by Defendant within the six-year statute of limitations. The Class is specifically defined as follows:

All individuals who worked for Defendant FedEx Ground System, Inc. and/or its subsidiary FedEx Home Delivery, Inc. in Iowa from August 16, 1999 to August 16, 2005 (the Class Period), as package pick-up and delivery drivers, and who were Classified as "independent contractors" and thereby deprived of various protections under Iowa law.

Plaintiffs believe that the Class as defined above includes over 1,000 members.

8. FEG and FHD employ thousands of drivers to pick up and deliver packages for its customers throughout the United States. As a condition of employment, each FEG and FHD driver is required to sign a lengthy form contract entitled the "Pick-up And Delivery Contractor

Operating Agreement” that mischaracterizes each driver as an “independent contractor.” These Operating Agreements conceal the true nature of the relationship between Defendant and its drivers: that of employer and employee.

9. Plaintiffs, and Plaintiff Class Members, were denied the accoutrements of employment, including, but not limited to:

- a. wages;
- b. overtime pay;
- c. holiday pay;
- d. workers’ compensation;
- e. unemployment insurance;
- f. contributions to Defendant’s retirement plan;
- g. participation in Defendant’s Employee Stock Purchase Plan;
- h. income tax withholding; and,
- i. meal, break and rest periods.

10. Plaintiffs, and Plaintiff Class Members, were required to pay Defendant’s operating expenses, all of which should have been paid by Defendant, including, but not limited to:

- a. delivery vehicle purchase;
- b. various insurances, including vehicle insurance and work accident insurance;
- c. delivery vehicle maintenance and repairs;
- d. purchase and maintenance of logos and uniforms;
- e. fuel;
- f. cargo claims; and,
- g. “business support,” including maps, signs, logos, training and scanners.

11. Despite Defendant's control over virtually all material aspects of the employment relationship, and despite the unequivocal command of applicable statutes and case law to the effect that workers such as Plaintiffs are entitled to the protections due employees under Iowa law, and despite the finding of the Los Angeles Superior Court in Estrada v. FedEx Ground Package Systems, Inc. (Case # BC 210130) that these drivers are employees, Defendant continues to misclassify its drivers as independent contractors. As a result, these drivers are deprived of the rights and protections guaranteed by Iowa law to employees, and they are deprived of employer-financed workers compensation coverage and unemployment insurance benefits. Furthermore, the terms and conditions of their employment contract require these drivers to purchase, operate and maintain expensive trucks for Defendant's exclusive benefit and to work under other unlawful conditions. Defendant's mischaracterization of its drivers as independent contractors, the concealment and/or non-disclosure of the true nature of the relationship between Defendant and its drivers and the attendant deprivation of substantial rights and benefits of employment are part of an on-going unlawful and fraudulent business practice by Defendant which this court should enjoin.

12. The named Plaintiffs are adequate representatives of the Class because they were treated in the same manner as other Class Members by the Defendant and they have been damaged by this treatment in the same manner as other Class Members by their exclusion from employee compensation programs, plans and agreements and employee benefit plans and rights.

13. There are common questions of law and fact applicable to the entire Class including, but not limited to, the question whether Plaintiffs and Plaintiff Class Members are entitled to certain types of employee compensation and benefits because they are employees of

Defendant as defined by common and statutory law, even though Defendant has misrepresented to Plaintiffs and Plaintiff Class Members their true employment status.

14. This case should be certified as a class action pursuant to Rule 23 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure because the common questions of law and fact concerning Defendant's liability predominate over any individual question over the amount of damages to each person and that:

- a. The members of the Class are so numerous that their individual joinder in a single action is impossible and/or impracticable;
- b. The central questions of law and fact involved in this action are of a common or general interest and those common legal and factual issues predominate over any questions affecting only individual members of the Class. Among the common questions of law and fact are the following:
 - i. Whether Class Members have been misclassified as independent contractors pursuant to Defendant's operating agreements;
 - ii. Whether the Defendant has violated its legal obligations under various provisions of Iowa law;
 - iii. Whether Defendant unlawfully failed to provide workers compensation insurance benefits and unemployment insurance benefits to the Class Members in violation of Iowa Law;
 - iv. Whether Defendant intentionally and/or negligently misrepresented to Plaintiffs and the Class they seek to represent their true employment status and thereby induced them to incur substantial expenses in reliance on such representations and;
 - v. Whether injunctive and declaratory relief and an equitable accounting are proper.

15. The claims of the named Plaintiffs are identical to the claims of other members of the Class. The named Plaintiffs share the same interests as other members of the Class in this action because, like other Class Members, they have each been misclassified and suffered financial loss of thousands of dollars due to Defendant's wrongful misclassification. Given the significance of their losses, they have the incentive, and are committed, to vigorously prosecute

this action. They have retained competent and experienced counsel who specialize in Class action and employment litigation to represent them and the proposed Class;

16. A Class action is the only realistic method available for the fair and efficient adjudication of this controversy. The expense and burden of individual litigation makes it impracticable for members of the Class to seek redress individually for the wrongful conduct alleged herein. Were each individual member required to bring a separate lawsuit, the resulting multiplicity of proceedings would cause undue hardship and expense for the litigants and the Court and create the risk of inconsistent rulings, which would be contrary to the interest of justice and equity.

FACTS COMMON TO ALL CAUSES OF ACTION

17. Defendant is a corporation whose business consists of package delivery and pick-up service to customers, using a single integrated nationwide network of transportation, communication and sorting facilities and integrating Class Members into that existing network of operations. Defendant hired Plaintiffs to deliver and pick up packages based on times, locations and for amounts determined solely by Defendant.

18. Defendant employs or employed during the Class period more than 1,000 delivery and pick-up drivers in the State of Iowa including, either currently or at material times in the past, each of the Plaintiffs.

19. Each pick-up and delivery driver (referred to by Defendant as a “P&D contractor”) must sign a “Pick-Up and Delivery Contractor Operating Agreement” and Addenda thereto (referred to hereinafter as combined as “OA” or the “Operating Agreement” or the “Agreement”) as a mandatory condition of employment. The date, time and place of execution of each driver’s Operating Agreement is within the knowledge of Defendant as each Agreement is maintained in the driver files described above, in the regular course of business. The

Operating Agreement between each member of the Plaintiff Class and Defendant is the same in all material respects. The Operating Agreement between Plaintiffs and FEG and between Plaintiffs and FHD contain all of the same identical material terms with only a few, minor and insubstantial differences.

20. The Operating Agreement contains various statements purporting to classify Plaintiffs and Plaintiff Class Members as independent contractors. At the same time, the Operating Agreement retains to the company, *inter alia*, the right to approve or disapprove any vehicle used to provide service, the right to approve or disapprove any driver or helper who provides service, the right to approve or disapprove the purchase or sale of any vehicle, the right to assign pickup and delivery stops to each driver, the right to temporarily or permanently transfer portions of any route to another with or without compensation, the right to determine when a driver has “too few” or “too many” packages to deliver on a given day, the right to inspect vehicles and drivers for compliance with Company-promulgated appearance standards, the right to terminate the contract upon thirty days notice or whenever the company unilaterally determines that any provision of the contract has been “violated” amounting to the right to terminate at will, the right to require the use of communication equipment and the wearing of Company uniforms, the right to take a vehicle out of service, the right to review and evaluate “customer service” and to set and change standards of such service, the right to require drivers to perform service at “times” requested by customers and determined by Defendant, the right to withhold pay for certain specified expenses, the right to require purchase of specified insurance and numerous other purchases by drivers, the right to require completion of specified paperwork, and other rights reserved to Defendant.

21. The Operating Agreement is and at all relevant times has been a contract of adhesion, drafted exclusively by Defendant and/or its legal counsel, with no negotiation with drivers, who are required to sign the Agreement as a condition of employment. Plaintiffs and Plaintiff Class Members are required to sign the form contract as is, without any changes made to the terms contained therein. Each year, drivers are required to sign additional Addenda which are likewise not subject to negotiation and are unilaterally drafted adhesion contract provisions. The Agreement is, and at all material times has been unlawful, unconscionable and fraudulent in form and effect.

22. Defendant also has created and regularly updated a large number of written policies and procedures outside of the Operating Agreement that drivers are never given, but nonetheless are required to follow in their work. Defendant's written policies are contained in the FedEx Ground Manual, Operations Management Handbook, Settlement Manual and numerous other written and extra-contractual policies that are actively concealed from drivers and which Defendant fails to disclose and/or provide to drivers that govern the relationship between Defendant and the drivers. The other written handbooks and manuals and additional extra-contractual sources include, but are not limited, to written rules on "contractor" termination, directives and training provided to terminal managers, written rules on driver appearance (with illustrative poster), written and oral complaint procedures, memorandum and directives to terminal management and other rules concealed from and not provided to the drivers. When drivers do not follow an FEG or FHD rule, whether disclosed or undisclosed, known or unknown, they are subject to various types of punishment, some financial and some disciplinary, up to and including contract termination and/or non-renewal. Defendant documents such so-called violations of such rules on forms referred to as "Business Discussion Notes" and

retain these documents in secret driver files called “DOT” files, along with myriad other documents which are likewise concealed from and not disclosed to the drivers.

23. Defendant maintains compensation and benefit plans, agreements and programs available to persons who are “employees” of Defendant. The benefit plans include: Health Benefit Plan, Life Insurance Plan, Short-term and Long-term Disability Plans, Accidental Death & Dismemberment and Survivor Income Plan, Employee Stock Purchase Plan, Business Travel Accident Plan, and Retirement and 401 (K) Savings Plans. In addition, employees of Defendant receive additional compensation programs, plans, rights, and benefits, including vacation, holidays, sick leave, other types of paid leave, and stock purchase rights.

24. Plaintiffs and Plaintiff Class Members have been excluded from the foregoing compensation plans and programs and benefit plans for all or a portion of their employment at FedEx due to their misclassification as non employees.

25. Plaintiffs and Plaintiff Class Members have incurred expenses for equipment, insurance and other expenses that Defendant requires them to purchase under the contract.

FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION:
ILLEGAL DEDUCTIONS FROM WAGES IN VIOLATION OF IOWA CODE § 91A.5

26. Plaintiffs hereby incorporate by reference all preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein, and further allege:

27. Plaintiffs are “employees” as defined in Iowa Code § 91A.2 and are not free from the control and direction of Defendant.

28. Defendant has unlawfully withheld monies from the compensation earned by Plaintiffs and Plaintiff Class Members for business expenses of FEG and FHD, including but not limited to vehicle expenses, cargo claims and insurance claims in violation of Iowa Code § 91A.5. Plaintiffs and Plaintiff Class Members have not expressly and freely given written

consent to such deductions, and these deductions are not made in response to a valid wage assignment or deduction order.

29. Defendant has withheld said funds unlawfully without providing Plaintiffs and Plaintiff Class Members with advance notice of the amounts, reasons or documentation to justify such deductions, and absent any lawfully sufficient reason for such conduct.

30. As a direct and proximate result of Defendant's conduct, Plaintiffs and Plaintiff Class Members suffered substantial losses and have been deprived of compensation to which they were entitled, including monetary damage in an amount of two times the amounts deducted, pre-judgment interest, costs and reasonable attorney fees.

SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION:
FRAUD

31. Plaintiffs hereby incorporate by reference all preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein, and further allege:

32. Plaintiffs and the Class they represent were purportedly hired by Defendant to work as "independent contractors" pursuant to the terms of the OA described above. In fact, Defendant knew or should have known, at all times, that the "independent contractor" classification in the Operating Agreement was improper and that Plaintiffs and all persons similarly situated were "employees" entitled to the benefits and protections of all laws enacted for employees. Plaintiffs are informed, believe and on that basis allege, that through the OA Defendant intentionally misled Plaintiffs and the Class they represent as to their employment status, or made such representations to Plaintiffs and Plaintiff Class Members recklessly and/or negligently, and deliberately concealed from and/or failed to disclose to the pick-up and delivery drivers the extra contractual sources (including but not limited to the FedEx Ground Manual, Operation Management Handbook and Settlement Manual, other policies and secret driver files

described above) that defined the employment relationship between Plaintiffs and Defendant, all for the purpose of realizing unjust profits from Plaintiffs' work and/or to avoid paying for its operating costs and payroll taxes to increase its competitiveness.

33. At all material times, Defendant either knew, or should have known, that the material representation made to Plaintiffs in the OA concerning their employment status, and the concealment and/or non-disclosure of material facts to Plaintiffs concerning their employment status and Plaintiffs' corresponding obligation to assume responsibility for all of their "own" employment-related expenses including but not limited to purchasing or leasing, operating and maintaining expensive trucks were false and fraudulent.

34. At all material times, Defendant intended to and did induce Plaintiffs and the Class they represent to reasonably and justifiably rely to their detriment on the false and fraudulent representations made to them by Defendant in the OA concerning their employment status and obligation to assume responsibility for all of employment related expenses including but not limited to purchasing or leasing, operating and maintaining expensive trucks and suffered damage as a direct and proximate result.

35. By its aforesaid conduct, Defendant is guilty of oppression, fraud and malice in violating Plaintiff rights and protections guaranteed by Iowa law and other applicable law.

THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION:
RESCISSION

36. Plaintiffs hereby incorporate by reference all preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein, and further allege:

37. Despite the express terms of the Operating Agreement, Plaintiffs' relationship with Defendant satisfies every aspect of the test for employment, and not for independent contractor status.

38. Defendant controls virtually every aspect of the Plaintiffs' work and earnings, as set forth in the general allegations hereof at paragraphs 17 through 25.

39. Despite this control and the actual status of the drivers as employees, Defendant mischaracterizes the Plaintiffs as independent contractors. As a result, these drivers must pay substantial sums of their own money for work-related expenses, including but not limited to the purchase or lease of vehicles meeting company specifications, and all costs of operating, insuring and maintaining those vehicles.

40. The Operating Agreement illegally and unfairly advantages Defendant, by mischaracterizing the status of the Plaintiffs in that Defendant evades employment related obligations, such as social security contributions, workers' compensation coverage, and state disability and unemployment compensation, illegally shifting the expense of workers' compensation coverage and other expenses to Plaintiffs.

41. The Operating Agreement between Defendant and each Plaintiff and member of the Class is void as against public policy and therefore unenforceable, as failing to recognize the employment status of the Plaintiffs and the Class Members, and therefore denying them the legally cognizable benefits of employment.

42. The Operating Agreement between Defendant and each Plaintiff is an unconscionable contract of adhesion, which is unenforceable as contrary to the public interest, policy and law.

43. The Operating Agreement illegally shifts the burden of certain costs that an employer must pay.

44. While acting on the direct instruction of Defendant and discharging their duties for Defendant, Plaintiffs and the Class Members incurred expenses for, *inter alia*, the purchase

or lease, maintenance, operating costs and adornment of vehicles; insurance; and uniforms. Plaintiffs and the Class Members incurred these substantial expenses as a direct result of performing their job duties.

45. By misclassifying its employees as “independent contractors,” and further by contractually requiring those employees to pay Defendant’s own expenses, Defendant has been unjustly enriched.

46. As a direct and proximate result of Defendant’s conduct, Defendant has received substantial benefits to which it had no entitlement, at Plaintiffs’ and the Class Members’ expense, including lost profits, self-employment taxes, premiums for insurance to replace workers compensation and disability benefits, business expenses, compensation of replacement workers, and other expenses.

47. Plaintiffs are entitled to compensation for all of the business expenses they were illegally required by Defendant to bear, for all of the employment taxes, unemployment compensation and workers compensation the Defendant should have but did not pay, and Plaintiffs are entitled to the *quantum meruit* value of their services as employees.

FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION:
DECLARATORY RELIEF

48. Plaintiffs hereby incorporate by reference all preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein, and further allege:

49. An actual controversy has arisen between the Plaintiffs and Plaintiff Class Members, on the one hand, and Defendant, on the other hand, relating to the following matters:

- a. Whether Defendant has unlawfully misclassified Plaintiffs and Plaintiff Class Members as independent contractors, and have thus denied Plaintiffs and Plaintiff Class Members of the common benefits of employee status, such as
 - i. wages;

- ii. overtime pay;
 - iii. holiday pay;
 - iv. workers' compensation;
 - v. unemployment insurance;
 - vi. contributions to Defendant's retirement plan;
 - vii. income tax withholding;
 - viii. meal, break and rest periods.
- b. Whether Defendant has unlawfully failed to pay benefits and compensation owing in a timely manner to Plaintiffs and Plaintiff Class Members whose employment with Defendant ended, as required by Iowa law.
 - c. What amounts Plaintiffs and Plaintiff Class Members are entitled to receive in compensation and benefits.
 - d. What amounts Plaintiffs and Plaintiff Class Members are entitled to receive in interest on unpaid compensation due and owing.
 - e. What amounts Plaintiffs and Plaintiff Class Members are entitled to receive from Defendant in waiting time penalties.

50. Plaintiffs and Plaintiff Class Members further seek entry of a declaratory judgment in their favor which declares Defendant's practices as heretofore alleged to be unlawful and which provides for recovery of all sums determined by this Court to be owed by Defendant to the Plaintiffs and Plaintiff Class Members.

FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION
REQUEST FOR INJUNCTIVE RELIEF

51. Plaintiffs hereby incorporate by reference all preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein, and further allege:

52. Defendant will continue to misclassify Plaintiffs and Plaintiff Class Members as independent contractors and unlawfully deny them the common benefits of employee status;

53. Plaintiffs and Plaintiff Class Members have been injured and damaged, and are threatened with injury and damage, by Defendant's continued misclassification and unlawful refusal to pay all compensation and benefits as heretofore alleged, and Plaintiffs and Plaintiff Class Members have no adequate remedy at law.

54. Defendant has acted, and threatened to act, on grounds generally applicable to the individual members of the Class, thereby making appropriate preliminary and permanent injunctive relief enjoining Defendant and its agents from practicing the unlawful practices heretofore alleged.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs requests that judgment be entered against the Defendant for the following:

1. Declaring that the Defendant's acts described in this Complaint constitute violations of the Iowa Wage Payment and Collection Act and Iowa common law;
2. An award of benefits due them under the programs, agreements and plans described above with an appropriate award of interest;
3. An award of damages for their erroneous exclusion from the programs, agreements and plans described above with an appropriate award of interest;
4. Clarification and enforcement of their rights under these programs, agreements and plans;
5. An award of damages for all out-of-pocket expenses incurred by Plaintiffs and Plaintiff Class Members necessary to perform their jobs for Defendant described above with an appropriate award of interest;
6. An assessment of civil penalties pursuant to Iowa Code § 91A.12;
7. Punitive damages in an amount to be determined at trial;

8. Attorney fees and costs as provided by law;
9. Rescinding the Operating Agreement, and awarding restitution compensating for the reasonable value of the benefit provided to Defendant; and,
10. Such other further relief as the Court may deem just and equitable.

Dated: January 9, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

LOCKRIDGE GRINDAL NAUEN P.L.L.P.

s/Susan E. Ellingstad

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Susan E. Ellingstad, hereby certify that on January 9, 2006, I electronically filed the foregoing with the Clerk of Court using the CM/ECF system which sent notification of such filing to the following:

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and I hereby certify that I have mailed by United States Postal Service the document to the following non CM/ECF participants::

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Dated: January 9, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

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