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10 TARA JAN ADAMS

11 **UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**
12 **FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

14 TARA JAN ADAMS
15 Plaintiff,

17 vs.

18 LOS ANGELES COUNTY
19 SHERIFF’S DEPARTMENT, PAUL
Tanaka, CHUCK ANTUNA, GREG
20 SIVARD, JUAN SANCHEZ
21 VINCENT CALLIER AND DOES 1-
10,

22 Defendants.

CIVIL ACTION NO. 15-CV-4501

**PLAINTIFF’S FIRST AMENDED
COMPLAINT FOR DAMAGES**

23
24
25 **COMPLAINT**

26 1. The plaintiff, Tara Jann Adams (“Plaintiff”), complains for entry of judgment in
27 her favor against Defendants the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department (the
28 “LASD”), former Undersheriff Paul Tanaka, Captain Chuck Antuna, Greg Sivard,

1 Juan Sanchez, Lt. Sheriff Vincent Callier and Does 1-10 (collectively, “Defendants”).

2 The Defendants other than the LASD (i.e., the individual, non-entity defendants) are
3 sued in their individual capacities for acting inappropriately and under color of law
4 and are hereinafter collectively referred to as the “Cabal”.

5 2. In support of her Complaint, Plaintiff alleges and avers as follows:

6 **NATURE OF ACTION AND JURISDICTION**

7 3. This civil action arise under 42 U.S.C § 1983, *inter alia*., seeking damages and
8 injunctive relief against the Cabal in their individual capacities for committing acts,
9 under color of law, with the intent and for the purpose of depriving Plaintiff of rights
10 secured under the Constitution and laws of the United States; retaliating against
11 Plaintiff for her exercise of her constitutionally protected right of free speech and to
12 testify in Court; and against the LASD for refusing or neglecting to prevent such
13 deprivations and denials to Plaintiff, and ultimately ratifying same.

14 4. This case arises under the United States Constitution and 42 U.S.C.
15 §§ 1983 and 1988, as amended. This Court has jurisdiction in this matter pursuant to
16 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1343. The declaratory and injunctive relief sought is
17 authorized by 28 U.S.C. §§ 2201 and 2202, 42 U.S.C. § 1983 and Rule 57 of the
18 Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

19 5. This Court is an appropriate venue for this cause of action pursuant to 28
20 U.S.C. 1391(b)(1) and (b)(2). The actions complained of took place in this judicial
21 district; evidence and employment records relevant to the allegations are maintained
22 in this judicial district; Plaintiff would be employed in this judicial district but for the
23 unlawful actions and practices of the Defendants; and the Defendants are domiciled
24 and regularly conduct affairs in this judicial district.

25 **PARTIES**

26 **Plaintiff**

27 6. Plaintiff Tara Jann Adams is a former deputy Sheriff who was employed as a
28 Los Angeles Deputy Sheriff from 2007 to June 14, 2014 when she was constructively

1 terminated. As shall be seen, Ms. Adams was the one deputy sheriff in the LASD
2 who stood up to, and refused to cooperate in, a scheme orchestrated by, among others,
3 Undersheriff Paul Tanaka, to obstruct a federal investigation into illegal practices at
4 the LASD violative of the constitutional rights of the inmates in the LASD's charge.
5 She would be repaid for her acts of courage by shunning, threats and ultimately the
6 termination of her career.

7 **Defendants**

8 7. Defendant Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department is one of the largest, if not
9 the largest, Sheriff's departments in the Country. It was also the former Plaintiff's
10 former employer.

11 8. Defendant and former Undersheriff Paul Tanaka was the second most powerful
12 person in the LASD. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that Mr.
13 Tanaka was the architect and leader of a conspiracy to obstruct justice by hiding
14 various jail inmates from federal investigators inquiring into misconduct in the LASD
15 while falsely acting under color of law. The participants in the conspiracy have
16 previously been referred to as the "Cabal".

17 9. Defendant Chief Sheriff Chuck Antuna is and was an official within the LASD
18 with close ties to Defendants and to Defendant Tanaka. Defendant Antuna was
19 among the persons with supervisory power over Plaintiff during her tenure at the
20 LASD.

21 10. Defendant Greg Sivard was and is a civilian supervisor in the inmate reception
22 center at the Los Angeles County Jail.

23 11. Defendant Capt. Vincent Callier is and was a lieutenant sheriff and a
24 supervisor of Plaintiff.

25 12. Defendant Deputy Sheriff Juan Sanchez is and was a deputy sheriff.

26 13. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that each of the
27 individual Defendants was acting in concert with, and at the direction of, the other
28 individual Defendants in a joint effort to chill and retaliate against Plaintiff's exercise

1 of her constitutional right to free speech, and to give truthful testimony in the federal
2 courts. Each of the individual Defendant knew and had reason to know that their acts
3 in this regard were illegal.

4 14. The true names and capacities of Does 1-10 are currently unknown to Plaintiff,
5 but Plaintiff is informed and believes that they contributed to or caused her injuries
6 complained of herein. Plaintiff will amend this complaint as their identities are
7 discovered.

8 **FACTS**

9 15. Plaintiff was hired as a deputy sheriff in March 2007. She completed her
10 studies at the Sheriff's Academy in July of that same year. Plaintiff's ultimate goal
11 upon joining the LASD was to be a patrolling Deputy Sheriff. She continued to have
12 that career goal throughout her tenure at the LASD.

13 16. Plaintiff's first assignment was in the Inmate Reception Center (the "IRC") in
14 the Los Angeles County jail (the "LAJ"). The IRC and its personnel are responsible
15 for handling inmate intake and releases from the LAJ. The IRC also maintain inmate
16 "jackets" – the files which contains information regarding, among other things, (1)
17 the inmates' current location within the LAJ; (2) the reason for their commitment to
18 the LAJ; and (3) whether they are to be released of the street after their commitment
19 LAJ, or whether they are to be sent to prison upon leaving LAJ's custody.

20 17. Plaintiff did well in the Academy and in her position at the IRC. Her reviews
21 were always laudatory, and her supervisors and coworkers gave her the impression
22 that she was both well-respected and well-liked.

23 18. In late 2009, Plaintiff was promoted to a watch commander's position at the
24 IRC. In that position, Plaintiff supervised other deputy sheriffs working in the IRC,
25 and also worked closely with civilian workers assigned to the IRC.

26 19. From time to time, in the course of her work, Plaintiff would have occasion to
27 also deal with deputy sheriffs in the LAJ's anti-gang unit which was known as
28 Operation Safe Jails (the "OSJ"). It was plaintiff's general impression that the

1 deputies within the OSJ cultivated a “bad boy” image and were routinely involved in
2 trying to circumvent the procedural rules of the LAJ and LASD..

3 20. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that in part because of
4 improprieties committed by the OS J deputies, and sanctioned by Defendant Tanaka
5 (among others) within the hierarchy of the LASD, the LASD came to be under federal
6 investigation sometime between 2009 and 2011.

7 21. Plaintiff is also informed and believes and thereon alleges that in connection
8 with that investigation (but unbeknownst to Plaintiff at the time), Federal law
9 enforcement officials were attempting to interview an LAJ inmate, Anthony Brown.
10 The Cabal wanted to hide Mr. Brown from the federal investigators because Mr.
11 Brown was expected to testify in a fashion which would implicate them.

12 22. In August 2011, Plaintiff arrived for work to find three OSJ deputies and a
13 lieutenant sheriff, Lt. Libertone, waiting for her in her office. The OSJ deputies asked
14 her to enter into the system that Anthony Brown was being released from the LAJ.
15 Upon checking Mr. Brown’s record, Plaintiff discovered that although he was
16 currently at the jail, Mr. Brown was under a substantial prison sentence. Not only
17 would it be contrary to accepted practices and regulations for her to have released Mr.
18 Brown under such circumstances, her doing so could have resulted in Mr. Brown
19 being released to the streets.

20 23. Plaintiff informed the OSJ deputies and her supervisor Lt. Libertone that the
21 only way that Mr. Brown could be released consistent with regulations was if he was
22 simultaneously rebooked. The OSJ deputies became loud and combative and told
23 Plaintiff that they were under orders from undersheriff Tanaka that Mr. Brown be
24 removed from the system altogether and implied and explicitly stated that Plaintiff
25 would be in deep career trouble if she did not comply with their requests.

26 24. Lt. Libertone remained strangely silent throughout this exchange which grew
27 more and more heated with each passing minute. Plaintiff demanded that the OSJ
28 deputies provide her with a written order from undersheriff Tanaka – something they

1 refused to do. Ultimately, Plaintiff and the OSJ deputies were shouting at each other.

2 25. After the argument between Plaintiff, on the one hand, and the OSJ deputies,
3 on the other hand devolved into a shouting match, one of the civilian personnel in the
4 IRC, Gus Acadamia, without Plaintiff's permission or approval entered into the
5 system that Mr. Brown was being released and announced the OSJ deputies that there
6 was nothing more to argue about because he had complied with their request.

7 26. At this point, one of the deputies took from Mr. Acadamia Mr. Brown's
8 "jacket" and proceeded to put it in a manila envelope. Plaintiff protested that this
9 also was against regulations and could lead to the inadvertent release of Mr. Brown
10 despite his outstanding prison sentence. The OSJ deputies ignored Plaintiff's protests
11 in this regard. Again, Lt. Libertone remained strangely impassive throughout this
12 episode.

13 27. Approximately a week later, three different OSJ deputies arrived at Plaintiff's
14 office and asked her to retroactively rebook Mr. Brown – apparently to make it appear
15 as though regulations have been complied with at the time that Mr. Brown was
16 released from the system a week previously in an apparent effort to hide the Cabal's
17 wrong-doing from federal investigators. (One of these OSJ deputies, James Sexton,
18 would continue to visit Plaintiff from time to time to discuss the Anthony Brown
19 release and its aftermath.) Plaintiff refused to comply with the request to "paper
20 over" the prior improprieties associated with the release of Mr. Brown.

21 28. At some point shortly after the incident involving Mr. Brown, two of
22 Plaintiff's supervisors visited her office and asked to be informed what happened
23 during the incident. Plaintiff told them her rendition of the facts and was met with
24 silence in response. Plaintiff began to be concerned that her career was in jeopardy.
25 At about the same time, Plaintiff became aware of discussions to the effect that the
26 reason the OSJ deputies had tried to relocate Mr. Brown was to keep them from
27 falling into the hands of federal investigators.

28 29. Thereafter, Plaintiff continued to carry out her job duties in the IRC. During

1 this time, her supervisors and many of her coworkers appeared to avoid interaction
2 with her. Plaintiff felt shunned. In June and July of 2012, Defendant Deputy Juan
3 Sanchez “shoulder checked” Plaintiff twice -- i.e., deliberately knocking her roughly
4 with his shoulder. Plaintiff had had no personal interaction with Deputy Sanchez
5 prior to that point. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that Deputy
6 Sanchez acted based upon knowledge of the Brown incident, and under the continued
7 direction of Tanaka and the Cabal, and based upon rumors that Plaintiff would soon
8 be questioned regarding the matter by the federal authorities. Plaintiff filled out a
9 work-place violence report on the two batteries, which she is informed and believes
10 was ultimately presented to Defendant Antuna, but is also informed and believes that
11 nothing was done to discipline Deputy Sanchez.

12 30. In or about September or August 2012, Plaintiff received a federal grand jury
13 subpoena. Plaintiff gave testimony before the federal grand jury in or about October
14 2012 concerning the foregoing incidents. Thereafter, federal agents were repeated
15 visitors to the IRC whose procedures and practices they were trying to learn as part of
16 their investigation of the LASD.

17 31. In or about October of 2012 one of the civilian workers in the IRC called to
18 Plaintiff’s attention the fact that two inmates had had additional time added to their
19 sentence through a hand entry into the IRC’s computer system. There was no
20 legitimate reason why this should be so.

21 32. Plaintiff undertook an investigation to see if other inmates had similarly had
22 additional time added to their sentences. Plaintiff discovered to her alarm that
23 approximately twenty inmates had been subjected to such treatment. The user
24 number from which all of this additional time had been entered belonged to a
25 employee who had been on disability for more than five years and could not have
26 possibly been the one to have actually have made the computer entries. Defendant
27 Greg Sivard attempted to dissuade Plaintiff from her investigation and implied that
28 adverse consequences to her would result from her investigation.

1 33. Plaintiff prepared a report on her findings in this regard to her supervisor, Lt.
2 Sheriff Kelly Porowski who took the matter over. Plaintiff would later learn through
3 the rumor mill that overbooking of inmates at the LASD was among the subjects of
4 the federal investigation into the LASD's wrongdoing.

5 34. Throughout this period of time, in part because of the tensions associated with
6 working in the IRC following the Brown incident, and in part because it had always
7 been her goal to be a patrol deputy, Plaintiff monitored opportunities to transfer into a
8 patrol position. In or about October 2012, such an opportunity arose.

9 35. Specifically, Plaintiff was approached by a sergeant in the noncompliance unit
10 of the LASD and informed Plaintiff that a position was opening for a female deputy
11 in that department that he felt that Plaintiff was uniquely qualified for that position.
12 In fact, based upon seniority and performance reviews, Plaintiff was far and away the
13 most qualified female candidate for such position. Plaintiff applied for a transfer to
14 the noncompliance unit.

15 36. Shortly thereafter, a friend of Plaintiff informed her that she had overheard a
16 heated discussion between several high-ranking officers of the LASD the upshot of
17 which was that Plaintiff's application for transfer would not be entertained on its
18 merits. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that the reason she was
19 denied the transfer was her role in and testimony regarding the Brown incident, as
20 well as pressure from the Cabal.

21 37. Throughout this time, federal investigators were involved in serving multiple
22 subpoenas on the LASD. The IRC in general, and Plaintiff in particular, were tasked
23 with gathering documents responsive to the subpoenas. Because of the volume of
24 materials responsive to the subpoenas, Plaintiff determined that the only way that
25 there could be any assurance of full compliance with the subpoenas would be to cause
26 the materials sought by the federal investigators to be reduced to an electronic form
27 which Plaintiff arranged to occur. Shortly before she was going to pick up the
28 electronic set of documents for production to the federal authorities, Lt. Porowski

1 learned of Plaintiff's planned course of action and angrily chastised Plaintiff for
2 attempting to help the federal investigators beyond the strict letter of their document
3 production requests. Lt. Porowski made it clear that he expected Plaintiff to do the
4 bare minimum in cooperating with federal authorities and nothing more. Plaintiff is
5 informed and believes and thereon alleges that in so doing, Lt. Porowski was acting
6 in furtherance of the interests of the Cabal.

7 38. Shortly thereafter, a deputy Mark Camacho was assigned to work in the IRC.
8 Among the workers in the IRC were civilian inmates who were on a work release
9 program which required them to work at LAJ during working hours, and return to
10 their homes at night. Deputy Camacho was physically abusive to these workers.
11 Deputy Camacho also made it a practice to make comments under his breath loud
12 enough for Plaintiff to hear regarding his disdain for deputies who "rat on [their]
13 partners". Plaintiff complained about Mr. Camacho's behavior principally because it
14 presented a danger to the civilian and work release employees, but also because it
15 created a risk of physical violence of the office which jeopardized Plaintiff's safety as
16 well. Plaintiff's superiors ignored her complaints about Mr. Camacho.

17 39. In or about March 2013, Plaintiff was visited by Deputy Sexton and another
18 OSJ deputy who informed her that they believed that she was in physical danger, that
19 she should "watch her back", that she should always have her gun with her and be
20 prepared to use it. The deputies also warned Plaintiff that she should not text or make
21 calls on her cell phone regarding sensitive matters because her cell phone
22 communications were being monitored by corrupt elements within the LASD.
23 Plaintiff is informed and believes that all of the foregoing activities were entered into
24 in support of the Cabal.

25 40. In January 2013, Plaintiff discovered that she was pregnant. Thereafter, the
26 elements described in the complaint that only made Plaintiff fear for her own personal
27 safety, but for the safety of her unborn child and her family in general. Although the
28 conditions in the IRC had become intolerable, Plaintiff endure them in till her

1 pregnancy leave in September 2013.

2 41. In May of 2014, Plaintiff gave testimony in a federal criminal trial which
3 resulted in the conviction and imprisonment of six LASD personnel. Further trials
4 were expected to go forward in a few months.

5 42. Plaintiff's pregnancy leave was to terminate in June 2014. While, as of that
6 time, Plaintiff was informed and believe that the climate at the LASD had not
7 materially changed since her going out on leave, Plaintiff hoped that ultimately the
8 aftermath of the trials would result in improved conditions in the LASD. As such,
9 Plaintiff requested a six-month extension of her leave without pay – something that
10 was generally granted to requesting employees of the LASD as a matter of course.
11 Plaintiff's request was refused by Defendant Capt. Callier in furtherance of the
12 conspiracy among the defendants and in direct retaliation for her giving testimony
13 against the Cabal.

14 43. Plaintiff regarded and still regards such refusal as effectively requiring her to
15 resign her employment at LASD because she feared that her physical safety and the
16 safety of her family would be jeopardized if she returned to work. Plaintiff so
17 informed Defendant Callier and further informed him that concern over her family as
18 well as the stress created by the the treatment she received after the Ground incident
19 were requiring her to tender her resignation. Defendant Callier responded by telling
20 her that she could list only one reason for her resignation and that he would record
21 that reason as being her family concerns.

22 44. At all times relevant to this Complaint, the Cabal acted in concert to prevent
23 the Plaintiff from testifying in Court or otherwise cooperating with federal
24 investigators. At all time relevant to this Complaint, such conduct was impermissible
25 under Ninth Circuit law and the Defendants, and each of them, knew or were
26 unreasonable in not knowing the same.

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1 **CAUSES OF ACTION**

2 **COUNT ONE**

3 **Constitutional and Civil Rights Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §§ 1983, 1988 Violation of**
4 **First Amendment Speech Rights**
5 **(Against all Defendants)**

6 44. The foregoing allegations are incorporated as if re-alleged herein in full.

7 45. Through the foregoing acts, and each of them, the Defendants sought to and
8 did retaliate against Plaintiff for her exercise of her constitutional right of free speech
9 and did so under color of their authority as law enforcement officers. Defendants'
10 efforts in this regard were also were intended to protect the Defendants' ongoing
11 abuse under color of law of the constitutional rights of the inmates under their
12 supervision.

13 46. As a result of the wrongdoing of Defendants, and each of them, Plaintiff
14 suffered emotional and physical symptoms including extreme stress, crying jags,
15 headaches, muscular pain and hair loss. Plaintiff also endured the loss of her chosen
16 career.

17 47. As a result of the foregoing, Plaintiff has been damaged in an amount presently
18 unknown to her, but to be proven at time of trial.

19 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

20 WHEREFORE, Plaintiff requests judgment against Defendants as follows:

21 A. For appropriate declaratory relief regarding the unlawful and unconstitutional
22 acts and practices of Defendants.

23 B. For appropriate compensatory damages in an amount to be determined at trial;

24 C. For appropriate equitable relief against all Defendants as allowed by the Civil
25 Rights Act of 1871, 42 U.S.C. Section 1983, including the enjoining and permanent
26 restraining of these violations, and direction to Defendants to take such affirmative
27 action as is necessary to ensure that the effects of the unconstitutional and unlawful
28 employment practices are eliminated and do not continue to affect Plaintiff's, or

1 others', employment opportunities;

2 D. For an award of reasonable attorney's fees and costs on her behalf expended as
3 to such Defendants; and

4 E. For such other and further relief to which Plaintiff may show herself justly
5 entitled.

6 **PLAINTIFF REQUESTS TRIAL BY JURY ON ALL ISSUES SO TRIABLE.**

7 Dated: January 19, 2016

THE LAW OFFICES OF JOHN A. SCHLAFF

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By _____

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John A. Schlaff
Counsel for Plaintiff, TARA JAN ADAMS

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