

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
IN AND FOR HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLORIDA  
CIRCUIT CIVIL DIVISION**

DEBRYNNA GARRETT, ALEXANDER C. ROBERTS,  
TIMOTHY DIXON, JR., KONICA RITCHIE,  
JESSICA YOUNG, LAMOND RICHARDSON,  
ANGELA CANSINO, JOHNNY OLDEN,  
KATRINA EVANS, DANIEL WALKER,  
TODD ALEXANDER, ELTON GOULD,  
LAMEKA DOTSON, NICHOLAS COLLINS,  
REMEAL EUBANKS, TANIA PAUL,  
GABRIELLE MURRELL, COURTNEY NELSON,  
individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated,

Plaintiffs,

v.

Case No.: 20-CA-001146

FACEBOOK, INC., and COGNIZANT  
TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS U.S. CORPORATION,

Defendants.

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**AMENDED CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT AND DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL**

Plaintiffs DEBRYNNA GARRETT, ALEXANDER C. ROBERTS, TIMOTHY DIXON, JR., KONICA RITCHIE, JESSICA YOUNG, LAMOND RICHARDSON, ANGELA CANSINO, JOHNNY OLDEN, KATRINA EVANS, DANIEL WALKER, TODD ALEXANDER, ELTON GOULD, LAMEKA DOTSON, NICHOLAS COLLINS, REMEAL EUBANKS, TANIA PAUL, GABRIELLE MURRELL and COURTNEY NELSON (“Plaintiffs”) hereby sue the Defendants, FACEBOOK, INC. (“Facebook”), and COGNIZANT TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS U.S. CORPORATION (“Cognizant”) (collectively, “Defendants”) to protect themselves and all others similarly situated from the dangers of psychological trauma resulting from Defendants’ failure to provide a safe workplace for the thousands of “content moderators” who are entrusted to provide the safest environment possible for Facebook users.

## **BACKGROUND**

1. Every day, Facebook users post millions of videos, images, and livestreamed broadcasts of child sexual abuse, rape, torture, bestiality, beheadings, suicide, racist violence and murder. To maintain a sanitized platform, maximize its already vast profits, and cultivate its public image, Facebook relies on people like Plaintiffs – known as “content moderators” – to view those posts and remove any that violate the corporation’s terms of use.

2. From their cubicles during the overnight shift in Cognizant’s Tampa and Phoenix offices, Plaintiffs witnessed thousands of acts of extreme and graphic violence. As another Facebook content moderator recently told the Guardian, “You’d go into work ..., turn on your computer and watch someone have their head cut off. Every day, every minute, that’s what you see. Heads being cut off.”

3. As a result of constant and unmitigated exposure to highly toxic and extremely disturbing images through Facebook’s content review systems, Plaintiffs and other class members developed and suffer from significant psychological trauma and/or post-traumatic stress disorder (“PTSD”).

4. In an effort to cultivate its image, Facebook helped draft workplace safety standards to protect content moderators like Plaintiffs and the proposed class from workplace trauma and associated adverse consequences, which include pre-hiring psychological screening; providing moderators with robust and mandatory counseling and mental health support; altering the resolution, audio, size, and color of trauma-inducing images; and training moderators to recognize the physical and psychological symptoms of PTSD.

5. Other recommended safety standards include: having content moderators work in pairs or teams rather than alone; improving working conditions by not focusing solely on

efficiency and productivity; and providing additional breaks or “wellness time” during periods of extraordinary stress. In addition, Cognizant employees requested to change their queues. For example, several content moderators asked the company to change which queues they were assigned, whereby Workforce Management could periodically place a moderator in less graphic queues, such as regulated goods. Defendants failed to implement any of these safety standards.

6. But Defendants ignore the very workplace safety standards they helped create. Instead, the multibillion-dollar corporations affirmatively require their content moderators to work under conditions known to cause and exacerbate psychological trauma.

7. Facebook contracts with companies like Cognizant to serve as its agent responsible for finding, hiring and employing the moderators, and then laying them off when the contract expires, thereby attempting to absolve Defendants of accountability for the mental health of (offering no psychological support to) their workers after they are laid off. In fact, Cognizant has shut down its Tampa and Phoenix offices in February 2020, laying off its workforce and leaving content moderators, including Plaintiffs, with no means of obtaining requisite ongoing medical monitoring, screening, diagnosis, or adequate treatment after suffering psychological trauma during their employment.

8. By requiring their content moderators to work in dangerous conditions that cause debilitating physical and psychological harm and then laying them off when the contract expires in order to absolve themselves of accountability for their mental health issues, Defendants violate Florida and Arizona law.

9. Without this Court’s intervention, Defendants will continue to breach the duties they owe to the content moderators who review content on Facebook’s platforms.

10. Content moderators are essentially the first responders of the internet, performing

a critical function on a platform with billions of users. Many times, moderators are the first to see emergency situations and report them to Facebook to report to local authorities. Plaintiffs were specifically referred to as “first responders,” and Facebook compiles statistics about how moderators assist law enforcement. Plaintiffs and the other content moderators, at a minimum, deserve the same protections as other first responders, which includes workers’ compensation/health coverage for the PTSD caused by the working conditions.

11. On behalf of themselves and all others similarly situated, Plaintiffs bring this action (1) to ensure that Defendants cease to engage in these unlawful and unsafe workplace practices and instead provide content moderators with safe tools, systems, and mandatory ongoing mental health support, (2) to establish a medical monitoring fund for testing and providing mental health treatment to the thousands of current and former content moderators affected by Defendants’ unlawful practices, and (3) to provide monetary compensation to the thousands of current and former content moderators for the lost wages and medical and mental health expenses incurred as a result of the Defendants’ unlawful practices.

### **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

12. This is an action for damages in excess of \$30,000.00, exclusive of interest, costs, and equitable relief.

13. Venue is proper in this Court because the unlawful conduct giving rise to the claims herein occurred within this judicial district, and at least one Defendant is located in this judicial district.

14. This Court has personal jurisdiction over Cognizant because the corporation operates, conducts, engages in, and carries on a business venture in this state and has an office in this judicial circuit, at 7725 Woodland Center Blvd., Tampa, FL 33614, and regularly conducts

substantial business there, committed a tortious act within Florida, and engages in substantial and not isolated activity within Florida.

15. This Court has personal jurisdiction over Facebook because the corporation operates, conducts, engages in, and carries on a business venture in this state and has an office in this state, located at 701 Brickell Ave., Miami, Florida 33131, and regularly conducts substantial business there and throughout the state, committed a tortious act within Florida, and engages in substantial and not isolated activity within Florida.

### **PARTIES**

16. Plaintiffs Garrett, Roberts, Dixon, Ritchie, Young, Richardson, Cansino, Olden, Evans, Walker, Alexander, Dotson, Collins, Eubanks, Paul, Murrell and Nelson are residents of Hillsborough County, Florida. Plaintiff Gould is a resident of Pasco County, Florida. Plaintiff Roberts is a citizen of Arizona.

17. Defendant Facebook provides “products that enable people to connect and share with friends and family through mobile devices, personal computers, and other surface” or “to share their opinions, ideas, photos and videos, and other activities with audiences ranging from their closest friends to the public at large.” Facebook is a publicly traded corporation incorporated under the laws of Delaware, with its headquarters located at 1601 Willow Road, Menlo Park, California, 94025.

18. Defendant Cognizant is a professional services vendor that employed approximately 800 workers at its Facebook content moderation site in Tampa. Cognizant is a publicly traded corporation incorporated under the laws of Delaware, with its headquarters located at 211 Quality Circle, College Station, TX 77845.

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