Plaintiff Sergio Carrillo a/k/a Sergio Carrillo-Serrano hereby alleges as follows:

INTRODUCTION

- 1. Sergio Carrillo a/k/a Sergio Carrillo-Serrano¹ (hereinafter "Sergio Carrillo" or "Mr. Carrillo") is a United States citizen born in Mexico who acquired United States citizenship over twenty years ago.
- 2. Despite being an American citizen, Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE") agents violated Mr. Carrillo's constitutional rights by arresting him and searching him without probable cause to believe that he was an "alien" who was subject to removal from the country. In fact, the agents did not know anything about him except that he was born in Mexico. Days before his arrest, ICE agents searched their databases and found no information at all. Relying solely on the *absence* of information in their databases and his national origin, ICE agents sought to arrest him.
- 3. On July 25, 2016, after calling and texting Mr. Carrillo on his cell phone to ask where he was without identifying themselves, ICE agents arrested Mr. Carrillo at the Home Depot in Rialto, California.
- 4. Following Mr. Carrillo's arrest, ICE agents transported him to various ICE facilities where he was detained for approximately three (3) days. Mr. Carrillo was detained despite the fact that the various ICE officers handling his case did not have, nor could they find, any information indicating that he was a noncitizen subject to removal. His detention was further unreasonable because Mr. Carrillo repeatedly informed the ICE officers—including at the time of his arrest—that he was a United States citizen, yet no ICE officer investigated his claim until three days later when Mr. Carrillo's family hired a lawyer.

¹ Mr. Carrillo's Certificate of Citizenship identifies him as "Sergio Carrillo-Serrano," while his United States Passport and other public records identify him simply as "Sergio Carrillo." -2-

5. To remedy this egregious behavior, Mr. Carrillo brings this action against the United States of America ("United States") and the individual immigration officers who unlawfully arrested and detained him. Specifically, Mr. Carrillo seeks compensatory damages against the United States for (1) false imprisonment; (2) negligence; and (3) negligent infliction of emotional distress, and seeks compensatory and punitive damages from the individual ICE officers for violations of his constitutional rights under the Fourth Amendment.

JURISDICTION

6. This action arises under the Constitution and laws of the United States, including the Federal Tort Claims Act ("FTCA"), the Fourth Amendment to the United States Constitution, and *Bivens v. Six Unknown Agents of Federal Bureau of Narcotics*, 403, U.S. 388 (1972) ("*Bivens*"). Accordingly, this Court has jurisdiction over the subject matter of this complaint pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 (federal question), 1343 (civil rights), and 1346(b) (United States as a defendant).

EXHAUSTION

7. In December 2016, Mr. Carrillo submitted an administrative tort claim to the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) alleging claims for false imprisonment, negligence, and negligent infliction of emotional distress. Mr. Carrillo's administrative tort claim was received by DHS on December 12, 2016. The six-month period within which DHS was required to issue a final disposition expired on June 12, 2017. As of the filing of this complaint, DHS has not issued a final denial of Mr. Carrillo's claims. Accordingly, Mr. Carrillo's claims are deemed denied, and he has exhausted all available administrative remedies. 28 U.S.C. § 2675(a).

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VENUE

8. The acts and omissions giving rise to this complaint occurred within the Central District of California, and, as such, venue is appropriate in this Court pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1402(b) and 28 U.S.C. § 1391.

PARTIES

- 9. Plaintiff Sergio Carrillo is a resident of Rialto, California. Mr. Carrillo was born in Mexico. He became a lawful permanent resident ("LPR") of the United States when he was one-month old in 1978 and derived U.S. citizenship from his mother in 1994.
- Defendant United States of America is a proper defendant in this action as to Mr. Carrillo's claims made pursuant to the FTCA. 28 U.S.C. § 1346(b). ICE was at all times relevant herein a federal agency of DHS, organized and existing under the laws of the United States. The United States is vicariously liable for the misconduct of its employees. Upon information and belief, individual defendants DOES 1-10, were at all relevant times acting in their capacity as ICE officers and/or employees, and were acting within the course and scope of their employment. Accordingly, the United States of America is sued under the FTCA for the tortious acts of its employees.
- Defendants DOES 1 through 10 (collectively "DOE DEFENDANTS") are 11. individuals whose identities are not currently known to Mr. Carrillo, and who, by their actions, caused Mr. Carrillo's unlawful detention and violations of his rights. Upon information and belief, they are, and were at all relevant times, agents, employees, officers or otherwise representatives of ICE. At all times relevant to this complaint, DOE DEFENDANTS were acting within the course and scope of their employment with ICE, an executive agency of the United States.

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

12. Plaintiff Sergio Carrillo has been a U.S. citizen for over 20 years. He is 39 years old. He was born in Mexico while His parents were on a brief trip from Los

Angeles to Tijuana, but has otherwise lived in California his entire life. He is a resident of Rialto, California.

- 13. Mr. Carrillo became a lawful permanent resident of the United States on June 26, 1978, when he was one-month old. In 1994, he automatically derived citizenship by operation of law when his mother naturalized as a U.S. citizen.
- 14. In 1995, Mr. Carrillo obtained a U.S. passport from the Department of State. In 1996, he obtained a certificate of citizenship from the then Immigration and Naturalization Service ("INS").

ICE's Arrest and Detention of Mr. Carrillo

- 15. On the morning of Monday, July 25, 2016, Plaintiff was at the Home Depot in Rialto, California when he received a call from an unknown number asking for Sergio Carrillo.
- 16. The caller asked him where he was located. Mr. Carrillo responded that he was at the Home Depot and asked the caller who he was. The caller refused to identify himself and hung up.
- 17. Mr. Carrillo then went into the Home Depot, made a few purchases, and left.
- 18. Around the time he was leaving, at 9:34am, he received a text message from (626) 246-6899 stating: "Where are u at." Mr. Carrillo then called the number from which he received the text and asked who it was. The person refused to identify himself.
- 19. Moments later, DOES 1-2, two agents wearing black vests labeled "POLICE" over plain clothes, approached Mr. Carrillo as he exited the store and asked if he was Sergio Carrillo. They said they wanted to ask him some questions.
- 20. Mr. Carrillo inquired as to what the questions were concerning and whether he was a criminal suspect, and also stated that he wanted a lawyer if he was being detained.

- 21. The agents refused to answer Mr. Carrillo's questions. Finally, he asked the agents whether he was being detained. The agents responded that they were arresting him. When he asked why, the officers refused to say, with one officer responding that he would tell him later. The agents placed him under arrest.
- 22. He was placed into an unmarked car and transported to another section of the Home Depot parking lot, where he was removed from the car.
- 23. Mr. Carrillo and DOES 1-2 were then joined by another unmarked car. Two officers, DOES 3-4, exited the second car. At least one had a uniform that said "Homeland Security." When Mr. Carrillo saw the uniform he immediately told the officers they had the wrong person because he was a U.S. citizen. One of the officers responded that they believed Mr. Carrillo was in the United States illegally. The officers searched Mr. Carrillo, without his consent, and he was placed back into the first unmarked car.
- 24. From Rialto, DOES 1-2 drove Mr. Carrillo to the ICE processing facility, located at 300 North Los Angeles Street in downtown Los Angeles. During the car ride, Mr. Carrillo asked for the names and badge numbers of the officers, but both officers refused to give him the information. Mr. Carrillo continued to tell the officers throughout the duration of the car ride that they were making a big mistake because he was a U.S. citizen, but the officers ignored him.
- 25. When they arrived at the ICE processing center in downtown Los Angeles, an officer took Mr. Carrillo fingerprints. An officer also took a photo of him with his cell phone because their cameras were not working. The officers took Mr. Carrillo's wallet, which contained his identification. Mr. Carrillo told the officer that he was being illegally detained because he was a U.S. citizen.
- 26. After the officers took his fingerprints, Mr. Carrillo was sitting on a bench while the officers processed his paperwork. He overheard one of the officers tell another officer that he could not find any records of Mr. Carrillo in the computer databases.

- 27. Without any information from their electronic databases or information from Mr. Carrillo himself, the ICE agents nonetheless issued him a Notice to Appear ("NTA") in immigration court, charging him with grounds of removability. The ICE agents did not have Mr. Carrillo's address or phone number, so, for unknown reasons, they listed the address and phone number for the Orange County Sheriff's Department as Mr. Carrillo's address and phone number on his NTA. The ICE agents also lacked any information about Mr. Carrillo's citizenship or immigration status, so they wrote on his NTA that he entered the U.S. at an "unknown place at an unknown time" and alleged that he was a Mexican citizen.
- 28. The NTA was signed by ICE officer J. Patterson, and was served on Mr. Carrillo by ICE officer A. Vargas.
- 29. ICE held Mr. Carrillo at the processing center until approximately 8 or 9:00 pm that day, when they took him in a van to the Adelanto Detention Center in Adelanto, California.
- 30. The Adelanto Detention Center is an immigration detention facility run by a private company called GEO Group, through a contract with ICE.
- 31. While being booked into custody by a GEO Group employee, Mr. Carrillo told the employee that he was a U.S. citizen. The officer ignored him. He was taken to a dorm for the night.
- 32. First thing the next morning, on Tuesday, July 26, Mr. Carrillo told a GEO guard that he was a citizen and asked why he was being imprisoned. He also told the guard's supervisor that he was a citizen. He asked what he had to do to be able to communicate this fact to an ICE officer. The GEO guards told him he had to fill out a kite complaint, which would be picked up that evening by an ICE employee. He then put in a kite requesting to speak to an ICE officer and stating that he was a U.S. citizen.

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- 33. Mr. Carrillo did not hear from ICE all day on July 26, so on Wednesday, July 27 he put in a second request to speak with ICE, again stating he was a U.S. citizen.
- 34. Finally, on the morning of Thursday, July 28, Mr. Carrillo received a written response from ICE asking him for his parents' names. He responded as soon as he received the response and put his response in the box for kite complaints that same morning.
- That same day, around 1:00 pm, Laura Kent-Monning, an attorney 35. contacted by Mr. Carrillo's family, reached ICE Officer Eric Saldana at the Adelanto Detention Facility by phone and informed him that Mr. Carrillo was a U.S. citizen.
- 36. She followed up that call with a 1:26 pm email providing Mr. Carrillo's U.S. passport.
- 37. At 3:09 pm, she again emailed Officer Saldana, this time with Mr. Carrillo's certificate of citizenship, after hearing from the family that Officer Saldana had requested it.
- After receiving Ms. Kent-Monning's call and correspondence, ICE Officer 38. Saldana called Mr. Carrillo out of the dorm to speak with him. The Officer asked Mr. Carrillo a number of questions and he waited in Officer Saldana's office for approximately an hour while Officer Saldana spoke by phone to Mr. Carrillo's son and made various other phone calls.
- 39. At 3:37pm, Officer Saldana informed Ms. Kent-Monning that Mr. Carrillo would be released.
- Officer Saldana told Ms. Kent-Monning that they had been unable to locate Mr. Carrillo's record in the Central Index System (CIS) and that his information had been incorrectly entered into CIS under a different name, "Mr. Sergio Cabrillo Serrano." He also informed her that when Mr. Carrillo's certificate of citizenship was issued, the record and lais fingerprints were not digitized and

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electronically stored, and thus not available in any database. The Officer told her that the databases do not have naturalization and citizenship information from back then. Mr. Saldana also informed Ms. Kent-Monning that when ICE ran Mr. Carrillo's fingerprints, they came up negative for any immigration record.

41. Shortly after this call, ICE released him.

ICE's Review and Reliance on Electronic Database Searches

- 42. Upon information and belief, and based on documents in Mr. Carrillo's immigration file ("A-file"), on July 20, 2016, ICE conducted database searches for information about Mr. Carrillo. It searched the following databases: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service's (USCIS) Central Index System (CIS), U.S. Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) NNSV database, California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), the Los Angeles County Consolidated Criminal History Reporting System (CCHRS), Customs and Border Protection's Treasury Enforcement Communications System (TECS), and a database of the FBI's Criminal Justice Information Services Division.
- 43. The results of these database searches produced no information about Mr. Carrillo's citizenship and immigration status. The results of the CIS database search produced no records. The results of the other databases produced only criminal history information, biographical information, photographs of Mr. Carrillo, and Mr. Carrillo's home address.
- 44. In addition, when ICE booked Mr. Carrillo and ran his fingerprints against its electronic immigration databases, a report was created and placed in Mr. Carrillo's file stating "No candidate found for the below searched subject."
- 45. CIS is a database maintained by USCIS, the agency that oversees lawful immigration to the United States and is responsible for processing petitions, applications, and other requests for immigration benefits.
- 46. According to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), "CIS is a DHS-wide index used to track the location of case files, to include Alien Files (A-

File) nationally and to maintain alien status and repository information. CIS contains information on the status of individuals, including lawful permanent residents, naturalized citizens, U.S. border crossers, apprehended aliens, legalized aliens, aliens who have been issued employment authorizations, and other individuals of interest to DHS. CIS provides information used for granting or denying benefits and capturing subsequent status changes; documenting chain of custody for enforcement; keeping track of immigrant statistics; and control and account of record keeping services in accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) to certify the existence or non-existence of records."

- 47. By its nature, CIS is not a complete repository of information about all citizens and noncitizens in the United States, including their legal status and whether they are subject to removal from the United States.
- 48. The CIS database is incomplete, even for information that it otherwise maintains. Upon information and belief, DHS only began a system to digitize the fingerprints of applicants in 1994 and to electronically input associated records. USCIS only began consistently digitizing fingerprints of people who apply for immigration benefits in 2008. Immigration records, including citizenship applications, filed before 2008 are not consistently available in the CIS system and those filed before 1994 are not available at all. Neither ICE, nor USCIS has worked to upload information contained in paper records of citizenship certificates from before 2008 to its electronic databases.
- 49. Upon information and belief, the CIS database is also replete with errors ranging from misspelling of names, to erroneous immigration status information, to not maintaining up-to-date information. These error rates have been repeatedly reported on by the DHS Office of Inspector General and the Government Accountability Office and are well known throughout DHS.

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- 50. Upon information and belief, ICE is aware of the incomplete and inaccurate nature of the databases, yet nonetheless continues to rely on them for arrest determinations.
- 51. Upon information and belief, ICE arrested Mr. Carrillo on the basis of evidence of his birth in Mexico and the absence of any information in the CIS database or any other immigration database.
- 52. ICE has acknowledged in the context of immigration detainers that it does not have probable cause when it initiates arrests based on evidence of a foreign birth and no match in any immigration database.
- ICE's arrest of Mr. Carrillo on the basis of the absence of information in 53. an untrustworthy and unreliable database is further compounded by the fact that ICE should have already had an electronic record of a prior encounter with Mr. Carrillo in 2010. In late 2010, as Mr. Carrillo was being released form a county jail, ICE officers questioned him about his citizenship and immigration status. He gave the officers information about his parents and explained that he was a U.S. citizen. The officers took no further action against him and he was released. At that time, ICE should have created a contemporaneous record about its encounter with Mr. Carrillo indicating his U.S. citizenship. But the DOE DEFENDANTS either failed to review this information or it was not electronically recorded in ICE's database.
- Upon information and belief, without any probable cause to believe he was 54. a noncitizen subject to removal, ICE arrested Mr. Carrillo solely on the basis of national origin and place of birth.

ICE'S Failure to Investigate Mr. Carrillo's Claims to Citizenship

DOE DEFENDANTS' conduct was also in contravention of ICE's own policies, which require prompt and thorough investigation when an arrestee claims to be a U.S. citizen.

- 56. On November 10, 2015, ICE Director Sarah Saldana issued a policy directive numbered 16001.2 and entitled "Investigating the Potential U.S. Citizenship of Individuals Encountered by ICE" (the "Directive"). By its terms, this Directive became effective on November 10, 2015.
- 57. The stated policy of the Directive is to ensure that ICE "carefully and expeditiously investigate[s] and analyze[s] the potential U.S. citizenship of individuals encountered by ICE."
- 58. Pursuant to this policy, the Directive requires that "ICE Personnel *must* assess the potential U.S. Citizenship of an individual encountered by ICE if the individual makes or has made a claim to U.S. citizenship" (emphasis added). By the Directive's terms, this duty extends to individuals claiming citizenship who have been "arrested and taken into ICE custody pursuant to the agency's civil immigration authorities"
- 59. When an individual makes a claim to citizenship, a "factual examination and legal analysis" must be conducted and must include "a check of all available DHS data systems and any other reasonable means available to the officer."
- 60. The Directive further specifies that the "factual examination" may include "a review of the A-file and other pertinent documents, an interview of the individual, searches of vital records databases, interviews of family members and other individuals in possession of relevant information, and other appropriate investigation."
- 61. Further, "in any case in which there is uncertainty about whether the evidence is probative of U.S. citizenship, ICE should not detain [or] arrest . . . the individual"
- 62. Immediately upon being encountered by DOES 1–4, Mr. Carrillo stated in no uncertain terms that he was a U.S. Citizen. He repeated these claims during his transportation to the ICE processing center and while being booked into custody. He also informed several GEO guards of his citizenship and filled out two kite

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- Tellingly, it took a call by Ms. Kent-Monning before ICE took any meaningful steps to investigate Mr. Carrillo's claims of citizenship.
- DOE DEFENDANTS neglect of ICE's stated policies and procedures contributed to Mr. Carrillo's lengthy, unnecessary, and unreasonable detention.

CLAIMS

First Cause of Action

False Imprisonment (Against Defendant United States)

- Mr. Carrillo repeats and incorporates herein by reference the allegations in 66. the preceding paragraphs of this Complaint.
 - 67. DOE DEFENDANTS intentionally arrested Mr. Carrillo on July 25, 2017.
- 68. There was no lawful justification for arresting Mr. Carrillo. The DOE DEFENDANTS did not have probable cause to believe that Mr. Carrillo was a noncitizen who was subject to removal from the United States. Upon information and belief, Mr. Carrillo was arrested solely on the basis of his national origin.
- 69. Mr. Carrillo was detained without lawful justification or probable cause for approximately three (3) days, from July 25 to July 28, 2016.
- 70. Mr. Carrillo was aware of his unlawful confinement and did not consent to it.
- 71. DOE DEFENDANTS were, at all times relevant, officers and/or employees of ICE, and, as such, employees of the UNITED STATES.

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States.

- 81. Upon information and belief, DOE DEFENDANTS were at all times relevant acting within the course and scope of their employment as ICE officers and/or employees, and as employees of the United States.
- 82. DOE DEFENDANTS' conduct proximately caused injury to Mr. Carrillo, including, but not limited to, lost wages, lost employment opportunities, and emotional distress.

Third Cause of Action Federal Tort Claims Act Negligent Infliction of Emotional Distress (Against Defendant United States)

- 83. Mr. Carrillo repeats and incorporates herein by reference the allegations in the preceding paragraphs of this Complaint.
- 84. ICE officials have a duty to act with reasonable care and to not subject individuals to personal injury during the course of their duties.
- 85. ICE officials have a duty to use reasonable care in effecting an arrest of a suspected alien and in determining whether probable cause exists to perform an arrest.
- 86. ICE officials have a duty, upon an arrest, to investigate and ensure that probable cause exists to ensure that any continued detention is legally justified.
- 87. ICE officials have a duty to not subject individuals to unreasonable searches and seizures.
- 88. ICE officials have a duty to not subject individuals to discriminatory treatment on the basis of national origin.
- 89. DOE DEFENDANTS breached these duties by wrongfully arresting Mr. Carrillo without probable cause or legal justification; by arresting Mr. Carrillo based solely on his national origin; by searching Mr. Carrillo without legal justification or probable cause and pursuant to an unlawful arrest; and, upon his arrest and transportation to the ICE processing facility, failing to use reasonable care to ascertain that Mr. Carrillo was at all times a citizen of the United States.

- 90. Upon information and belief, DOE DEFENDANTS were at all times relevant acting within the course and scope of their employment as ICE officers and/or employees, and as employees of the United States.
- 91. DOE DEFENDANTS' conduct proximately caused Mr. Carrillo to experience serious emotional distress in the form of nervousness, shock, anxiety, and depression.

Fourth Cause of Action

Bivens

Violations of Fourth Amendment (Unreasonable Search and Seizure) (Against Defendants DOES 1-10)

- 92. Mr. Carrillo repeats and incorporates herein by reference the allegations in the preceding paragraphs of this Complaint.
- 93. The Fourth Amendment to the United States Constitution prohibits unreasonable searches and seizures.
- 94. DOE DEFENDANTS arrested Mr. Carrillo on July 25, 2016 without a warrant and without probable cause.
- 95. DOE DEFENDANTS also searched Mr. Carrillo at the time of his arrest without a warrant or probable cause.
- 96. DOE DEFENDANTS continued Mr. Carrillo's detention for approximately three (3) days after he informed them, at the point of arrest and throughout the ensuing three days, that he was a U.S. citizen.
- 97. As of July 25, 2016 it was clearly established that an ICE officer must have probable cause to arrest and search an individual suspected of being a removable noncitizen.
- 98. It was also clearly established that ICE does not have probable cause to arrest and detain a U.S. citizen.
- 99. It was also clearly established that ICE does not have probable cause to make an arrest based on foreign place of birth and the absence of records in its databases, databases it knows to be incorrect and incomplete.

- 100. Even if ICE had probable cause for the arrest, which it did not, probable cause ceased to exist at the moment that Mr. Carrillo informed DOE
- DEFENDANTS that he was a U.S. citizen—something he mentioned upon his arrest.

 101. DOE DEFENDANTS' conduct proximately caused injury to Mr. Carrillo,
- including, but not limited to, lost wages, lost employment opportunities, and emotional distress.
- 102. In performing the acts alleged herein, DOE DEFENDANTS acted maliciously, intentionally, recklessly, and/or with callous indifference to Mr. Carrillo's constitutional rights, such that an award of punitive damages is appropriate.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff respectfully requests relief as follows:

- 1. Trial by jury on all claims so triable under applicable law;
- 2. Compensatory damages against the United States in an amount to be proven at trial, but, in any event, no less than an amount sufficient to adequately compensate Mr. Carrillo for injuries resulting from the false imprisonment, negligence, and negligent infliction of emotional distress perpetrated by the DOE DEFENDANTS;
- 3. Compensatory damages against the DOE DEFENDANTS in an amount to be proven at trial, but, in any event, no less than an amount sufficient to adequately compensate Mr. Carrillo for injuries resulting from the violation of his Fourth Amendment rights;
- 4. Punitive damages against the DOE DEFENDANTS in an amount to be proven at trial, but, in any event, no less than an amount sufficient to not only punish DOE DEFENDANTS for their unlawful conduct but to deter future like conduct from similarly situated ICE agents;

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