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1	SALVESON, an individual; STREAMLINE GLOBAL, a business form unknown; and
2	DOES 1 through 100, Inclusive,
3	Defendants.
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REPLY IN SUPPORT OF DEMURRER TO PLAINTIFF'S FIRST AMENDED COMPLAINT

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Defendants Alexander R. Baldwin III ("Baldwin") and El Dorado Pictures, Inc. ("El Dorado" and collectively the "Baldwin Defendants") respectfully submit this reply in support of their demurrer to Plaintiff Mamie Mitchell's first amended complaint ("FAC").

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

The Baldwin Defendants based their demurrer on the body of case law holding that pleading ultimate facts is insufficient to establish Mitchell's claims. Instead of addressing those cases or citing any that support the adequacy of her allegations, Mitchell's opposition consists of little more than copying and pasting those inadequate allegations into her brief. Because none of the unsupported arguments that Mitchell does make demonstrates the sufficiency of the FAC, the Court should sustain the Baldwin Defendants' demurrer, with prejudice.

First, the Baldwin Defendants argued that Mitchell engages in improper group pleading throughout the FAC, and with regard to each claim, by lumping all defendants together and not specifying the actions of any individual defendant. Even though the Baldwin Defendants raised this argument numerous times in their opening brief, Mitchell does not address it. Accordingly, she concedes the point and that their demurrer should be sustained on this ground. This is so endemic that she did not notice her repeated references to the Baldwin Defendants as "Defendants Nigam and Brittany House Productions [sic]" when she recycled here her opposition to their demurrer. See, e.g., Pl. Opp. 5, 11.

Second, Mitchell argues that she has stated a claim for assault under the second prong of N.M. Stat. Ann. § 30-3-1, which requires an "unlawful act, threat or menacing conduct which causes another person to reasonably believe that he is in danger of receiving an immediate battery." Not so. Assault requires intent, and Mitchell's general, conclusory allegations of intent are insufficient under well-established California law. They are also undercut by her specific allegations that the incident was "unexpected" (FAC ¶ 56), for which she has no answer. Nor has Mitchell adequately alleged an "unlawful act, threat or menacing conduct." Although she attempts to satisfy that standard by arguing that it "is unlawful for anyone to carry any type of deadly weapon anywhere" in New Mexico (Pl. Opp. 10), the statute she relies on, N.M. Stat. Ann. § 30-7-2, prohibits the carrying of a "concealed" firearm. The gun at issue here, however, was not

concealed. The statute also does not apply to unloaded firearms, which Baldwin, Mitchell, and all others on the set believed the gun to be. Lastly, though she argues otherwise, Mitchell's assault claim also fails because she has not adequately pled that she apprehended an immediate battery *prior* to the accidental discharge of the gun. Instead, she admits that the discharge was "unexpected" and that she experienced fear only *after* the gun fired. FAC ¶¶ 56, 59-60, 62.

Third, the Baldwin Defendants argued in their opening brief that Mitchell has not stated a claim for intentional infliction of emotional distress because she has not alleged that the conduct at issue was extreme and outrageous or that the Baldwin Defendants acted intentionally or in reckless disregard of Mitchell. In response, Mitchell claims that she satisfies the extreme-and-outrageous standard because of her strong emotional involvement in the incident. But whether conduct is extreme and outrageous is assessed through the objective lens of "an average member of the community"—it is not a question of Mitchell's subjective reaction. Moreover, her allegations that the Baldwin Defendants acted intentionally or in reckless disregard of her well-being are conclusory and, as such, are to be disregarded when judging the sufficiency of her claim.

Fourth, Mitchell concedes that the Court should dismiss her claim for "deliberate infliction of harm" because it is not a valid cause of action.

Fifth, in response to the Baldwin Defendants' argument that Mitchell fails to state a claim for negligence because she merely recites its elements, Mitchell does not distinguish the decisions that the Baldwin Defendants cited or cite any case law of her own. Rather, she simply recites the allegations from the FAC. But merely repeating her inadequate allegations does not make them adequate, nor rebut the cases holding that her allegations are insufficient to state a claim. Next, Mitchell argues that she has stated a negligence claim against the Baldwin Defendants based on her allegations against four other defendants: Rust Movie Productions, Thomasville Pictures, Ryan Smith, and Langley Cheney. According to Mitchell, that's so because all defendants acted in concert. But Mitchell must allege facts, not conclusions, and her boilerplate allegation of concerted conduct, devoid of any facts, is not sufficient to state a claim against the Baldwin Defendants. Lastly, Mitchell flat-out ignores, and therefore concedes, the Baldwin Defendants' argument that her failure to adequately plead physical injury is fatal to her negligence claim.

Finally, the Court should dismiss Mitchell's claims with prejudice and not grant her the opportunity to amend the FAC. Mitchell has failed to identify any additional facts not already in her pleading that would cure these defects.

ARGUMENT

I. MITCHELL CONCEDES THAT SHE HAS ENGAGED IN IMPROPER GROUP PLEADING

Throughout their opening brief and with regard to each cause of action, the Baldwin Defendants explained that Mitchell engages in improper "group pleading" by lumping all defendants together and failing to provide any facts specific to each (or any) defendant's conduct. Def. Br. 5-8, 10-11. In her opposition, Mitchell simply ignores, and thus concedes, this defect.

Mitchell conclusorily alleges that "each and every Defendant" acted through an agency or joint venture with "each and every other Defendant" and that "[t]hose responsible for the unsafe conditions" on the *Rust* set include the 19 "Defendant Producers" (FAC ¶¶ 34-35, 66), without pleading any facts to establish those legal relationships or to support such collective responsibility. *See, e.g., Falahati v. Kondo*, 127 Cal. App. 4th 823, 829 (2005) (a complaint containing "boilerplate allegation[s] [that] each defendant was the agent and employee of the others and ... charging allegations respecting 'defendants and each of them'" fails to state a claim where "it does not allege [that] any conduct on [a particular defendant's] part caused any harm, loss or damage on the plaintiffs' part"). Mitchell's general allegations against all defendants are insufficient to put specific defendants on notice of the claims against them, a basic pleading requirement that the California Supreme Court has recognized for over a century. *See, e.g., Hawley Bros. Hardware Co. v. Brownstone*, 123 Cal. 643, 646-47 (1899) (a demurrer should be sustained where "[i]t is not possible by any reading of the complaint ... to say[] whether one, and if one, which one, of the persons named in the caption" is allegedly responsible for particular conduct).

Although the Baldwin Defendants raised this argument numerous times, Mitchell fails to address it in her opposition, thereby conceding the point and that their demurrer should be sustained. *See, e.g., Rudick v. State Bd. of Optometry*, 41 Cal. App. 5th 77, 90 (2019) (by failing to address opposing party's arguments, plaintiffs "implicitly concede" them); *People v. Stanley*, 10 Cal. 4th 764, 793 (1995) ("[E]very brief should contain a legal argument with citation of

authorities on the points made. If none is furnished on a particular point, the court may treat it as waived, and pass it without consideration."). Notably, Mitchell refuses to differentiate between defendants in her cut-and-paste, recycled opposition brief, which still contains references to "Defendants Nigam and Brittany House Productions [sic]." See, e.g., Pl. Opp. 5, 11. That Mitchell is content merely to copy the arguments she made against other defendants, on another demurrer, underscores that she has not adequately pled her case. Mitchell sued 24 individual defendants here. Mitchell thus bears—but has not satisfied—the burden of pleading the role of each in the events that led to her purported injuries. II. MITCHELL'S FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION FOR ASSAULT FAILS An assault (FAC ¶¶ 77-85) under New Mexico law¹ is (1) "an attempt to commit a battery upon the person of another," (2) "any unlawful act, threat or menacing conduct which causes another person to reasonably believe that he is in danger of receiving an immediate battery," or (3) "the use of insulting language toward another impugning his honor, delicacy or reputation." N.M. Stat. Ann. § 30-3-1. Mitchell argues that she satisfies the second prong. Pl. Opp. 10. She is wrong.

First, Mitchell claims that she "has plead sufficient facts to establish th[at] ... Baldwin ... committed tortious conduct constituting assault." *Id.* That requires Mitchell to have adequately alleged intent, see, e.g., Pena v. Greffet, 108 F. Supp. 3d 1030, 1048 (D.N.M. 2015), by pleading facts, not conclusions, see, e.g., Bichai v. Dignity Health, 61 Cal. App. 5th 869, 877 (2021). Mitchell has failed to do so. She only conclusorily alleges that Baldwin's actions "constituted intentional acts and/or omissions, without any just cause or excuse" (FAC ¶ 85), which is insufficient under well-established California pleading standards. See, e.g., Appl v. Lee Swett

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¹ Although Mitchell's opposition primarily cites California authorities, the Court has made clear that New Mexico substantive law applies to her claims, which arise out of alleged conduct that occurred in that state. *See* June 2, 2022 Minute Order at 5 (ordering supplemental briefing solely on issues of New Mexico law); Def. Br. 1. Even if the sufficiency of the FAC's allegations were assessed under California law, Mitchell still fails to state a claim. *See* Def. Br. 1, 6 n.1, 8 n.4, 12-13 n.5.

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Stanley, 10 Cal. 4th at 793.

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The New Mexico Constitution protects the right "to keep and bear arms for security and defense, for lawful hunting and recreational use and for other lawful purposes." N.M. Const. art. II, § 6. The "carrying of concealed weapons" is a stated limit to this right. *Id.* Thus, what Mitchell misleadingly states as the rule is in fact the exception.

Livestock Co., 192 Cal. App. 3d 466, 470 (1987) (conclusory labels such as "maliciously,"

about the event underlying the alleged assault, which she describes as an "unexpected," "tragic

incident" resulting from a gun that had been declared "cold." FAC ¶ 5, 51-56; see, e.g., Med.

Marijuana, Inc. v. ProjectCBD.com, 6 Cal. App. 5th 602, 619 (2016) ("California courts have

adopted the principle that specific allegations in a complaint control over an inconsistent general

allegation."). By not addressing the Baldwin Defendants' argument that the specific trumps the

Second, Mitchell has not properly alleged an "unlawful act, threat or menacing conduct."

N.M. Stat. Ann. § 30-3-1. While Mitchell argues that in New Mexico it "is unlawful for anyone to

carry any type of deadly weapon anywhere, with limited exceptions" (Pl. Opp. 10), the statute

Mitchell cites has no relevance here because it prohibits "carrying a *concealed* loaded firearm,"

announcement of "cold gun" to her observation of Baldwin's movement of the gun "to ensure

continuity with the upcoming afternoon scenes." FAC ¶¶ 5, 80. Moreover, the statute is clear that

it "shall [not] be construed to prevent the carrying of any unloaded firearm," N.M. Stat. Ann. § 30-

7-2, which Baldwin, Mitchell, and all others on the set believed the gun to be (see FAC ¶¶ 5, 56).

Because Mitchell does not otherwise argue or plead facts to support that the Baldwin Defendants'

actions were "menacing" or "threat[ening]," N.M. Stat. Ann. § 30-3-1, she has not satisfied this

was concealed. On the contrary, she alleges that its presence was conspicuous, from the

N.M. Stat. Ann. § 30-7-2 (emphasis added),² and Mitchell does not allege that the firearm at issue

general (Def. Br. 7), Mitchell concedes the point. See, e.g., Rudick, 41 Cal. App. 5th at 90;

Regardless, Mitchell's general allegations of intent are undercut by her specific allegations

"willfully," "oppressively," or "deliberately" are not assumed as true on a demurrer).

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Finally, Mitchell is required to allege that she experienced fear or anticipation of receiving an immediate battery before the single, accidental discharge of the gun. See Baca v. Velez, 114 N.M. 13, 15 (Ct. App. 1992) (cause of action for assault requires a plaintiff to "fe[el] scared before the [contact] took place") (emphasis added); United States v. Acosta-Sierra, 690 F.3d 1111, 1121-22 (9th Cir. 2012) (assault cannot lie where purported victim "did not realize what had happened until after the threat of imminent bodily harm had passed," because a "general feeling of fear or unease" after the event "is not the same as apprehension of an imminent battery"). But, contrary to Mitchell's argument (Pl. Opp. 10), her allegations are insufficient because she does not allege that she felt any fear until after the gun unexpectedly discharged. See FAC ¶¶ 59-60, 62 (alleging that after the gun discharged, Mitchell "feared for her life" and was "terrified").

Indeed, Mitchell alleges that she was *unaware* that the gun contained live ammunition while Baldwin was "moving the loaded gun within approximately 4 feet in front of her" and "pointing" it towards her. *Id.* ¶¶ 56, 58, 60, 79-80. That allegation also dooms her claim. *See, e.g.*, Restatement (Second) of Torts § 24 cmt. a (noting that "if the actor ... points [a revolver] at another ... the actor is not liable [for assault] if the other believes that the revolver is unloaded," *even if* "the revolver is in fact loaded"). Mitchell's after-the-fact allegation of fear does not suffice to state a claim for assault.

III. MITCHELL'S SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION FOR INTENTIONAL INFLICTION OF EMOTIONAL DISTRESS FAILS

To state a claim for intentional infliction of emotional distress (FAC ¶¶ 86-93) under New Mexico law, a plaintiff must allege, among other things, that "the conduct in question was extreme and outrageous" and that "the conduct of the defendant was intentional or in reckless disregard of the plaintiff." *Trujillo v. N. Rio Arriba Elec. Co-op, Inc.*, 131 N.M. 607, 616 (2001). The Baldwin Defendants' opening brief explained that Mitchell has not satisfied these elements. Def. Br. 8-9. None of the arguments that Mitchell makes in her opposition changes that conclusion.

First, Mitchell argues that she satisfies her burden of pleading extreme and outrageous conduct by alleging "evidence of strong emotional involvement and intense emotions resulting

from the tortious conduct." Pl. Opp. 12. But the Restatement (Second) of Torts, which New Mexico has adopted, *see*, *e.g.*, *Trujillo*, 131 N.M. at 616, assesses extreme and outrageous conduct through the objective lens of "an average member of the community"—not the plaintiff's subjective reaction. Restatement (Second) of Torts § 46 cmt. d. Because Mitchell has not even attempted to plead that the Baldwin Defendants were aware of or exploited any unique emotional sensitivities, Mitchell's reaction to the Baldwin Defendants' conduct is insufficient to satisfy this element. *See id.* cmt. f ("The extreme and outrageous character of the conduct may arise from the actor's knowledge that the other is peculiarly susceptible to emotional distress, by reason of some physical or mental condition or peculiarity.").

Moreover, as the Baldwin Defendants noted in their opening brief, Mitchell alleges that Baldwin's conduct was extreme and outrageous "under the facts and circumstances of the 'Rust' filmmaking." FAC ¶ 88 (emphasis added). But those "facts and circumstances" were the production of a "western-themed motion picture" that required Baldwin to be "sitting in a pew wearing a holster with a gun [declared to be 'cold'] that had been handed to him" and to "mov[e] the ... gun within" Mitchell's proximity. Id. ¶¶ 5, 42, 52, 56, 58. These routine and expected actions on the set of a film "that ... necessitate[d] the use of numerous weapons" (id. ¶ 42) are not "so outrageous in character, and so extreme in degree, as to go beyond all possible bounds of decency." Trujillo, 131 N.M. at 616.

Second, Mitchell simply repeats her allegations in an attempt to show that she's adequately alleged the Baldwin Defendants' intent or "reckless disregard of the plaintiff." *Id.*; see Pl. Opp. 12-13. What's missing from Mitchell's argument is any legal support. Mitchell fails to cite even one case in which a court found that conclusory, boilerplate allegations like hers were sufficient to withstand a demurrer. That is for good reason: her allegations are deficient. For example, Mitchell's only allegation of intent is the assertion that the discharge of the gun was a "deliberate" action. FAC ¶¶ 56, 89. But that is a legal conclusion that must be disregarded on a demurrer, see, e.g., Appl, 192 Cal. App. 3d at 470; Bichai, 61 Cal. App. 5th at 877, and is belied and superseded

³ Mitchell cites California law for this proposition. As explained above, New Mexico law applies. *See supra* n.1.

by Mitchell's specific allegations that the event was "unexpected." FAC \P 56; see Med. Marijuana, 6 Cal. App. 5th at 619.

To maintain a claim for intentional infliction of emotional distress based on "reckless disregard," Mitchell must allege the Baldwin Defendants' "deliberate disregard of a high degree of probability that [her] emotional distress w[ould] follow." *Baldonado v. El Paso Nat. Gas Co.*, 143 N.M. 288, 296-97 (2007). Mitchell has not satisfied this standard. In particular, she does not explain how the Baldwin Defendants consciously disregarded a likelihood that their conduct could result in emotional harm to *anyone*, much less that *her emotional distress* was a probable result.

IV. MITCHELL CONCEDES THAT HER THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION FOR DELIBERATE INFLICTION OF HARM FAILS

Mitchell does not oppose the Baldwin Defendants' demurrer to her third cause of action for "deliberate infliction of harm" (FAC ¶¶ 94-117), which is not a recognized tort under New Mexico or California law and has been dismissed against other defendants in this action. Pl. Opp. 3, 17; see June 2, 2022 Minute Order at 5 (sustaining defendants Anjul Nigam and Brittany House Pictures's demurrer to Mitchell's third cause of action).

V. MITCHELL'S FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION FOR NEGLIGENCE FAILS

In addition to the improper group pleading that plagues all of Mitchell's claims, the Baldwin Defendants' opening brief explained how Mitchell's negligence claim is insufficiently pled for several other reasons. Def. Br. 10-13. Instead of addressing those arguments and the decisions that the Baldwin Defendants cited, Mitchell simply quotes the deficient allegations from the FAC.

First, to state a negligence claim, a plaintiff must allege "a duty owed from the defendant to the plaintiff; that based on a standard of reasonable care under the circumstances, the defendant breached that duty; and that the breach was a cause in fact and proximate cause of the plaintiff's damages." Romero v. Giant Stop-N-Go of New Mexico, Inc., 146 N.M. 520, 522 (Ct. App. 2009). The Baldwin Defendants argued that Mitchell merely recites those elements (FAC ¶¶ 119-24), which is insufficient to state a claim. See Shaeffer v. Califia Farms, LLC, 44 Cal. App. 5th 1125, 1143 (2020); see also Bichai, 61 Cal. App. 5th at 877. In her opposition, Mitchell does not

address that argument. For example, she cites no case law demonstrating that the FAC's allegations meet the applicable standard. Instead, she merely copies and pastes the allegations from the FAC into her brief. But simply reciting the allegations does not rebut the Baldwin Defendants' argument that those allegations are deficient.

Second, Mitchell argues that her claim that a group of 19 "Defendant Producers" "skirt[ed] all industry-wide protocols" and "prioritize[d] profit over the safe handling of weapons" suffices to state a claim for negligence against the Baldwin Defendants. Pl. Opp. 14-15. But Mitchell made her allegations of "intentionally" producing Rust "on a low budget and cost-cutting scheme that was known to create unsafe conditions for movie production crews" against only four "Defendant Producers"—and not against the Baldwin Defendants. Id. at 6; see FAC ¶ 63-66. Mitchell's attempt to impute her allegations to the Baldwin Defendants through a cursory assertion that all "Defendant Producers" acted in concert (id. ¶¶ 34-35, 66), does not suffice. See, e.g., Falahati, 127 Cal. App. 4th at 829 ("boilerplate allegation[s] [that] each defendant was the agent and employee of the others" fail to state a claim against specific defendants). Instead, to state a claim for negligence against each of the Baldwin Defendants, Mitchell must plead "a duty owed from the defendant" and that "the defendant breached that duty." Romero, 146 N.M. at 522 (emphasis added). She has not done so.

Finally, by not addressing the Baldwin Defendants' argument that Mitchell has not adequately pled physical injuries, she concedes it and that their demurrer should be sustained. See, e.g., Rudick, 41 Cal. App. 5th at 90; Stanley, 10 Cal. 4th at 793. The core of Mitchell's alleged injuries are "emotional distress for which she has had to employ medical treaters, including, without limitation, mental health providers." FAC ¶ 123. But, as the Baldwin Defendants explained (Def. Br. 12-13), New Mexico law permits recovery for alleged negligently-inflicted emotional injuries in limited circumstances, none of which applies here. See, e.g., La Rosa v. Presb. Healthcare Servs., Inc., 2011 WL 6016977, at *2 (Ct. App. Nov. 16, 2011) (a plaintiff may recover for emotional injuries caused by another's negligence only "if the conduct also caused a personal, physical injury" or under New Mexico's limited definition of negligent infliction of emotional distress).

1 VI. THE COURT SHOULD DENY LEAVE TO AMEND 2 Upon sustaining a demurrer, a court should not grant a plaintiff leave to amend if there is 3 no "reasonable possibility" that her complaint's defects can be cured. Heckendorn v. City of San 4 Marino, 42 Cal. 3d 481, 486 (1986). Here, there are no facts that Mitchell can rely on to fashion 5 viable claims under New Mexico law against the Baldwin Defendants. If there were, it was 6 Mitchell's duty to have stated them in her opposition. She offered nothing to cure these defects. 7 The Court should therefore deny her leave to amend. 8 **CONCLUSION** 9 For the reasons stated above and in their opening brief, the Court should sustain the 10 Baldwin Defendants' demurrer with prejudice. 11 DATED: June 14, 2022 Respectfully submitted, 12 QUINN EMANUEL URQUHART & SULLIVAN, LLP 13 14 Robert M. Schwartz 15 Luke Nikas (admission *pro hac vice* pending) 16 Attorneys for Defendants Alexander R. Baldwin III and El Dorado Pictures, Inc. 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27

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PROOF OF SERVICE

STATE OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

At the time of service, I was over 18 years of age and not a party to this action. I am employed in the County of Los Angeles, State of California. My business address is 865 South Figueroa Street, 10th Floor, Los Angeles, California 90017.

On June 14, 2022, I served true copies of the following document(s) described as

DEFENDANTS ALEXANDER R. BALDWIN III AND EL DORADO PICTURES, INC.'S REPLY IN SUPPORT OF DEMURRER TO PLAINTIFF'S FIRST AMENDED COMPLAINT

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5	House Pictures	Newport Beach, California 92660 nwhyte@bremerwhyte.com			
6		kwheeler@bremerwhyte.com			
7	BY OVERNIGHT MAIL: Lenclosed the document(s) in a sealed envelope or package				
8	collection and overnight mailing, following our ordinary business practices. I am readily familiar with the practice of Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan, LLP for collecting and processing				
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11	in the county where the mailing occurred. The envelope was placed in the mail at Los Angeles, California.				
12	I dealers and an appellar of a sairrar and an the leave	of the State of Colifornia that the			

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on June 14, 2022, at Los Angeles, California.

Laumi Mes

Case No. 21STCV42301

PROOF OF SERVICE