

1 Rachel B. Abrams (SBN #209316)  
Adam B. Wolf (SBN #215914)  
2 **PEIFFER WOLF CARR KANE CONWAY & WISE, LLP**  
3 555 Montgomery Street, Suite 820  
San Francisco, California 94111  
4 Telephone: (415) 766-3544  
Facsimile: (415) 840-9435  
5 Email: rabrams@peifferwolf.com  
Email: awolf@peifferwolf.com  
6

ELECTRONICALLY  
**FILED**  
Superior Court of California,  
County of San Francisco  
**04/17/2024**  
Clerk of the Court  
BY: AUSTIN LAM  
Deputy Clerk

7 E. Scott Verhine (*Pro Hac Vice* Forthcoming)  
**Verhine & Verhine PLLC**  
8 1013 Adams Street  
Vicksburg, MS 39183  
9 Telephone: (601) 558-9127  
Facsimile: (601) 636-2718  
10 Email: scott@verhine.biz

**CGC-24-614023**

11 *Attorneys for Plaintiff*

12 **SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**  
13 **COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO**

14 JANE DOE PWV 002, an individual,  
15 Plaintiff,  
16 v.  
17 LYFT, INC.; a Delaware Corporation; and  
18 DOES 1 through 50, Inclusive,  
19 Defendants.

Case No. \_\_\_\_\_  
**COMPLAINT FOR DAMAGES AND DEMAND  
FOR JURY TRIAL**  
1. **GENERAL NEGLIGENCE**  
2. **NEGLIGENT HIRING, RETENTION,  
AND SUPERVISION**  
3. **COMMON CARRIER NEGLIGENCE**  
4. **NEGLIGENT FAILURE TO WARN**  
5. **VICARIOUS LIABILITY/LIABILITY  
FOR THE TORTS OF LYFT'S DRIVERS**  
6. **VICARIOUS LIABILITY FOR SEXUAL  
ASSAULT**  
7. **VICARIOUS LIABILITY FOR SEXUAL  
BATTERY**  
8. **INTENTIONAL MISREPRESENTATION**  
9. **NEGLIGENT MISREPRESENTATION**  
10. **NEGLIGENT INFLICTION OF  
EMOTIONAL DISTRESS**  
11. **BREACH OF CONTRACT**  
12. **STRICT PRODUCT LIABILITY –**

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28

**DESIGN DEFECT**  
13. **STRICT PRODUCT LIABILITY-  
FAILURE TO WARN**

JANE DOE PWV 002 (“Plaintiff”) alleges causes of action against LYFT, INC. (“LYFT”), a corporation with its principal place of business in San Francisco, California, and DOES 1 through 50, inclusive, and each of them, and complains and alleges as follows:

**FACTUAL OVERVIEW OF ALLEGATIONS**

1. LYFT is a transportation company headquartered in San Francisco, California and is one of the fastest growing companies in the United States. As early as 2015, LYFT became aware that LYFT drivers were sexually assaulting and raping female passengers. Since 2015, sexual predators driving for LYFT have continued to assault and rape LYFT’s female passengers. For five years, LYFT has known of the ongoing sexual assaults and rapes by LYFT drivers upon LYFT passengers. Complaints to LYFT by female passengers who have been attacked by LYFT drivers, combined with subsequent criminal investigations by law enforcement, clearly establish that LYFT has been fully aware of these continuing attacks by sexual predators driving for LYFT.

2. LYFT’s response to this sexual predator crisis amongst LYFT drivers has been appallingly inadequate. LYFT continues to hire drivers without performing adequate background checks. LYFT continues to allow culpable drivers to keep driving for LYFT. And, perhaps most importantly, LYFT has failed to adopt and implement reasonable driver monitoring procedures designed to protect the safety of its passengers. As a consequence, LYFT passengers continue to be victims of sexual assaults and rapes by LYFT drivers.

3. Plaintiff was assaulted by a LYFT driver. These events have had a devastating effect on Plaintiff. The trauma of the assault caused and continues to cause excruciating pain and suffering and has had a catastrophic impact on Plaintiff’s life and well-being. Unfortunately, there have been many other sexual assault victims who like Plaintiff, have been attacked and traumatized after they simply contracted with LYFT for a safe ride home.



1 actionable manner, responsible for the events and happenings hereinafter referred to, and thereby  
2 negligently, or in some other actionable manner, legally caused the hereinafter described injuries  
3 and damages to Plaintiff. Plaintiff will hereafter seek leave of the Court to amend this Complaint  
4 to show the Defendants' true names and capacities after the same have been ascertained.

5 10. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and on that basis alleges, that at all times herein  
6 mentioned, each of the defendants herein was the agent, servant, licensee, employee, assistant,  
7 consultant, or alter ego, of each of the remaining defendants, and was at all times herein mentioned  
8 acting within the course and scope of said relationship when Plaintiff was injured as set forth herein.  
9 Plaintiff is informed and believes that each and every defendant, when acting as a principal, was  
10 negligent in the selection, hiring, supervision or retention of each and every other defendant as an  
11 agent, servant, employee, assistant, or consultant. Plaintiff is further informed and believes, and  
12 thereon alleges, that at all times herein mentioned, each business, public entity or corporate  
13 employer, through its officers, directors, supervisors and managing agents, and each individual  
14 defendant, had advance knowledge of the wrongful conduct, psychological profile, and behavior  
15 propensity of said agents, servants, licensees, employees, assistants, consultants, and alter egos, and  
16 allowed said wrongful conduct to occur and continue to occur, thereby ratifying said wrongful  
17 conduct, and, after becoming aware of their wrongful conduct, each public entity, and corporate  
18 defendant by and through its officers, directors, supervisors and managing agents, and each  
19 individual defendant, authorized and ratified the wrongful conduct herein alleged.

20 11. Defendants are liable for the acts of each other through principles of *respondeat*  
21 *superior*, agency, ostensible agency, partnership, alter-ego and other forms of vicarious liability.

22 **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

23 12. The San Francisco Superior Court has jurisdiction over LYFT because it is a  
24 corporation with its principal place of business is located in San Francisco, in the State of California,  
25 LYFT is authorized to do business in the State of California and registered with the California  
26 Secretary of State. LYFT has its primary place of business in San Francisco and intentionally avails  
27 itself of the benefits and protection of California law such that the exercise of jurisdiction over it by  
28 the California courts is consistent with traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice. And,

1 LYFT’s user agreement states, “this Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of  
2 California...” Damages in this case exceed \$25,000.

3 13. Venue is proper in this Court pursuant to *California Code of Civil Procedure* §395  
4 in that Defendant LYFT resides in and maintains its principal place of business in San Francisco,  
5 San Francisco County, California. Further, LYFT’s negligent conduct, its breaches of contract  
6 express, and implied covenants and the conduct giving rise to Plaintiff’s punitive damages claims,  
7 all occurred in San Francisco.

8 14. All executive decision making of the part of LYFT regarding hiring policies,  
9 handling of complaints regarding drivers, driver termination policies, training of drivers and  
10 standard operating procedures relating to drivers occurred in San Francisco.

11 15. All executive decision making on the part of LYFT regarding its marketing  
12 campaigns and representations to passengers regarding its safety occurred in San Francisco.

13 **INADEQUATE SAFETY PRECAUTIONS AND INADEQUATE SCREENING**

14 16. Even today, the hiring of LYFT drivers occurs without any real screening. Potential  
15 drivers merely fill out a form online. There is no interview either in person or through online  
16 platforms such as Skype or Zoom. There is no adequate background check and no biometric  
17 fingerprinting. Almost all online applicants become drivers. Once a LYFT applicant becomes a  
18 driver, LYFT fails to utilize its own technology, including in-car cameras and GPS tracking, to  
19 ensure that drivers keep the camera running during the entire ride and that the driver remains on  
20 course to the passenger’s destination. LYFT does not have a zero-tolerance policy for sexual  
21 misconduct and has allowed drivers who have been reported for misconduct to continue driving.  
22 LYFT does not require non-harassment training, nor does it adequately investigate passenger  
23 complaints of sexually inappropriate behavior or serious sexual assaults. Shockingly, a chatroom of  
24 rideshare drivers exists where they openly discuss and brag about the access that they have to “hot”  
25 young women. Notwithstanding LYFT’s history of hiring sexual predators who have assaulted  
26 LYFT passengers, and notwithstanding the obvious and open subculture of LYFT drivers who  
27 harbor a sexual motivation for driving young female passengers, LYFT does nothing to warn its  
28 female passengers about this very serious and real danger.

1 **LYFT’S FINANCIAL MODEL**

2 17. The key to LYFT’s business model is getting as many new LYFT drivers on the road  
3 as possible. The more drivers, the more rides, the more money LYFT makes. Unfortunately, more  
4 careful screening and supervision would result in fewer drivers and lower profits.

5 18. LYFT also has a high turnover among its drivers because they are not well paid and  
6 often move on to other jobs. As a result, and in order to keep the number of drivers on the road at a  
7 maximum level, LYFT’s business model is designed to accept as many new drivers as possible and  
8 to keep as many existing drivers working for LYFT as possible. Unfortunately, LYFT prioritizes  
9 profits over passenger safety. That is why LYFT corporate management has made deliberate  
10 decisions to adopt inadequate initial screening procedures, inadequate safety monitoring, and has  
11 failed to warn passengers of the dangers of riding with LYFT.

12 **LYFT’S CONTROL OVER ITS DRIVERS**

13 19. LYFT exercises significant control over its drivers. LYFT executives set all of the  
14 fare rates. Drivers have no input on the fares charged and no ability to negotiate fares with  
15 customers. Fees are standardized based on mileage and/or ride time, similar to taxis.

16 20. LYFT collects a percentage fee for every ride. LYFT does not charge drivers a fee  
17 to become a LYFT driver and LYFT does not charge drivers to use the LYFT App.

18 21. LYFT drivers are prohibited from answering passenger inquiries about booking rides  
19 outside of the LYFT App.

20 22. LYFT has the power to terminate drivers with or without cause.

21 23. LYFT drivers are expected to accept all ride requests while they are logged into the  
22 App. Drivers who reject or cancel too many ride requests risk facing discipline, including suspension  
23 or termination.

24 24. LYFT provides its drivers with and requires them to use and display LYFT branding  
25 materials in order to make their drivers easily identifiable as LYFT drivers.

26 25. LYFT also allows for passengers to provide comments to LYFT regarding their  
27 experience with LYFT DRIVER. These comments are not shared with other passengers. Passengers  
28 are not provided with any information regarding their driver other than a photograph, and other basic

1 information about the car. Passengers are not informed about prior complaints concerning particular  
2 drivers.

3 26. Within the app, LYFT does not tell passengers whether their comments regarding  
4 drivers are shared with drivers, resulting in a ride share culture where passengers are fearful that  
5 giving honest negative feedback could negatively impact their passenger star rating – or result in  
6 retaliation from the driver.

7 **NO MONITORING OF RIDES**

8 27. Given LYFT’s knowledge of the sexual assaults and rapes of its passengers by LYFT  
9 drivers, the company should have implemented a monitoring system in order to protect its  
10 passengers. As a technology company with access to a state-of-the-art in-app tracking system, as  
11 well as a camera within the required mobile device, LYFT could take the following steps towards  
12 the elimination of the sexual assaults by LYFT drivers:

- 13 • Adopt a zero-tolerance policy for improper conduct and inform all drivers of the policy;
- 14 • Maintain a surveillance camera and rules requiring its continuing operation during all rides  
15 and have footage saved and accessible for download for up to 72 hours after each ride;
- 16 • Inform drivers that if they turn off the surveillance system during a LYFT ride, they will  
17 never drive for LYFT again;
- 18 • Inform their drivers that they may not leave the car and accompany a passenger to their  
19 home or to any other location outside the vehicle, other than to provide temporary and  
20 time-limited assistance to a passenger; and
- 21 • Modify the functionality of the app so that LYFT can determine immediately if a driver  
22 deviates from these protocols.
- 23 • Monitor rides and implement a system whereby passengers are required to confirm their  
24 intention to terminate a ride before reaching their destination
- 25 • Monitor rides and implement a system whereby passengers are required to confirm their  
26 intention to change their destination or their intention to deviate significantly from the  
27 assigned route.

28 28. The ongoing sexual attacks by LYFT drivers are and have long been known to LYFT.

1 Prior to Plaintiff's assault, LYFT has known that a consequence of its business model has been  
2 exposing women, who are using the business for a safe ride home, to drivers that may take advantage  
3 of their vulnerable position. Despite being a company that holds itself out to the public as being  
4 engaged in the safe transportation of its passengers from place to place for compensation, LYFT has  
5 failed to take any reasonable precautions to attempt to prevent harm to its passengers.

6 29. At the time of the actions alleged in this complaint LYFT was aware of the  
7 established occurrence of sexual assault of its female passengers by its drivers but failed to take any  
8 reasonable action to protect its passengers from these assaults and violations.

9 **MISREPRESENTATIONS AS TO SAFETY**

10 30. In addition to inadequate background check procedures, LYFT affirmatively induces  
11 passengers, particularly young, unaccompanied, intoxicated, and/or vulnerable women, to use its  
12 services with the expectation of safety, while LYFT simultaneously knows that sexual abuse of its  
13 passengers has been prevalent.

14 31. In February 2015, LYFT's website posted a blog post announcing it had partnered  
15 with It's On Us, an anti-sexual assault initiative, and offered free ride credits for new Lyft passengers  
16 during the Spring Break season, "making it easier to get a safe ride home even if you're in a new  
17 city." In November 2016, LYFT's website posted a blog post entitled "Get Home Safely with Lyft,"  
18 again touting its partnership with It's On Us, and offering college students free LYFT rides so that  
19 they "don't need to worry about finding a safe ride after going out." The insinuation of these articles  
20 is that LYFT prevents, and does not create, the risk of sexual assault. Nowhere on LYFT's website  
21 does LYFT discuss the occurrence or risk of sexual assault by LYFT's drivers. As a result, many  
22 women, like Plaintiff, enter LYFT cars unaccompanied with the expectation that they will not be  
23 harassed, propositioned, kidnapped, attacked, stalked, raped, or worse, by LYFT's drivers.

24 32. Further, LYFT does not report statistics about sexual harassment or sexual assault by  
25 its drivers. LYFT does not disclose its policies or procedures on dealing with sexual assault by its  
26 drivers. LYFT does not properly train its customer service representatives on how to deal with  
27 serious allegations of driver misconduct. As a result, passengers who report sexual abuse by a driver  
28 have been later matched with the same driver, and dangerous drivers continue to drive with LYFT



1 and assault passengers while LYFT profits from their actions. At the time of Plaintiff's attack,  
2 LYFT's guidelines for their drivers made no mention of sexual harassment or assault guidelines.

3 33. In short, LYFT fails to follow reasonable safety procedures and intentionally induces  
4 passengers to use LYFT's services while in a vulnerable state. As a result, Plaintiff and women like  
5 her are attacked, sexually harassed, assaulted, and raped by LYFT's drivers.

### 6 **LYFT'S BACKGROUND CHECKS**

7 34. LYFT relies on a quick, name-based background check process to screen its applicant  
8 drivers and has continuously refused to adopt an industry-standard, fingerprint-based background  
9 check qualification process.

10 35. LYFT's background check process requires drivers to submit personal identifiers  
11 (driver's license and social security number) through an online webpage. LYFT, in turn, provides  
12 this information to third party vendors to perform a basic, name-based background check.

13 36. Neither LYFT nor the third-party vendors it uses for background checks verifies that  
14 the information provided by applicants is accurate or complete. The turnaround time for a LYFT  
15 background check is typically between 3-5 days.

16 37. The difference between name-based background checks and fingerprint-based  
17 background checks is significant. While a name-based background check searches the applicant's  
18 reported name against various databases and compares records that have the same name, a  
19 fingerprint-based background check (or biometric check) uses the fingerprints of the individual to  
20 match against a law enforcement database, comparing records that have the same print, even if the  
21 names are different.

22 38. For example, most prospective taxi drivers are required by the taxicab companies to  
23 undergo criminal background checks that require the driver to submit fingerprints through a  
24 technology called "Live Scan." The fingerprint images are used to automatically search against all  
25 other fingerprint images in government criminal record databases, including databases maintained  
26 by state law enforcement and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The FBI's database includes  
27 criminal record information from all 50 states, including sex offender registries. If a person has a  
28 criminal history anywhere in the U.S., it will register as a match.



1 app.

2 46. The LYFT application assigned the ride to "Nathaniel" ("LYFT DRIVER"), who  
3 drove Plaintiff to the location in Honda CR-V.

4 47. Plaintiff noticed that the LYFT DRIVER took an unusually long route to the location.  
5 About 15 minutes into the ride, the LYFT DRIVER pulled the car on the side of the road and locked  
6 Plaintiff in the back seat. Plaintiff unlocked the car and exited the vehicle as the LYFT DRIVER  
7 went to the side of the road and exposed himself through masturbation. Plaintiff saw the LYFT  
8 DRIVER genitals as he was returning to the car. Plaintiff got back into the car and the driver told  
9 Plaintiff it was okay and to laugh.

10 48. During this time, Plaintiff was extremely frightened that the LYFT DRIVER would  
11 attempt a sexual assault on her.

12 49. Defendant LYFT collected a fee for the LYFT trip that resulted in the sexual assault  
13 of Plaintiff.

14 50. By failing to take reasonable steps to confront the problem of multiple rapes and  
15 sexual assaults of LYFT passengers by LYFT drivers, LYFT has acted in conscious disregard of the  
16 safety of its passengers, including Plaintiff, and has breached its duty of reasonable care and has  
17 breached the implied and express covenants arising from its contract with its passengers.

18 51. LYFT is legally responsible for the harm to Plaintiff under a number of legal theories  
19 including vicarious liability for the intentional acts of its employees, basic negligence for failing to  
20 act with reasonable care when faced with multiple and ongoing attacks by its drivers, breach of the  
21 non-delegable duty of a transportation company to provide safe passage to its passengers, punitive  
22 damages for the conscious disregard of the safety of its female passengers, intentional and negligent  
23 misrepresentations and breaches of contract, and express and implied covenants arising out of its  
24 commercial contracts with its passengers, including Plaintiff.

25 **CAUSES OF ACTION**

26 **COUNT ONE - GENERAL NEGLIGENCE**

27 52. The preceding paragraphs of this Complaint are incorporated by reference.

28 53. By providing transportation to the general public using its application and network

1 of drivers, LYFT owed a duty to act with due and reasonable care towards the public and in  
2 particular its own passengers, including Plaintiff.

3 54. LYFT has been on notice that its drivers have been sexually harassing, sexually  
4 assaulting, and raping its passengers since 2015. LYFT was aware or should have been aware that  
5 some LYFT drivers would continue to assault, sexually molest, sexually assault and/or rape their  
6 vulnerable LYFT patrons and passengers.

7 55. Since learning of the sexual misconduct perpetrated by its drivers, LYFT never  
8 adapted or improved its safety procedures in any meaningful way.

9 56. LYFT does not require video monitoring of its drivers that cannot be turned off, nor  
10 does it provide emergency notification to LYFT and the authorities when a driver drastically veers  
11 off course from the passenger's destination or abruptly cancels the ride.

12 57. LYFT is very well aware of the dangers its drivers pose yet induces vulnerable  
13 women like the Plaintiff to enter LYFT cars. In doing so, LYFT fails to warn of the dangers of  
14 sexual harassment and assault by LYFT's drivers.

15 58. LYFT does not require any sexual harassment/assault training of its drivers nor have  
16 any policies in place for immediate termination if a driver engages in sexual misconduct.

17 59. LYFT does not cooperate with the police when a driver commits an illegal sexual  
18 attack on its passengers. Despite having the express right to disclose driver information at LYFT's  
19 sole discretion, LYFT requires that extensive standards be met before the company will even  
20 consider law enforcement requests for information. Even after a report of sexual assault has been  
21 made, LYFT generally requires a subpoena before it will release information. Of hundreds of law  
22 enforcement requests for information in 2017, the company fully complied with only a fraction.  
23 LYFT's policy of noncooperation discourages police agencies from making recommendations to  
24 District Attorney's offices to file complaints against LYFT drivers, and provides LYFT's predatory  
25 drivers with tacit assurance that their illegal attacks will not be detected by law enforcement.

26 60. When hiring new drivers, LYFT does not verify driver identities with biometric  
27 background checks. LYFT does not correct for false negatives created by its name-based screening  
28 procedures. LYFT does not provide industry-standard background checks which would provide the

1 most comprehensive means of screening applicant drivers. LYFT does not invest in continuous  
2 monitoring of its drivers and is not immediately alerted when one of its drivers is implicated in  
3 criminal acts.

4 61. LYFT does not have a consistent, reliable system for addressing passenger reports of  
5 sexual harassment or assault by its drivers and continues to let dangerous predators drive for and  
6 earn money for LYFT.

7 62. For the above reasons and others, LYFT breached its duty of reasonable care towards  
8 Plaintiff.

9 63. LYFT's breach was the legal cause of Plaintiff's harassment and assault, which  
10 humiliated, degraded, violated, and robbed Plaintiff of her dignity and personal safety. The depraved  
11 attack on Plaintiff caused Plaintiff to suffer both psychological and physical harm from which she  
12 may never fully recover.

13 64. As a direct and legal cause of LYFT's general negligence, Plaintiff has suffered  
14 damages, both economic and general, non-economic damages according to proof.

15 **COUNT TWO - NEGLIGENT HIRING, SUPERVISION, AND RETENTION**

16 65. The preceding paragraphs of this Complaint are incorporated by reference.

17 66. Defendant LYFT and DOES 1 through 50, inclusive hired LYFT DRIVER.

18 67. LYFT did not interview, check the references of, provide training to, or advise LYFT  
19 DRIVER of any anti-sexual assault policies when hiring him. LYFT had no reasonable basis for  
20 believing that LYFT DRIVER was fit to drive vulnerable passengers around and failed to use  
21 reasonable care in determining whether he was fit for the task. LYFT should have known of LYFT  
22 DRIVER's unfitness but failed to use reasonable care to discover his unfitness and incompetence.

23 68. Despite failing to reasonably endeavor to investigate LYFT DRIVER's  
24 incompetence for transporting vulnerable passengers in a moving vehicle, LYFT employed LYFT  
25 DRIVER.

26 69. LYFT knew or should have known that assigning the task of transporting vulnerable  
27 passengers late at night to an inadequately screened driver created an unreasonable risk of harm to  
28 LYFT's passengers, including Plaintiff, particularly when LYFT had been on notice of the string of

1 sexual harassments and assaults committed by LYFT's drivers.

2 70. LYFT failed to employ measures to adequately supervise its drivers.

3 71. LYFT failed to adequately record, investigate and respond to passenger reports of  
4 unsafe conduct such as sexual harassment and sexual assault by LYFT drivers.

5 72. LYFT was negligent in failing to terminate drivers it knew or reasonably should have  
6 known were a threat to passengers, particularly vulnerable female passengers traveling alone.

7 73. LYFT DRIVER was and/or became unfit to perform the work for which he was  
8 HIRED as he improperly and illegally took advantage of LYFT's passenger Plaintiff when she  
9 attempted to use the service for a safe ride home, thereby causing her psychological and physical  
10 harm.

11 74. Because of LYFT DRIVER's unfitness to perform the task of transporting Plaintiff,  
12 Plaintiff was sexually assaulted and harassed, which humiliated, degraded, violated, and robbed  
13 Plaintiff of her dignity and personal safety.

14 75. LYFT's and DOES 1 through 50's, inclusive, negligence in hiring, retaining, and or  
15 supervising caused Plaintiff's sexual harassment and assault, which humiliated, degraded, violated,  
16 and robbed Plaintiff of her dignity and personal safety. The depraved attack on Plaintiff caused  
17 Plaintiff to suffer both psychological and physical harm from which she may never fully recover.

18 76. As a direct and legal result of LYFT's general negligence, Plaintiff has suffered  
19 damages, both economic and general, non-economic damages according to proof.

20 **COUNT THREE - COMMON CARRIER NEGLIGENCE**

21 77. The preceding paragraphs of this Complaint are incorporated by reference.

22 78. At the time that Plaintiff was harassed and assaulted, LYFT was a common carrier  
23 as it provided transportation to the general public.

24 79. LYFT provides transportation through a digital application made available to the  
25 general public for the purpose of transporting its users, the passengers, from place to place for profit.  
26 LYFT has widely offered its services to the general public and charges standard fees for its services  
27 through its application. LYFT does not allow discrimination against passengers on the basis of race,  
28 color, national origin, religion, gender, gender identity, physical or mental disability, medical

1 condition, marital status, age, or sexual orientation. Any member of the public can use LYFT's  
2 services for transportation.

3 80. As a common carrier, LYFT must carry its passengers, including Plaintiff, safely.

4 81. LYFT has a duty to employ the utmost degree of care and diligence that would be  
5 expected of a very cautious company. LYFT has a duty to do all that human care, vigilance, and  
6 foresight reasonably can do under the circumstances to avoid harm to passengers, including Plaintiff.

7 82. LYFT must use reasonable skill to provide everything necessary for safe  
8 transportation, in view of the transportation used and the practical operation of the business.

9 83. Despite complaints to LYFT of sexual assaults committed by LYFT drivers and  
10 lawsuits against LYFT for sexual assault, LYFT has failed to implement safety precautions that  
11 would address the sexual harassment and assault problem.

12 84. LYFT does not provide a consistent and reliable way for passengers to report sexual  
13 abuse and rape.

14 85. LYFT does not warn passengers of the dangers of riding with LYFT and fails to warn  
15 passengers of past complaints regarding LYFT drivers.

16 86. LYFT does not have an effective program in place to deal with the sexual predator  
17 crisis posed by some of its drivers.

18 87. LYFT knows that its female passengers are in a uniquely vulnerable situation  
19 enclosed in a moving vehicle and that a subset of its drivers are sexual predators.

20 88. LYFT has not exercised reasonable care to protect its passengers from harassment,  
21 assault, and rape by LYFT's drivers.

22 89. LYFT has not exercised the utmost degree of care in order to protect its passengers  
23 from the danger posed by sexual predators who drive for LYFT. If LYFT had used the highest  
24 degree of care, LYFT could have prevented or dramatically reduced the likelihood of the sexual  
25 harassment and assault of its passengers, including Plaintiff.

26 90. LYFT failed to safely transport Plaintiff.

27 91. LYFT failed to use the utmost care and vigilance to protect Plaintiff from its own  
28 driver who sexually harassed and assaulted Plaintiff while she was being transported by LYFT.





1 city.” In November 2016, LYFT’s website posted a blog post entitled “Get Home Safely with Lyft,”  
2 again touting its partnership with It’s On Us and offering college students free LYFT rides so that  
3 they “don’t need to worry about finding a safe ride after going out.” The insinuation of these articles  
4 is that LYFT prevents, and does not create, the risk of sexual assault. Nowhere on LYFT’s website  
5 does LYFT discuss the occurrence or risk of sexual assault by LYFT’s drivers.

6 100. LYFT itself represented to its passengers that riding with LYFT is safe, implying it’s  
7 free of risk from sexual harassment and assault.

8 101. Defendant LYFT had reason to know that passengers would be unaware of the risk  
9 of sexual harassment and assault by LYFT drivers.

10 102. A warning to its passengers that they were at risk of sexual harassment and assault  
11 by LYFT drivers would have reduced the risk of harm to passengers, including Plaintiff, who could  
12 have arranged for alternative transportation or taken additional safety precautions and avoided the  
13 assault she suffered at the hands of her Lyft driver.

14 103. As a legal and direct result of the aforementioned conduct and omission of  
15 Defendants LYFT and DOES 1 through 50, inclusive, Plaintiff was sexually harassed and assaulted,  
16 which humiliated, degraded, violated, and robbed Plaintiff of her dignity and personal safety. The  
17 depraved attack on Plaintiff caused Plaintiff to suffer serious psychological and physical harm from  
18 which she may never fully recover.

19 104. As a direct and legal result of Defendant LYFT’s failure to warn, Plaintiff has  
20 suffered damages, both economic and general, non-economic damages according to proof.

21 **COUNT FIVE - VICARIOUS LIABILITY/LIABILITY FOR THE TORTS OF LYFT’S**  
22 **DRIVERS**

23 105. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the preceding paragraphs.

24 106. LYFT is vicariously liable for the torts of its drivers through the theories of  
25 *respondeat superior*, nondelegable duties, agency, and ostensible agency. LYFT’s liability for the  
26 acts of its drivers is not contingent upon the classification of its drivers as employees.

27 107. Under the doctrine of *respondeat superior*, LYFT is responsible for the torts of its  
28 employees committed within the scope of employment. The modern rationale for the theory is that

1 an employer who profits from an enterprise which, through the torts of his employees, causes harm  
2 to others should bear the costs of the injury instead of the innocent injured Plaintiff.

3 108. LYFT profits from transporting vulnerable passengers. LYFT encourages such  
4 passengers to use its services. At the same time, LYFT does not take reasonable steps to protect its  
5 passengers or warn them of the dangers of riding with LYFT. LYFT, and not the victims of LYFT's  
6 negligence, should bear the costs of injuries that result from torts such as sexual assault, kidnapping,  
7 and rape.

8 109. LYFT drivers are employees. LYFT reserves the right to control the activities of  
9 LYFT drivers. LYFT controls the prices charged to customers, controls contact with the customer  
10 base, controls the ability of a driver to see where he will be driving before he accepts a ride, and  
11 reserves the right to terminate drivers with or without cause.

12 110. LYFT DRIVER's sexual harassment and assault of Plaintiff occurred within the  
13 scope of LYFT DRIVER's employment and/or authority. The harassment and assault of  
14 unaccompanied women who have been placed in an improperly screened LYFT driver's car with  
15 little to no supervision is incidental to and a foreseeable result of the act of transporting passengers.

16 111. LYFT may maintain that its drivers are contractors and not employees.  
17 Nevertheless, whether LYFT DRIVERS are characterized as contractors, employees or agents,  
18 LYFT has a non-delegable duty to transport its passengers safely.

19 112. The doctrine of nondelegable duty recognizes when one party owes a duty to another  
20 which, for public policy reasons, cannot be delegated. It operates to ensure that when a harm occurs  
21 the injured party will be compensated by the party whose activity caused the harm and who may  
22 therefore properly be held liable for the acts of his agent, whether the agent was an employee or an  
23 independent contractor. The doctrine recognizes that an entity may not delegate its duties to a  
24 contractor in order to evade its own responsibilities. This is especially so when allowing delegation  
25 would incentivize the employers to hire incompetent contractors in order to further the employer's  
26 pecuniary interests.<sup>1</sup>

27 \_\_\_\_\_  
28 <sup>1</sup> See, for example, *Barry v. Raskov* (Ct. App. 1991) 232 Cal. App. 3d 447, 454, where the court  
recognized that allowing a broker to delegate the liability for the fraudulent torts of its contractor

1 113. In advertising to passengers that LYFT provides them a safe ride to their destinations  
2 and by profiting off of women who use LYFT for that very purpose and are harassed or attacked,  
3 LYFT has a duty to its passengers that cannot be delegated. To allow LYFT to delegate the liability  
4 for harassment and assaults by its drivers to anyone else would encourage LYFT to continue to  
5 utilize the cheapest, fastest, and most haphazard safety procedures. LYFT would be disincentivized  
6 from hiring only competent drivers, since the more drivers LYFT has, the more money LYFT  
7 makes.

8 114. Further, LYFT drivers act as agents of and operate as extensions of LYFT. LYFT  
9 drivers represent LYFT's business and further LYFT's pecuniary interests.

10 115. LYFT drivers display the LYFT logo when interacting with passengers, and in many  
11 cases LYFT drivers are the only people with whom LYFT's passengers have direct contact. LYFT  
12 drivers provide the service that LYFT claims to provide transportation.

13 116. By allowing LYFT drivers to represent LYFT's business, LYFT creates the  
14 impression that its drivers, including LYFT DRIVER, were LYFT's employees and/or agents.

15 117. Plaintiff reasonably believed that LYFT DRIVER was an employee or agent of  
16 LYFT, and, relying on this belief, hired LYFT DRIVER and suffered harm as a result of her contact  
17 with LYFT DRIVER.

18 118. For these reasons and others, LYFT is vicariously liable for the tortious acts of its  
19 drivers, regardless of whether LYFT's drivers are employees, agents, apparent agents, or  
20 contractors of LYFT.

21 **COUNT SIX - VICARIOUS LIABILITY FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT**

22 119. The preceding paragraphs of this Complaint are re-alleged and incorporated by  
23 reference.

24 120. At the time that Plaintiff was sexually assaulted, LYFT DRIVER intended to cause  
25 harmful and offensive contact with Plaintiff, and placed Plaintiff in reasonable apprehension of  
26 imminent harmful and offensive contact. He intentionally and recklessly did acts which placed  
27 Plaintiff in apprehension of imminent harm.

28 121. As a result, Plaintiff was assaulted, which humiliated, degraded, violated, and robbed

1 Plaintiff of her dignity and personal safety. The depraved attack on Plaintiff caused Plaintiff to suffer  
2 both psychological and physical harm from which she may never fully recover.

3 122. LYFT DRIVER committed these tortious and wrongful acts while acting in the  
4 course and scope of his employment with LYFT as an employee/agent of LYFT. Therefore, LYFT  
5 is liable for LYFT DRIVER's assault of Plaintiff and is responsible for damages caused by said  
6 conduct under the principles of vicarious liability, including the doctrine of *respondeat superior*.  
7 Even if LYFT DRIVER had not been an employee, LYFT's duty to provide transportation free of  
8 assault is nondelegable and LYFT is liable for LYFT DRIVER's actions, because to allow LYFT to  
9 delegate its duty of providing the safe transportation it promises would incentivize LYFT to create  
10 a greater risk of harm to the public.

11 123. Under the theories of *respondeat superior*, nondelegable duty, agency, and ostensible  
12 agency, LYFT is liable for the tortious acts of LYFT DRIVER.

13 124. As a legal result of LYFT DRIVER's sexual assault, Plaintiff has suffered economic  
14 and general, non-economic damages according to proof.

15 **COUNT SEVEN - VICARIOUS LIABILITY FOR SEXUAL BATTERY**

16 125. The preceding paragraphs of this Complaint are re-alleged and incorporated by  
17 reference.

18 126. LYFT DRIVER made harmful and offensive contact with the Plaintiff. Plaintiff did  
19 not consent to the contact. Plaintiff was harmed and offended by LYFT DRIVER's contact with her.  
20 LYFT DRIVER intentionally and recklessly did acts which resulted in harmful contact with  
21 Plaintiff's person.

22 127. As a result of LYFT DRIVER's sexual battery, which occurred while in the course  
23 and scope of LYFT DRIVER's employment, Plaintiff was sexually assaulted, which humiliated,  
24 degraded, violated, and robbed Plaintiff of her dignity and personal safety. The depraved attack on  
25 Plaintiff caused Plaintiff to suffer both psychological and physical harm from which she may never  
26 fully recover.

27 128. As a legal result of LYFT DRIVER's sexual battery, Plaintiff has suffered damages,  
28 both economic and general, non-economic damages according to proof.

1           129. LYFT is vicariously liable for the torts of its driver under the theory of *respondeat*  
2 *superior*, the nondelegable duty doctrine, agency, and ostensible agency.

3                           **COUNT EIGHT - INTENTIONAL MISREPRESENTATION**

4           130. The preceding paragraphs of this Complaint are re-alleged and incorporated by  
5 reference.

6           131. At the time that Plaintiff was sexually assaulted, she had downloaded the LYFT  
7 application and had an account with LYFT.

8           132. LYFT represented to Plaintiff and the general public that safety was LYFT's top  
9 priority and it was LYFT's goal to make every ride safe, comfortable, and reliable. At the same time,  
10 LYFT already knew that a number of its drivers had preyed on vulnerable female passengers by  
11 sexually molesting, harassing, assaulting and/or raping them.

12           133. LYFT made intentional misrepresentations of fact to Plaintiff known by Defendant  
13 to be false including the false statement that Defendant would provide Plaintiff with a safe ride to  
14 her destination.

15           134. LYFT made these intentional misrepresentations of material fact in order to induce  
16 young women, including Plaintiff, into using LYFT's services.

17           135. LYFT made these representations to Plaintiff and the general public despite knowing  
18 that it had chosen not to take the measures necessary to provide a safe ride home, and that, as a  
19 result, continued sexual harassment and assault of its passengers by its drivers was a foreseeable  
20 occurrence. LYFT made these representations in order to induce women like the Plaintiff into using  
21 LYFT's services and to derive profit from women like Plaintiff.

22           136. In getting into the LYFT Plaintiff ordered, Plaintiff reasonably relied on LYFT's  
23 representations that it would get her safely to her destination.

24           137. In trusting and relying on LYFT's representations, Plaintiff was placed in a uniquely  
25 vulnerable position that was taken advantage of by LYFT's employee LYFT DRIVER who sexually  
26 assaulted Plaintiff against her will.

27           138. As a legal result of LYFT's intentional misrepresentation, Plaintiff was sexually  
28 assaulted and harassed which humiliated, degraded, violated, and robbed Plaintiff of her dignity and

1 personal safety. The depraved attack on Plaintiff caused Plaintiff to suffer both psychological and  
2 physical harm from which she may never fully recover.

3 139. As a legal result of LYFT's intentional misrepresentation, Plaintiff has suffered  
4 damages, both economic and general, non-economic damages according to proof.

5 **COUNT NINE - NEGLIGENT MISREPRESENTATION**

6 140. The preceding paragraphs of this Complaint are re-alleged and incorporated by  
7 reference.

8 141. LYFT represented to Plaintiff and the general public that safety is LYFT's top  
9 priority and it is LYFT's goal to make every ride safe, comfortable, and reliable. At the time of the  
10 assault alleged herein, LYFT knew that a number of its drivers had previously preyed on vulnerable  
11 female passengers by sexually harassing, molesting, assaulting and/or raping them.

12 142. LYFT continued to represent that its services were safe in order to further LYFT's  
13 own pecuniary interests.

14 143. In representing to vulnerable passengers that its services were safe, LYFT had a duty  
15 to provide correct and accurate information about the actual safety of its services.

16 144. LYFT knew or should have known that it could not provide the safe ride that it  
17 represented it could.

18 145. Knowing of the incidence of sexual harassment and assault of its passengers by its  
19 drivers and knowing that LYFT had not implemented adequate precautions, LYFT had no  
20 reasonable grounds for believing that it could provide Plaintiff and other similarly vulnerable female  
21 passengers a safe ride home as represented.

22 146. In getting into the LYFT Plaintiff ordered, Plaintiff reasonably relied on LYFT's  
23 representations that it would get her safely to her destination.

24 147. In trusting and relying on LYFT's representations, Plaintiff was placed in a uniquely  
25 vulnerable position that was taken advantage of by LYFT's employee, LYFT DRIVER, who  
26 sexually assaulted Plaintiff against her will.

27 148. As a legal result of Defendant LYFT's aforementioned conduct, Plaintiff was  
28 sexually harassed and assaulted which humiliated, degraded, violated, and robbed Plaintiff of her

1 dignity and personal safety. The depraved attack on Plaintiff caused her to suffer both psychological  
2 and physical harm from which she may never fully recover.

3 149. As a legal result of LYFT's Negligent Misrepresentation, Plaintiff has suffered  
4 damages, both economic and general, non-economic damages according to proof.

5 **COUNT TEN - NEGLIGENT INFLICTION OF EMOTIONAL DISTRESS**

6 150. Plaintiff hereby incorporates by reference the preceding causes of action and factual  
7 allegations.

8 151. For several years prior to the assault of Plaintiff by LYFT DRIVER, LYFT was fully  
9 aware that other female passengers had been sexually harassed, assaulted, and raped by LYFT  
10 drivers. Since 2015, LYFT has received frequent passenger complaints about driver misbehavior,  
11 has been notified of police investigations of the criminal conduct of drivers acting within their  
12 capacity as LYFT drivers, and has been the subject of numerous civil suits alleging the sexual  
13 harassment and sexual assault of LYFT's passengers by LYFT's drivers.

14 152. LYFT made a conscious decision not to implement procedures that would effectively  
15 screen its drivers and monitor its drivers in order to identify and terminate drivers who were sexual  
16 predators.

17 153. Safety precautions such as enhanced background checks, biometric fingerprinting,  
18 job interviews, electronic monitoring systems, warnings to passengers of the dangers of being  
19 attacked by LYFT drivers, and cooperation with law enforcement when a driver attacks a passenger  
20 would have cost LYFT money and reputational damage. Because of this, LYFT decided not to  
21 implement such precautions and instead continues to place its passengers at greater risk of sexual  
22 harassment, assault and rape by LYFT's own drivers.

23 154. Additional safety precautions that LYFT chose not to make include but are not  
24 limited to: ongoing monitoring of LYFT through available technology including cameras and GPS;  
25 a zero tolerance policy for drivers who deviate from expected behavior by leaving the vehicle with  
26 passengers, or by deviating substantially from the assigned route; a zero-tolerance program for  
27 sexual assault and guidelines mandating immediate termination; creating and instituting a system  
28 encouraging customer reporting; and adequate monitoring of customer complaints by well-trained

1 and effective customer service representatives. LYFT chose not to implement such precautions.

2 155. In failing to take these and other safety precautions designed to protect female  
3 passengers from sexual predators driving for LYFT, LYFT breached its duty of reasonable care,  
4 negligently inflicting emotional harm, and acted recklessly and in conscious disregard of the safety  
5 of its female passengers.

6 156. As a direct and legal result of LYFT's negligent infliction of emotional distress,  
7 Plaintiff has suffered damages, both economic and general, non-economic damages according to  
8 proof.

9 **COUNT ELEVEN - BREACH OF CONTRACT**

10 157. Plaintiff hereby incorporates by reference all the preceding allegations.

11 158. Plaintiff entered into a contract with LYFT. The essence of this commercial  
12 transaction was the payment of a fee to LYFT in exchange for safe and reasonable transportation to  
13 her destination.

14 159. As a result of the conduct, acts and omissions set forth above, LYFT breached its  
15 contract with Plaintiff, including breaching implied covenants which would be inherent in such a  
16 contract.

17 160. As a legal result of LYFT's Breach of Contract, Plaintiff has suffered damages, both  
18 economic and general, non-economic damages according to proof.

19 **COUNT TWELVE - STRICT PRODUCT LIABILITY BASED ON DESIGN DEFECT OF**  
20 **THE LYFT APP AND FAILURE OF THE LYFT APP TO MEET MINIMUM**  
21 **REASONABLE CONSUMER SAFETY EXPECTATIONS**

22 161. The preceding paragraphs of this Complaint are re-alleged and incorporated by  
23 reference.

24 162. LYFT manufactured and distributed the LYFT App.

25 163. The LYFT App did not perform as an ordinary consumer would have expected it to  
26 perform when used or misused in an intended or reasonably foreseeable way, because the LYFT  
27 App falsely led Plaintiff to form a reasonable minimum safety expectation that was not met.

28 164. Plaintiff was harmed.

165. LYFT App's failure to communicate with Plaintiff a true expectation of the lack of



1 safety in use of the Lyft App was a substantial favor in causing harm to the Plaintiff.

2 **COUNT THIRTEEN - STRICT PRODUCT LIABILITY BASED ON FAILURE TO**  
3 **WARN OF THE RISKS POSED BY THE LYFT RIDESHARING APP**

4 166. The preceding paragraphs of this Complaint are re-alleged and incorporated by  
5 reference.

6 167. LYFT manufactured and distributed the LYFT App.

7 168. The LYFT App presented potential risks of introducing each driver to a plaintiff  
8 victim who, because of the nature of the nature of the ridesharing arrangement created and facilitated  
9 by the LYFT App, could neither escape from the driver's vehicle nor control the place where the  
10 driver would take the plaintiff victim; these are risks that were known or knowable at the time of  
11 manufacture and distribution of the LYFT App.

12 169. The potential risks presented a substantial danger when the LYFT App was used or  
13 misused in an intended or reasonably foreseeable way.

14 170. Ordinary consumers such as the Plaintiff would not have recognized the potential  
15 risks.

16 171. Defendant LYFT failed to adequately warn of the potential risks.

17 172. Plaintiff was sexually assaulted and harmed.

18 173. The lack of sufficient warnings was a substantial factor in causing the harm suffered  
19 by Plaintiff.

20 **PUNITIVE DAMAGES**

21 174. The preceding paragraphs of this Complaint are re-alleged and incorporated by  
22 reference.

23 175. As stated above, LYFT knew that it faced an ongoing problem of sexual predators  
24 driving for LYFT and assaulting its passengers. As early as 2015 LYFT knew that its drivers were  
25 sexually harassing and assaulting female passengers. Since 2015, LYFT has received frequent  
26 passenger complaints about driver sexual misconduct, including sexual assault and rape, it has been  
27 notified of police investigations of the criminal sexual conduct of drivers acting within their capacity  
28 as LYFT drivers, and it has been the subject of numerous civil suits alleging the sexual harassment

1 and sexual assault of LYFT’s passengers by LYFT’s drivers.

2 176. Nevertheless, even though LYFT was fully aware of its sexual predator problem it  
3 failed to take safety precautions to protect its passengers.

4 177. Safety precautions such as enhanced background checks, biometric fingerprinting,  
5 job interviews, electronic monitoring systems, ongoing monitoring of LYFT drivers and rides  
6 through available technology including cameras and GPS; a zero tolerance policy for drivers who  
7 deviate from expected behavior by leaving the vehicle with passengers, or by deviating substantially  
8 from the assigned route, a warning system for when a driver significantly deviates from the intended  
9 route or prematurely terminates a ride, a system for checking in with and verifying a passenger’s  
10 safety when a driver prematurely terminates a ride or significantly deviates from the intended route  
11 ; a zero-tolerance program for sexual assault and guidelines mandating immediate termination; a  
12 zero-tolerance policy for fraternizing with passengers, creating and instituting a system encouraging  
13 customer reporting; and adequate monitoring of customer complaints by well-trained and effective  
14 customer service representatives, warnings to passengers of the dangers of being attacked by LYFT  
15 drivers, and cooperation with law enforcement when a driver attacks a passenger would have cost  
16 LYFT money and reputational damage. Because of this, LYFT decided not to implement such  
17 precautions and instead has continued to place its passengers at greater risk of kidnapping, sexual  
18 assault, rape, and exploitation by LYFT’s own drivers.

19 178. As such LYFT acted, and continues to act, recklessly and in knowing, conscious  
20 disregard of the safety of its passengers and the public safety.

21 179. As a legal result of the aforementioned negligent, reckless and grossly negligent  
22 conduct of Defendants LYFT and DOES 1 through 50, inclusive, Plaintiff was sexually assaulted,  
23 which humiliated, degraded, violated, and robbed Plaintiff of her dignity and personal safety.

24 180. As a result of her sexual assault, Plaintiff suffered serious emotional distress.

25 181. As a result of LYFT’s misconduct as stated above, Plaintiff prays for exemplary  
26 damages to punish LYFT for its misconduct and to deter future misconduct.

27 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

28 WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays judgment against all Defendants as follows:

1           1.       For general damages (also known as non-economic damages), including but not  
2 limited to, past and future pain and suffering, in an amount in excess of the jurisdictional minimum,  
3 according to proof;

4           2.       For special damages (also known as economic damages), including but not limited  
5 to past and future hospital, medical, professional, and incidental expenses as well as past and future  
6 loss of earnings, loss of opportunity, and loss of earning capacity, in excess of the jurisdictional  
7 minimum, according to proof;

8           3.       For exemplary and punitive damages according to proof;

9           4.       For prejudgment interest, according to proof;

10          5.       For costs of suit incurred herein, according to proof;

11          6.       For such other and further relief as the Court may deem just and proper.

12 Dated: April 17, 2024

Respectfully Submitted,

13  
14                   **PEIFFER WOLF CARR KANE**  
                         **CONWAY & WISE, LLP**

15                   */s/ Rachel B. Abrams*

16                   Rachel B. Abrams

17                   Attorneys for Plaintiff

18                   **DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL**

19           Plaintiff hereby demands a trial by jury as to all causes of action.

20 Dated: April 17, 2024

Respectfully Submitted,

21  
22                   **PEIFFER WOLF CARR KANE**  
                         **CONWAY & WISE, LLP**

23                   */s/ Rachel B. Abrams*

24                   Rachel B. Abrams

25                   Attorneys for Plaintiff