

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Fighters File Class Action Antitrust Lawsuit Against the Ultimate Fighting Championship (“UFC”) and Endeavor Group Holdings, Inc.**

(Philadelphia, PA – June 24, 2021) – Kajan Johnson and C.B. Dollaway, two long-time veterans of the Ultimate Fighting Championship (“UFC”), filed a proposed class action antitrust lawsuit against Zuffa, LLC (d/b/a Ultimate Fighting Championship and UFC) and its parent company Endeavor Group Holdings, Inc.

The lawsuit is similar to the class action brought by Cung Le, Nathan Quarry, Jon Fitch, Brandon Vera, Luis Javier Vazquez, and Kyle Kingsbury against the UFC currently pending in federal district court in Nevada. *See Cung Le, et al. v. Zuffa, LLC d/b/a Ultimate Fighting Championship and UFC*, No. 2:15-cv-01045-RFB-BNW (D. Nev.) (“*Le*”). Like the *Le* action, the lawsuit filed by Johnson and Dollaway alleges that Zuffa violated antitrust laws by paying UFC fighters far less than they were entitled to receive and eliminating or hurting other MMA promoters. The class period ultimately proposed by the plaintiffs in the *Le* action closed on June 30, 2017. Plaintiffs Johnson and Dollaway bring this case on behalf of those like themselves who fought in a bout promoted by the UFC on or after July 1, 2017.

The fighters claim that Zuffa and Endeavor engaged in the following anticompetitive practices:

- (1) locking fighters into long-term, exclusive contracts which, the fighters say, prevents them from competing elsewhere;
- (2) using its market dominance to coerce fighters to re-sign contracts, allegedly making the contracts effectively perpetual and preventing fighters from reaching free agency; and
- (3) acquiring and then closing down other MMA promoters that threatened the UFC’s dominance.

The fighters contend that by locking up the vast majority of top fighters in each weight class and buying out its biggest rivals, Zuffa’s scheme prevented potential competitors from obtaining the critical mass of top fighters necessary to compete with the UFC, rendering other promotions to the “minor leagues.” In MMA, athletes obtain fame by competing against ranked opponents, ascending the rankings, and vying for titles. The fighters argue that by acquiring all potential competitors and signing virtually all top Fighters to long-term exclusive contracts, Zuffa left the top Fighters and aspiring top Fighters with nowhere else to go to compete at the top level of the sport. Due to this lack of competition, according to the fighters, Zuffa pays UFC fighters significantly lower share of revenues than they otherwise would if the fighters had more options.

“Like Carlos Newton, Cung Le, Nathan Quarry and Jon Fitch before me, I am honored to bring this lawsuit not only on behalf of myself but all those fighters in the proposed bout class who are afraid to speak out against the injustice we have endured. I feel obligated to do my part to leave

the sport better off for my students and all future mixed martial artists to come,” said Plaintiff Kajan Johnson.

“We train hard and risk our bodies to succeed in this sport. Every time we step into that Octagon, we leave a piece of ourselves behind. The UFC should have to pay us competitive compensation for our services, just like professional athletes in other sports get paid based on competitive markets,” said Plaintiff C.B. Dollaway.

In December 2020, Judge Richard F. Boulware, a U.S. District Court Judge for the District of Nevada, who is overseeing the *Le* action, indicated that the Court would be granting class certification to professional mixed martial artists who competed in bouts for the UFC. This ruling would allow the ground-breaking antitrust lawsuit to proceed as a class action. Specifically, the proposed class in the *Le* action would include:

**“All persons who competed in one or more live professional UFC-promoted MMA bouts taking place or broadcast in the United States from December 16, 2010, to June 30, 2017.”**

“By filing this action, we are bringing the proposed class period forward to also cover all fighters who competed in bouts between June 30, 2017 and the present,” said Eric L. Cramer, one of the lead counsel for the proposed class.

The case *Kajan Johnson, et al. v. Zuffa, LLC, et al.*, No. 2:21-cv-01189 (D. Nev.) was filed in federal district court in Nevada. The law firms representing the fighters are Berger Montague PC, [Cohen Milstein Sellers & Toll PLLC](#), The Joseph Saveri Law Firm, Inc., Kemp Jones LLP, and Warner Angle Hallam Jackson & Formanek PLC.

For more information about *Johnson, et al. v. Zuffa LLC, et al.*, and *Le, et al. v. Zuffa LLC*, visit [www.UFCclassaction.com](http://www.UFCclassaction.com) or contact [Richard Koffman](#) at [rkoffman@cohenmilstein.com](mailto:rkoffman@cohenmilstein.com).