



IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF MOBILE COUNTY,

LISA EDWARDS,

Plaintiff,

v.

VACEK LAW GROUP PLLC,
STERLING SHIELD LEGAL, LLC
JOHN BAKER, individually,
Fictitious Parties A, B and/or C,
the person, Firm, or corporation
responsible

Defendants.

CASE NO: CV-2026-_____

COMPLAINT

Comes now, the Plaintiff, **LISA EDWARDS**, and in accordance with the *Alabama Rules of Civil Procedure*, files the following Complaint against the Defendant, **VACEK LAW GROUP PLLC, STERLING SHIELD LEGAL, LLC, JOHN BAKER, individually, and fictitious parties A, B, and C**, alleging as follows, to-wit:

JURISDICTIONAL PREAMBLE

1. The Plaintiff, **LISA EDWARDS**, is a resident citizen of the State of Alabama, above the age of nineteen (19) years, and the victim of Negligence, Wantonness, Breach of Contract, Unjust Enrichment and legal malpractice hereinafter alleged.
2. The Defendant, **VACEK LAW GROUP PLLC**, upon information and belief, is a foreign limited liability company, operating and doing business in the State of Alabama.
3. The Defendant, **STERLING SHIELD LEGAL, LLC** upon information and belief, is a foreign corporation, operating and doing business in the State of

Alabama at the time of the subject incident of this lawsuit.

4. The Defendant, **JOHN BAKER**, is a resident citizen of Alabama and a licensed attorney in the State of Alabama doing business with **VACEK LAW GROUP PLLC and/or STERLING SHIELD LEGAL, LLC**.
5. **Fictitious Defendants A, B, and C** are individuals, general partnerships, limited partnerships, corporations or other legal entities who:
 - A. Have any involvement with the actions of the named Defendant(s) relating, but not limited to, the incident hereinafter described; or
 - B. Was in any manner involved with the actions giving rise to the damage alleged by the Plaintiff herein.
6. The location where the incident occurred is Mobile County, Alabama.
7. The amount in controversy is within this Court's jurisdictional limits.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

6. On or about December 13, 2024, the Plaintiff, LISA EDWARDS, was involved in a motor vehicle accident on Airport Boulevard in the City of Mobile, Mobile County, Alabama.
7. The Plaintiff sought treatment at South Alabama Medical & Rehab located at 3202 Old Shell Road, Mobile, Alabama 36607.
8. The Plaintiff was evaluated for her injuries and then the medical team at South Alabama Medical & Rehab suggested Ms. Edwards retain **STERLING SHIELD LEGAL, LLC and/or THE VACEK LAW GROUP PLLC and/or attorney JOHN BAKER** for representation in her motor vehicle accident case.
9. Staff at the South Alabama Medical & Rehab presented Ms. Edwards a written Legal Fee Contract.

10. The medical staff explained the Legal Fee Contract to Ms. Edwards as a contingency fee contract. Ms. Edwards executed the contract at the medical office, but never met face-to-face with an attorney.
11. Ms. Edwards continued to treat with South Alabama Medical & Rehab for several visits. She never received a bill for her treatments.
12. Ms. Edwards concluded her treatments with South Alabama Medical & Rehab but never received a bill for services rendered.
13. After her treatment concluded, Ms. Edwards was concerned about the outcome of her motor vehicle accident case. She never received case settlement funds nor provided consent to settle her case to any attorney, attorney staff, or firm. She reached out to the Vacek Law Group PLLC and/or attorney John Baker to determine what had occurred.
14. Ms. Edwards reached out several times to The Vacek Law Group and/or Attorney John Baker. The Vacek Law Group PLLC and/or John Baker failed to properly communicate the status of her case to Ms. Edwards despite her multiple calls and voicemails.
15. By May 30, 2025, neither The Vacek Law Group PLLC nor Attorney John Baker had updated Ms. Edwards about her case. On June 6, 2025, Ms. Edwards visited South Alabama Medicine & Rehab to discuss the matter with their staff.
16. On June 9, 2025, a representative from The Vacek Law Group PLLC and/or Attorney John Baker's office called to address Ms. Edward's concerns. That representative informed Ms. Edwards that she would investigate the progress of the case. Ms. Edwards did not provide consent to settle her case during this conversation.

17. Ms. Edwards never received a call back from The Vacek Law Group PLLC and/or Attorney John Baker's office. She never approved or endorsed a settlement for her case. She never executed a release or a settlement check.
18. On July 23, 2025, the Mobile County District Attorney's office filed a civil complaint (CV-2025-901925) against Defendants Vacek Law Group PLLC and Attorney John Baker alleging Deceptive Trade Practices.
19. On July 31, 2025, Ms. Edwards again called The Vacek Law Group and/or Attorney John Baker's office and left a voicemail. Neither Defendant returned her call.
20. Ms. Edwards fired The Vacek Law Group PLLC and/or Attorney John Baker.
21. Through the assistance of undersigned counsel, Ms. Edwards discovered that despite her never authorizing a settlement of her car accident case, the case had been settled by The Vacek Law Group PLLC and/or Attorney John Baker. (*see attached* settlement check).
22. The tortfeasor's insurance carrier, Bluefire Insurance had settled the case for twenty-two thousand five hundred (\$22,500) dollars and had delivered the funds via check to the Vacek Law Group PLLC at 60 Commerce Street Suite 310, Montgomery, Alabama 35104 and then the funds were deposited in their trust account on July 21, 2025. This came as a surprise to Ms. Edwards because she had neither discussed a settlement offer, nor approved a settlement amount with anyone.
23. Ms. Edwards requested a copy of the settlement check front and back (attached). Upon inspection, Ms. Edwards identified that her name had been written on the back of the check without her permission. Despite this unauthorized "settlement" no funds were ever delivered to Ms. Edwards.
24. As of the date of this filing, Sterling Shield Legal, The Vacek Law Group PLLC,

or Attorney John Baker have not paid Lisa Edwards for the settlement of her case.

FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION
(Negligence)

Plaintiff **LISA EDWARDS** alleges against Defendants, **VACEK LAW GROUP PLLC, STERLING SHIELD LEGAL, LLC, JOHN C. BAKER** and **Fictitious Parties A, B, and C**, the following:

25. The Plaintiff adopts and incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1-24 as if set out fully below.
26. The Defendants were negligent in one or more of the following ways:
 - Defendants negligently failed to properly communicate with a client regarding a pertinent legal matter.
 - Defendants negligently failed to discuss a settlement offer in a Personal Injury case.
 - Defendants negligently accepted a settlement offer without express client approval.
 - Defendants negligently endorsed a check in Plaintiff's name without her approval or consent.
 - Defendants negligently failed to provide settlement funds to a personal injury client.
 - Defendants negligently failed to satisfy their client's outstanding medical bills.
 - Defendant negligently communicated with a represented party in an attempt to resolve prior negligent acts.
27. As a proximate cause of the Defendants' negligence, Plaintiff was caused to suffer harm. Plaintiff has not been properly compensated for her personal injury case.

Plaintiff has outstanding medical bills and is due proper compensation for her pain

and suffering. Furthermore, Plaintiff has a general disdain and distrust for the legal profession.

WHEREFORE, the Plaintiff demands judgment against the Defendants for actual damages, general damages, punitive and such other damages as allowed by the State of Alabama in an amount not in excess of this Honorable Court's jurisdictional limit, plus interest and costs.

**SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION
(Wantonness)**

Plaintiff **LISA EDWARDS** alleges against Defendants, **VACEK LAW GROUP PLLC, STERLING SHIELD LEGAL, LLC, JOHN C. BAKER** and **Fictitious Parties A, B, and C**, the following:

28. The Plaintiff adopts and incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1-27 as if set out fully below.
29. The Defendants were wanton in one or more of the following ways:
 - Defendants wantonly failed to properly communicate with a client regarding a pertinent legal matter.
 - Defendants wantonly failed to discuss a settlement offer in a Personal Injury case.
 - Defendants wantonly accepted a settlement offer without express client approval.
 - Defendants wantonly endorsed a check in Plaintiff's name without her approval or consent.
 - Defendants wantonly failed to provide settlement funds to a personal injury client.
 - Defendants wantonly failed to satisfy outstanding medical bills.
 - Defendant wantonly communicated with a represented party in an attempt to resolve prior negligent acts.
30. As a proximate cause of the Defendants' wanton behavior, Plaintiff was caused to

suffer harm. Plaintiff has not been properly compensated for her personal injury case. Plaintiff has outstanding medical bills and is due proper compensation for his pain and suffering. Furthermore, Plaintiff has a general disdain and distrust for the legal profession.

WHEREFORE, the Plaintiff demands judgment against the Defendants for actual damages, general damages, punitive damages and such other damages as allowed by the State of Alabama in an amount not in excess of this Honorable Court's jurisdictional limit, plus interest and costs.

**THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION
(Unjust Enrichment and/or Breach of Contract)**

Plaintiff, **LISA EDWARDS**, alleges against Defendants, **VACEK LAW GROUP PLLC**, **STERLING SHIELD LEGAL, LLC**, **JOHN BAKER** and **Fictitious Parties A, B, and C**, the following:

31. The Plaintiff adopts and incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1-30 as if set out fully below.
32. The Plaintiff entered into a valid contract by way of contingency legal fee agreement on or about December 17, 2024.
33. The Defendants breached the agreement by accepting and depositing settlement funds without express client approval and/or endorsement.
34. The Defendants further breached the agreement by failing to compensate Plaintiff at the agreed upon contingency fee rate.
35. Plaintiff seeks damages from breach of contract/unjust enrichment, which resulted in additional damages to Plaintiff.

WHEREFORE, the Plaintiff demands judgment against the Defendants, and **Fictitious Parties A, B, and C** for actual damages, general damages, punitive damages, and such other

damages as allowed by the State of Alabama in an amount within this Honorable Court's jurisdictional limit, plus interest and costs.

FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION
(Legal Malpractice Under Alabama Legal Services Liability Act)

Plaintiff, **LISA EDWARDS**, alleges against Defendants, **VACEK LAW GROUP PLLC**, **STERLING SHIELD LEGAL, LLC**, **JOHN BAKER** and **Fictitious Parties A, B, and C**, the following:

36. The Plaintiff adopts and incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1-35 as if set out fully below.
37. The Plaintiff entered into a valid legal fee contract by way of contingency legal fee agreement with the Defendants on or about December 17, 2024.
38. The Defendants are licensed attorneys/law firms doing business in the State of Alabama. The Defendants owe a duty of reasonable care, skill, and diligence to their clients and the Defendants violated these duties by negotiating, accepting and depositing settlement funds without express client approval and/or client endorsement.
39. The Defendants further breached the agreement and violated their duty to their client by forging Plaintiff's signature to a settlement check, by failing to compensate Plaintiff at the agreed upon contingency fee rate and by depositing the funds into their own account.
40. Plaintiff seeks compensatory and punitive damages from Defendant(s) for these wanton, deliberate, and fraudulent actions of legal malpractice.

WHEREFORE, the Plaintiff demands judgment against the Defendants, and **Fictitious**

Parties A, B, and C for actual damages, general damages, punitive damages, and such other damages as allowed by the State of Alabama in an amount within this Honorable Court's jurisdictional limit, plus interest and costs.

Respectfully submitted this **30th day of August, 2026.**

ATTORNEYS FOR THE PLAINTIFF

/s/ David M. Allen

DAVID M. ALLEN (ALL109)

Attorney for Plaintiff

/s/ Joseph D. Damrich

JOSEPH D. DAMRICH (DAM005)

Attorney for Plaintiff

THE LAW OFFICES OF DAMRICH & ALLEN

David M. Allen, LLC

214 S. Lawrence Street

Mobile, Alabama 36602

(251) 444-1444

david@dma-lawfirm.com

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I do hereby certify that on August 30, 2026, a copy of the foregoing pleading was served on Defendants either through U.S. Mail, electronic mail, fax, or through the Alafile system.

/s/ David M. Allen

DAVID M. ALLEN (ALL109)

Attorney for Plaintiff

**DEFENDANT WILL BE SERVED VIA CERTIFIED MAIL BY CLERK OF THE COURT
AS FOLLOWS:**

Vacek Law Group PLLC
60 Commerce Street
Suite 310
Montgomery, Alabama 36104

Sterling Shield Legal LLC
2 N. Jackson Street Suite 605
Montgomery, Alabama 36104

John Baker, Attorney at Law
7169 Highway 72 W.
Suite A-113
Madison, Alabama 35758

John Baker (alternative address)
60 Commerce Street
Suite 310
Montgomery, Alabama 36104