

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY**

<p>██████████, an individual,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Plaintiff,</p> <p>v.</p> <p><b>TABLETOPS UNLIMITED, INC.</b>, a California Corporation,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Defendant.</p>	: : : : : : : : : : : : : : :	Case No.: 1:23-cv-00579
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**COMPLAINT**

Plaintiff, ██████████ (hereafter referred to as “Plaintiff”), by and through her attorneys, ██████████, and ██████████  
██████████, hereby submits the following Complaint and Demand for Jury Trial against Defendant **TABLETOPS UNLIMITED, INC.** (hereafter referred to as “Defendant TTU” or “Defendant”), and alleges the following upon personal knowledge and belief, and investigation of counsel:

**NATURE OF THE ACTION**

1. This is a product liability action seeking recovery for substantial personal injuries and damages suffered by Plaintiff, after Plaintiff was seriously injured by a Cooks by JCPenney 8-Quart Stovetop Pressure Cooker.
2. Defendant TTU designs, manufactures, markets, imports, distributes and sells a wide range of consumer products, including the subject “Cooks by JCPenney 8-Quart Hard Anodized Pressure Cooker,” which specifically includes the Model Number Y22 4(8)-00 (referred to hereafter as “pressure cooker(s)”) that is at issue in this case.
3. Defendant touts the “safety” of its pressure cookers, and state that they cannot be

opened while in use. Despite Defendant's claims of "safety," it designed, manufactured, marketed, imported, distributed and sold a product that suffers from serious and dangerous defects. Said defects cause significant risk of bodily harm and injury to consumers.

4. Specifically, said defects manifest themselves when, despite Defendant's statements, the lid of the pressure cooker is removable with built-up pressure, heat and steam still inside the unit. When the lid is removed under such circumstances, the pressure trapped within the unit causes the scalding hot contents to be projected from the unit and into the surrounding area, including onto the unsuspecting consumers, their families and other bystanders. The Plaintiff in this case sustained serious and substantial bodily injuries and damages including, but not limited to, burns to her abdomen and right forearm, as a result of the lid's ability to be rotated, opened, and removed while the pressure cooker retained pressure.

5. Defendant knew or should have known of these defects, but has nevertheless put profit ahead of safety by continuing to sell its pressure cookers to consumers, failing to warn said consumers of the serious risks posed by the defects, and failing to recall the dangerously defective pressure cookers regardless of the risk of significant injuries to Plaintiff and consumers like her.

6. As a direct and proximate result of Defendant's conduct, the Plaintiff in this case incurred significant and painful bodily injuries, medical expenses, physical pain, mental anguish, and diminished enjoyment of life.

**PLAINTIFF [REDACTED]**

7. Plaintiff [REDACTED] is a resident and citizen of the city of Galloway, County of Atlantic, State of New Jersey, and was born on September 16, 1981.

8. On or about February 10, 2021, Plaintiff suffered serious and substantial burn injuries as the direct and proximate result of the pressure cooker's lid being able to be rotated and

opened while the pressure cooker was still under pressure, during the normal, directed use of the pressure cooker, allowing its scalding hot contents to be forcefully ejected from the pressure cooker and onto Plaintiff. The incident occurred as a result of the failure of the pressure cooker's supposed "safety" features which purport to keep the consumer safe while using the pressure cooker. In addition, the incident occurred as the result of Defendant's failure to redesign the pressure cooker, despite the existence of economical, safer alternative designs.

### **DEFENDANT TABLETOPS UNLIMITED**

9. Defendant designs, manufactures, markets, imports, distributes and sells a variety of consumer kitchen products including pressure cookers, cookware, dinnerware, and storage products, amongst others.

10. Defendant is a California Corporation, which has a headquarters and registered service address of 23000 Avalon Boulevard, Carson, California 90745.

### **JURISDICTION & VENUE**

11. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction over this case pursuant to diversity jurisdiction prescribed by 28 U.S.C. § 1332 because the matter in controversy exceeds the sum or value of \$75,000, exclusive of interest and costs, and there is complete diversity between the parties.

12. Venue is proper in this Court pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391 because all or a substantial part of the events or omissions giving rise to this claim occurred in this district.

13. Venue is also proper in this Court pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391 because Defendant has sufficient minimum contacts with the State of New Jersey and intentionally availed itself of the markets within New Jersey through the promotion, sale, marketing, and distribution of its products.

### **FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS**

14. Defendant is engaged in the business of designing, manufacturing, warranting, marketing, importing, distributing and selling the pressure cookers at issue in this litigation.

15. Defendant boasts that it is “the housewares industry leader in designing and manufacturing trendy, value-driven”<sup>1</sup> culinary products. Defendant touts the “safety” of its pressure cookers, however, despite Defendant’s claims of “safety,” it designed, manufactured, marketed, imported, distributed and sold a product that suffers from serious and dangerous defects. Said defects cause significant risk of bodily harm and injury to its consumers.

16. Plaintiff and/or her family purchased the pressure cooker with the reasonable expectation that it was properly designed and manufactured, free from defects of any kind, and that it was safe for its intended, foreseeable use of cooking.

17. Plaintiff used her pressure cooker for its intended purpose of preparing meals for herself and/or family and did so in a manner that was reasonable and foreseeable by the Defendant.

18. However, the aforementioned pressure cooker was defectively and negligently designed and manufactured by Defendant in that it failed to properly function as to prevent the lid from being removed with normal force while the unit remained pressurized, despite the appearance that all the pressure had been released, during the ordinary, foreseeable and proper use of cooking food with the product; placing the Plaintiff, her family, and similar consumers in danger while using the pressure cookers.

19. Defendant’s pressure cookers possess defects that make them unreasonably dangerous for their intended use by consumers because the lid can be rotated and opened while the unit remains pressurized.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ttucorp.com/about/> (last accessed February 1, 2023).

20. Economic, safer alternative designs were available that could have prevented the pressure cooker's lid from opening or being removed while pressurized.

21. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' failure to warn consumers of such defects, its negligent misrepresentations, its failure to remove a product with such defects from the stream of commerce, and its negligent design of such products, Plaintiff used an unreasonably dangerous pressure cooker, which resulted in significant and painful bodily injuries upon Plaintiff's simple removal of the lid of the pressure cooker.

22. Consequently, the Plaintiff in this case seeks compensatory damages resulting from the use of Defendants' pressure cooker as described above, which has caused the Plaintiff to suffer from serious bodily injuries, medical expenses, physical pain, mental anguish, diminished enjoyment of life, and other damages.

### **SPECIFIC COUNTS**

#### **COUNT ONE**

#### **PURSUANT TO THE NEW JERSEY PRODUCTS LIABILITY ACT** **(N.J.S.A. §2A:58C-1 et. seq.)**

23. Plaintiff incorporates by reference each preceding and succeeding paragraph as though set forth fully at length herein.

24. This Count is brought pursuant to N.J.S.A. §2A:58C-1 et. seq., the New Jersey Products Liability Act.

25. At the time of Plaintiff's injuries, Defendant's pressure cookers were defective and unreasonably dangerous for use by foreseeable consumers, including Plaintiff.

26. Defendant's actions and omissions were the direct and proximate cause of the Plaintiff's injuries and damages.

27. Defendant, under all applicable laws including, but not limited to, the New Jersey

Products Liability Act, N.J.S.A. §2A:58C-1 et. seq. is liable unto Plaintiff for her injuries and damages for designing, manufacturing, assembling, marketing, distributing, and/or selling the aforesaid pressure cooker that was unreasonably dangerous in construction or composition, in design, because inadequate warnings about the product had not been provided, and/or because the pressure cooker did not conform to the implied and express warranties of the manufacturer about this product.

28. Specifically, Defendant's pressure cookers are unreasonably dangerous due to the pressure cooker's lid being able to be rotated and opened while the pressure cooker was still under pressure, during the normal, directed use of the pressure cooker, allowing its scalding hot contents to be forcefully ejected from the pressure cooker and onto the Plaintiff, as it did in this case.

29. Further, a reasonable consumer, including Plaintiff, would not have reason to expect that the subject pressure cooker would retain pressure despite the appearance that all pressure had been released, would not be able detect any such defect, and would not have any knowledge as to how to prevent such an incident occurring.

**WHEREFORE**, Plaintiff demands judgment against Defendant for damages, together with interest, costs of suit and all such other relief as the Court deems proper.

**INJURIES & DAMAGES**

30. As a direct and proximate result of Defendant's strict liability, negligence and wrongful misconduct as described herein, Plaintiff has suffered and will continue to suffer physical and emotional injuries and damages including past, present, and future physical and emotional pain and suffering as a result of the incident. Plaintiff is entitled to recover damages from Defendant for these injuries in an amount which shall be proven at trial.

31. As a direct and proximate result of Defendant's strict liability, negligence and

wrongful misconduct, as set forth herein, Plaintiff has incurred and will continue to incur the loss of full enjoyment of life and disfigurement as a result of the incident. Plaintiff is entitled to recover damages for loss of the full enjoyment of life and disfigurement from Defendant in an amount to be proven at trial.

32. As a direct and proximate cause of Defendant's strict liability, negligence and wrongful misconduct, as set forth herein, Plaintiff has incurred medical treatment expenses and will continue to incur expenses for medical care and treatment, as well as other expenses, as a result of the burns she suffered from the incident. Plaintiff is entitled to recover damages from Defendant for her past, present and future medical and other expenses in an amount which shall be proven at trial.

**WHEREFORE**, Plaintiff demands judgment against Defendant for damages, together with interest, costs of suit and all such other relief as the Court deems proper.

**JURY TRIAL DEMANDED**

33. Plaintiff is entitled to and demands a trial by jury.

**PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

**WHEREFORE**, Plaintiff demands judgment against the Defendants as follows:

A. On the **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**, compensatory damages, interest, attorneys' fees, costs of suit and any such other relief as the Court deems just and proper.

Dated: February 2, 2023

[REDACTED]

*In association with:*

[REDACTED]

*Attorneys for Plaintiff*