



William Webster

## Senator Williams sues Abscammers

by Mary Jane Freeman

*At an Oct. 1 press conference in Washington, Sen. Harrison Williams announced a \$6 million lawsuit against nine Justice Department and FBI officials and former officials involved in Abscam, including then-Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti and current FBI Director William Webster.*

*The suit seeks damages for violation of the senator's constitutional rights and asks appointment of a Special Prosecutor for FBI misconduct.*

*The suit names, but does not seek damages against, current Attorney General William French Smith, seeking "actions which may or should be taken in the future relating to information in possession of defendant Smith or his subordinates concerning the wrongs of the other defendants."*

*Sued for \$1 million in compensatory damages and \$5 million in punitive damages are: Benjamin Civiletti, former attorney general; William Webster, director of the FBI; Philip Heyman, former deputy attorney general; Irvin Nathan, former deputy assistant attorney general; Thomas Puccio, prosecutor for Abscam; Mel Weinberg, FBI "special employee" for Abscam; John Good, Anthony Amoroso and Richard Farhart, FBI special agents.*

*The following are excerpts from the charges contained in Senator Williams' complaint to the court.*

This is an action for damages for deprivation of civil rights secured by the Constitution and laws of the United States by current and former officers and officials under color of authority; for conspiracy to wrongfully defame, indict, convict and imprison plaintiff; for declaratory and injunctive relief. . . and for referral to the appropriate three judge panel for the appointment of a Special

Prosecutor as to one official of the United States. . . .

Weinberg, after these events, carried his conspiracy to cover up his artificial inculcation of Plaintiff on June 28, 1979, to its most logical perverse extreme, and after having falsely claimed tapes which he knew would establish his entrapment of Plaintiff were "lost or stolen" he, true to his criminal nature, perjured himself at Plaintiff's trial. . . .

As a result of this close working relationship with Weinberg during the course of the Abscam operation, Amoroso would often allow Weinberg to freelance and direct many inculpatory scenarios. Based upon that relationship, as seen from that which follows, Amoroso lost his professional judgment and became seduced by Weinberg's con man approach to the point where he also began soliciting rather than eliciting the appearance of criminal or improper conduct by Plaintiff.

Weinberg and Amoroso conspired to conceal in every regard from the assistant United States attorneys the criminal nature and outrageous character their suborning conduct had attained.

Defendant Puccio's role in the phase of the Abscam operation directed against Plaintiff involves the most sordid conduct that has ever stained the United States Department of Justice or besmirched the reputation of the bar.

Defendant Puccio provided this false information to these members of the Justice Department to keep Abscam's targeting of Plaintiff alive and to provide a false basis for the eventual indictment of Plaintiff. . . .

Defendant Civiletti, having conspired with others to conceal the due process infirmities directed against Plaintiff and the exculpatory documents which memorialized them testified before the Congressional committee in a purposely deceptive fashion as a fundamental part of his conspiracy to conceal the aforementioned facts. Further conspiring to prevent the disclosure of the aforesaid material documenting these infirmities, defendant Civiletti conspired with others to prevent the Jan. 6, 1981 "Nathan" memorandum to defendant Heymann from being released to Plaintiff's counsel. He did so in direct bad faith for the purpose of denying Plaintiff and his counsel access to certain exculpatory materials which would be fundamental to Plaintiff's case.

Defendant Smith, a fine and honorable man, is sued only in his *ex officio* capacity as Attorney General. . . .

The aforesaid wrongs of all defendants against whom damages are sought below violated Plaintiff's rights secured by the First, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Amendments to the Constitution of the United States, as an individual, as well as Plaintiff's rights as a United States Senator and a member of the legislative Branch of government to be free from conspiracies directed against him by the Executive Branch, or agents thereof, in derogation of his Senatorial function.