

SPEXaminer
] filed w/g

21 Nov 76

IRS informant sues for \$10 million

by Larry Kramer

A key federal informant [Norman Casper, TW-24] in the tax investigation into offshore banks and money laundering has sued the government for \$10 million for blowing his cover.

.....

✓ 62/4
C.A. (D)

IRS informant sues for \$10 million

By Larry Kramer

A key federal informant in the tax investigation into offshore banks and money laundering has sued the government for \$10 million for blowing his cover.

Norman Casper, known as Internal Revenue Service informant TW-24, has been credited with providing the evidence that broke open "Project Haven." That's a 10-year investigation into the use of Bahamian and other banks by rich Americans trying to evade U.S. income taxes.

"My life is pure hell now," Casper said in a phone interview from his Key Biscayne, Fla. home. "I am picking up a few bucks here and there, but I can't do investigative work anymore. Frankly, I'm starving. I can't pay my bills and I don't like it. My life has been threatened. My wife (a Dade County School teacher) has been supplying me with a livelihood, but it isn't enough." He is suing in The Federal Claims Court in Washington. The suit reveals the death threat for the first time.

Casper was best known for pulling off the controversial "briefcase caper" four years ago.

In that instance, a Bahamian banker who stopped in Miami dated a female associate of Casper. While they were at dinner, Casper en-

tered the woman's apartment and took out the contents of the banker's briefcase. He brought the records to waiting IRS Special Agent Richard Jaffe, who photographed them and returned them to Casper, who then returned them to the apartment.

Those records gave the government its first confirmation of which Americans had accounts at Castle Bank and Trust, a Nassau bank at the center of the Project Haven probe. The evidence has led to several indictments.

But more than two years later, IRS commissioner Donald Alexander told a press conference that the evidence obtained in the briefcase incident might have been acquired illegally, and a full review by the IRS was under way. He even suspended Project Haven temporarily until he was satisfied that the evidence would be admissible.

Alexander provided the public with enough information to pinpoint Casper as the informant, according to Casper and his attorney Jack Solerwitz of New York City.

"That is a violation of his personal right of confidentiality with the IRS and breach of an implied contract agreement between himself and the IRS, Solerwitz said. Casper was the IRS's top in-

formant in the Bahamas and is now unable to return there "because he is subject to apprehension and conviction for helping to violate Bahamian law concerning the disclosure of foreign investors" the suit reads.

IRS agents working on Haven said Casper's contention, and point out that his effectiveness has been ruined since disclosure of his identity. They still ask his help, however.

Asked why Alexander would reveal the information leading to the discovery of one of his own informants, Casper said:

"I wish I knew. I don't know why the silly son of a gun went out there breastbeating (at the press conference) and peddled the information."

In an interview with the Examiner three months ago, Alexander said he held the press conference to clear up allegations made by a TV broadcast in Florida. 11/18/76

That station had charged that Alexander was hating Project Haven to protect members of his former law firm, whose names appeared on records found at Cas-

Alexander said he wanted to

show that the probe was suspended because he was worried about the methods TW-24 used in obtaining the key evidence.

IRS spokesman Al Golato said in Washington that "There is no merit to the suit."

Last week the Chicago Tribune ran a story claiming that Project Haven investigators were in the Bahamas checking into bank accounts set up by U.S. congressmen seeking to hide payoffs from Korean businessman Tongsun Park.

Haven officials say the story is completely false, and they don't know how it came out. But strict constraints have been placed on all personnel working on the case not to talk to the press.

The Examiner did learn that CBS-TV's "60 Minutes" film crew paid an American woman for information about banks in the Bahamas. She sells information that is essentially on the public record, but difficult to find normally.

No Bahamian laws concerning bank secrecy were violated by the CBS news team, IRS sources say.

The segment on "Project Haven" is scheduled to appear on "60 Minutes" tonight. TRAVNSCKR/P.T. USE