

Bell Helicopter faces lawsuit Ex-employee alleges overcharging practice

DALLAS (AP) — A former employee of Bell Helicopter Textron has filed a lawsuit against the company, alleging he was fired in retaliation for his concern over \$2 million in overcharges on a Pentagon contract.

Robertson, 48, sought unspecified compensatory and punitive damages, back pay, attorneys' fees and court costs in the lawsuit, which was filed on July 14 in U.S. District Court in Fort Worth. He also seeks reinstatement with seniority and benefits. He was a senior contracts administrator making \$52,000 a year when he was dismissed last Feb. 14, he said. In a July 27 letter to U.S. Rep. Pete Geren, Bell Helicopter employment manager David L. Stockton denied Robertson's charges.

"Our investigation has revealed that Mr. Robertson's allegations regarding possible age discrimination and whistleblower retaliation, or ethics violations, have been found to be without foundation," Stockton said.

Robertson said that during a four-year period, beginning in mid-1988, he and his immediate supervisor repeatedly questioned Bell Helicopter's billing practices in the Army Helicopter Improvement Program, one of Bell's biggest Pentagon programs.

In interviews with The Dallas Morning News, Robertson said he and his supervisor were repeatedly asked to submit to the Army what they believed were illegal claims.

As soon as they began asking questions, he and his supervisor were excluded from discussions about the new charges Bell Helicopter was attempting to pass on to the government, Robertson said.

He said he refused to bill the government for the claims for more than a year, until he was finally forced to do so by his department head last December.

His refusal to pass on the false claims and his insistence that Bell officials conduct an audit of the disputed expenses led to his firing, he said.

Wave machine tests offshore rigs

By Angie Payne
Special to The Battalion

With a compass rose on its floor, a five-ton capacity overhead traveling crane, and robotic-looking machinery everywhere, the three-story room looks like a science-fiction movie set.

But it is really a giant wave tank. Inside the 150-foot by 100-foot

wave tank, the Offshore Technology Research Center creates wave conditions that test the safety of oil drilling rigs in the Gulf of Mexico.

"Our biggest concern is the safety of the deep water drilling rigs," Peter Johnson, facility manager and engineer for the OTRC said.

Before safety experiments can begin, he said, scale models of drilling rigs are constructed and lowered into the tank by the

crane. Technicians use the crane to align the model on the compass rose so they can observe and record the effects of different wave angles on the structure.

Inside the wave tank, 48 computer-controlled, 10-foot-tall hinged waveboards move in different sequences and motions to reproduce the waves of the Gulf of Mexico.

Technicians monitor and record things like waves' run-up and load on the structure's

columns and motions like sway, heave, pitch and roll.

"Our mission," Johnson said, "is to conduct research in engineering in deep water. We want to be solving tomorrow's problems" of the safety of deep ocean drilling rigs.

Solving these problems, the OTRC believes, begins when new ways to determine forces on floating structures and new techniques and materials to secure them at sea are developed.

Maladjusted dogs face trials in municipal courts

DALLAS (AP) — Residents who are fed up with a maladjusted dog in the neighborhood don't have to take matters into their own hands. They can take their pet peeves to court.

Every Wednesday, complaints about animals are heard in Dallas Municipal Court. The summons often paints a dark picture:

"Said actor did then and knowingly harbor an animal, to wit: a dog, that unreasonably barked in the following particulars, to wit: said dog barked continuously for a period of time exceeding 15 minutes near a private residence . . . against the peace and dignity of the state."

During the trial, Fido is denied the

constitutional protections normally accorded to human defendants.

He isn't allowed in the courtroom, but tape recordings of howling can be admitted into evidence and played for the benefit of judge and jury.

After several minutes of listening to such a tape, judgment is usually swift and sure. "I've never lost a case," one prosecutor told The Dallas Morning News. "Just like Perry Mason."

But both he and another assistant city attorney asked that their names not be published. "I really don't want all my friends

to know what sort of cases I work on," one of the prosecutors said.

Tom Hickey, manager of the city's animal control division, said his office issued about 3,000 citations through the first six months of the year.

About four or five cases involve expiring registration tags, he said. The tickets often are dismissed after owners bring their pets into compliance. Depending upon the complaint, an owner may be required to neuter the pet or arrange for it to receive a license or shots to pen a free-roaming animal.

POLICE BEAT

Misdemeanor Theft

Heldenfels Hall - a black Bianchi 10-speed boys bicycle was stolen.

Memorial Student Center Game Room - the victim's backpack and contents were stolen.

University Owned Apartments - a pink, unknown brand, three-speed girls bicycle was stolen.

University Owned Apartments - a pink, unknown brand, single speed boys bicycle was stolen.

Southside Parking Garage - the body side molding was removed from the victim's 1990 Ford Probe.

Zachry Engineering Center - a black Cannondale, 18-speed boys bicycle was stolen.

University Owned Apartments - recovered property - the owner of the white, Trek 800 bicycle recovered by the Bryan Street Crime Apprehension Team on 7/22/92 was identified. The bicycle was stolen from Hensel Dr.

Lechner Hall - two pairs of sweats, two t-shirts and two pairs of Levi jeans were stolen from a clothes dryer in the first floor laundry room.

Underwood Hall - a turquoise and black Murray 18-speed mountain bicycle was stolen.

Criminal Mischief

Grounds Maintenance Complex - a Ford front end loader was damaged by someone who threw an object through the glass of the front and rear cab window.

University Owned Apartments - the rear window of the victim's vehicle was shattered by an unknown object that struck the glass in two places.

University Center Garage - someone used a sharp instrument to damage the painted surfaces of the victim's 1982 Datsun.

Parking Area 2 - the trunk and passenger side of the victim's vehicle was damaged by someone who scratched the paint with a sharp object.

Briggs Hall - the third floor restroom window on the south side of the building was broken.

Overhead Pedestrian Crosswalk at Joe Routh and Wellborn Road - two small spots and three handprints of a substance that appeared to be blood were found on the crosswalk. TAMU Emergency Medical

Service personnel tested the substance and reported it was not blood.

University Owned Apartments - someone entered the victim's vehicle and damaged the steering column by breaking off the turn signal lever.

Assault

Zachry Engineering Center - a subject pressed his body against the victim in an offensive manner.

Harassment

University Owned Apartments - the victim received an obscene telephone call from an unknown male.

University Owned Apartments - the victim has been receiving annoying and threatening telephone calls for approximately one month.

Burglary

Northgate Post Office - a subject detected stealing mail from a post office box was apprehended. Criminal charges are pending.

Dormitory 9 - someone stole four credit cards and has made \$1101.31 in purchases.

Florida volunteer drops suit

MIAMI (AP) — A Florida volunteer dropped her lawsuit against Ross Perot Monday, satisfied the Texas billionaire will fulfill his promises he made during his undeclared presidential campaign.

Miami Attorney Douglas Stein filed a motion in federal court on behalf of Michele Alexander to dismiss the class-action suit, filed July 20 to demand that Perot stay in the race and fulfill his promises to volunteers.

Ms. Alexander, 31, of Hobe Sound, had said last week she like would drop the suit. This came after she received a telephone call from Perot during which he apparently apologized for dropping out of the race and assured her he would continue to push his platform.

"As Michele sought only Mr. Perot's acknowledgement of accountability and responsibility, and Mr. Perot has demonstrated sincerity of his assurances made to her, the lawsuit has been technically rendered moot," Stein said Monday.

\$5 million of art stolen


NICE, France (AP) — Thieves broke into the Riviera mansion of a wealthy French-Lebanese businessman, stealing four paintings by masters valued at about \$5 million that were considered too well known to be easily sold, the owner said Sunday.

Anthony Tannouri flew from his Geneva residence to his French villa on the Cap d'Ail after learning of the early Friday theft of a Matisse, a Modigliani and two Degas.

Tannouri owes the French tax


office \$56.6 million in fines and repayment of back taxes for 14 years 1980-83, and said Sunday he had hoped to sell the paintings uninsured in France — to raise the money.

Thieves entered his estate by breaking a terrace door. The Matisse, "L'Interieur d'une Chambre" (Inside of a Room), was taken from the living room. Three other paintings were taken from a bedroom: Modigliani's "Portrait de Femme" (Portrait of a Woman) and two paintings of dancers by Degas.



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