UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

GEORGE SASSOWER, individually, and on behalf of all others similarly situated

File No. 78 Civ. 124

Plaintiff,

-against-

ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, ANTHONY MASTROIANNI, VINCENT G. BERGER, JR., JOHN P. FINNERTY, A ALLAN CROCE, ANTHONY GRZYMALSKI, CHARLES BROWN, LEONARD J. PUGATCH, HARRY E. SEIDELL, and THE COUNTY OF SUFFOLK.

Second Amended Complaint.

Class Action.

Defendants.

similarly situated or affected complaining of the defendants

Plaintiff, individually, and on behalf of other

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respectfully sets forth and alleges:

la. The jurisdiction of this Court is invoked pursuant to the provisions of Title 28, United States Code, §§ 1331 and 1343, this being a suit in law and equity authorized by law, Title 42, United States Code § 1983, brought to redress the deprivation under color of state law, stuatute, ordinance, regulation, custom, or usage of rights, privileges, and immunities secured by the Constitution and laws of the United States providing for equal rights and due process of citizens; Amendment XIV of the Constitution of the United States, and pendent jurisdiction. The rights here sought to be redressed are rights guaranteed by the due process, privileges and immunities and equal protection clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States and Article 42 of the United States Cod §1983, and the matter in controversy exceeds the sum of \$10,000 as

hereinafter more fully appears.

Plaintiff brings this action on his own behalf and on behalf of classes consisting of all non-judicially appointed litigants, estates, and beneficiaries wherein judicial appointees are involved (first cause of action), the general citizenry of the State of New York (third cause of action), and those who have or desire to deposit cash bail with the County of Suffolk (fourth cause of action). Said classes are so numerous that joinder of all members are impractical. There are common questions of law and fact to the classes involved which predominates over any questions affecting only individual members. The claims of plaintiff are typical of the claims of the classes. Plaintiff will fairly and adequately represent the interests of the classes. In addition the prosecution of spearate actions would create a risk of inconsistent or varying adjudications with respect to individual members of the class which would establish incompatible standards of conduct for the party opposing the class; adjudication by plaintiff would as a practical matter be dispositive of the interests of the other members not parties to the adjudications; and the defendants have refused to act on grounds generally applicable to the classes thereby making appropriate declaratory relief with respect to the classes as a whole.

AS AND FOR A FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION AGAINST THE DEFENDANTS, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, ANTHONY MASTROIANNI, AND VINCENT G. BERGER, JR.

- 2. All of the times hereinafter mentioned, plaintiff was and still is a resident and citizen of the United States.
- 3. The State of New York has enacted a statutory scheme of justice regarding the administration and adjudication of estates which is primarily found in the Surrogate's Court Procedure Act (hereinafter called "SCPA").
- 4. Suffolk County was and still is an independent subdivision of the State of New York.
- 5. There is only one Surrogate of Suffolk County, and he adjudicates all cases and controversies in that jurisdiction relating to estates, appoints or has the power to appoint all or substantially all of the employees of the Surrogate's Court: Suffolk County, including assistants, clerks, attendents, and court reporters, who serve at his pleasure.
- 6. The Surrogate of the County of Suffolk appoints the Public Administrator who in turn appoints his attorney and others needed to perform duties related to his office.
- 7. The Surrogate appoints and removes guardians and other fiduciaries.
- 8. The Surrogate of Suffolk County passes on and fixes the fees and disbursements of the Public Administrator, the attorney for the Public Administrator, guardians, other fiduciaries, their attorneys and others.
- 9. The Office of the Public Administrator is located in the same building as the Surrogate's Court:

Suffolk County, which is maintained by the County of Suffolk and/or the State of New York and they share common expenses.

- 10. The present Surrogate of Suffolk County is the defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI.
- 11. The present Public Administrator for Suffolk County is the defendant ANTHONY MASTROIANNI.
- 12. The present attorney for the Public Administrator is the defendant, VINCENT G. BERGER, JR.
- portion of the time, energy, and activity of defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, if not the major portion thereof, is in making appointments and passing on applications for fees and disbursements for his appointments and others.
- 14. The notorious importance of the position of the Surrogate of Suffolk County is due to the extraordinary large patronage power and authority controlled by the Surrogate.
- Public Administrator, and the attorney for the Public Administrator, by law, custom, and usage is such that they are in point of fact the agents and servants of the Surrogate.
- supporting such patronage as aforementioned comes from the State of New York, the County of Suffolk, the litigants, the attorneys for the litigants, and the estates being administered.
 - of Suffolk County in adjudicating cases and controversies, involve in substantial numbers persons and attorneys who

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have been appointed directly or indirectly by him and it is he who fixes their fees and disbursements.

- 18. The cases and controversies adjudicated by the defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, were cases and controversies adjudicated by the courts at and prior to the formation of the United States and State of New York.
- 19. That by force of state law, persons who reside in Suffolk County or have real property in that county are compelled to have their estates administered in Surrogate's Court: Suffolk County and no place else.
- 20. On information and belief, the appointees of defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, to insure future appointments, favorable allowances, and for other reasons inconsistent with their office and obligations towards their clients and others, subvert such obligations in favor of the defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI.
- designated litigant in Surrogate's Court: Suffolk County involving the Public Administrator, an appointee of defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, the attorney for the Public Administrator, appointed by the Public Administrator, and indirectly by the Surrogate, and a guardian appointed by the defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI.
- 22. Plaintiff is presently and personally subject to various pending criminal and civil proceedings in that Court.
- 23. On information and belief, in adjudications between the appointees of the defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORILI,

and others, the defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, is not, in law or fact, an impartial and disinterested judicial officer; has conflicting obligations as to his friends and political affiliates from those to his judicial functions and duties; does not hold a detached and neutral position in his adjudications; is partial; profits indirectly from his appointments, adjudications, fee and expense allowances; presents an intolerable high and unconstitutional invitation for the defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, to prefer his personal, social, and political obligations to that judicially owed for a fair trial and adjudication, in fact and in apperance, contrary to the Constitution and Laws of the United States.

- 24. That because plaintiff was not a judicially designated litigant, has by voice and actions protested the illegal procedures of these defendants, has sought redress in other courts of the State of New York and United States of America, and otherwise lawfully exercised his rights and privileges, the defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, has made adverse adjudications against the plaintiff and used the legal procedures to harass and intimidate him and continues to do so.
- and denigrate plaintiff, have instituted several criminal proceedings against plaintiff, all of which have thus far been successfully defended by plaintiff at great personal cost of time and expense. Nevertheless these defendants are continually reinstituting same despite their lack of success.

- 26. At the time of the filing of the complaint herein, the defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, had set January 25, 1978 as the date for the commencement of a civil trial involving plaintiff. Furthermore, on that date, criminal contempt proceedings were again instituted against plaintiff and because of the matters set forth herein, plaintiff received and continues to receive adverse ruling and adjudications in both the civil and criminal matters.
- 27. That such civil proceeding is still viable and active, but again in the absence of plaintiff he was found guilty and sentenced to jail for criminal contempt with complete knowledge by the defendants that their procedures were unconstitutional.
- 28. That by reason of the job and economic power that defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, has over the employees of Surrogate's Court: Suffolk County, and his judicial appointees, directly or indirectly, that Court is not fairly, impartially, or constitutionally administered to plaintiff's prejudice and those not judicially appointed.
- 29. That by reason of the aforementioned these defendants under color of statute, regulation, custom, and usage have and are depriving plaintiff and others similarly situated, or interested of their rights, privileges, and immunities secured by the Constitution and Laws of the United States.
- 30. That for the reasons heretofore and hereinafter mentioned there exists many cases and controversies between the named parties herein and also between those on whose behalf plaintiff is bringing this action and the defendants.

AS AND FOR A SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION AGAINST THE DEFENDANTS ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, ANTHONY MASTROIANNI, VINCENT G. BERGER, JR., JOHN P. FINNERTY, HARRY E. SEIDELL, AND THE COUNTY OF SUFFOLK

- 31. Plaintiff repeats, reiterates, and realleges each and every allegation heretofore made in every paragraph of the complaint as if more fully set forth at length herein and further alleges:
- 32. Defendant, JOHN P. FINNERTY, was and still is the Sheriff of Suffolk County.
- 33. That on June 22, 1977 and March 8, 1978, the defendants ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI and HARRY E. SEIDELL caused to be issued and entered Orders of Criminal Contempt both directing that plaintiff be incarcerated in the Suffolk County Jail for a period of thirty (30) days.
- 34. In addition to other infirmities, the aforesaid Orders of Contempt and the sentence thereon were made after "mock trials" in the absence of plaintiff, without due and/or proper notice, for acts which did not all occur in the Courtroom or in the presence of the defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI or HARRY E. SEIDELL, without allocuation, and as a result thereof such adjudication has been or is null and void.
- 35. That such adjudications and sentences in criminal contempt were entered against plaintiff by defendants

 ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI and HARRY E. SEIDELL although they knew or should have reasonably known that their actions violated plaintiff's basic and established constitutional rights, and would and did result in plaintiff's incarceration in the earlier conviction, until released through a Writ of

Habeas Corpus and an adjudication that such conviction and sentence for criminal contempt was null and void. That the later conviction is unquestionably null and void.

- 36. Except for the arbitrary and unexplained omission relating to Surrogate's Court (and several other civil courts), the State of New York has provided in every other court for a procedure whereby a defendant may apply for bail pending an appeal. (Criminal Procedure Law §460.50).
- 37. That by reason of the aforementioned arbitrary omission for a bail procedure pending an appeal from Surrogate's Court, persons similarly situated in other courts have bail rights which are unavailable to plaintiff.
- Contempt Order null and void was entered, and while the earlier Contempt Order was still in full force and effect, the defendants, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, VINCENT G. BERGER, ANTHONY MASTROIANNI, HARRY E. SEIDELL, and LEONARD J. PUGATCH, directly or indirection, caused another Contempt Proceeding to be instituted and prosecuted towards conviction and sentence against plaintiff knowing or they should have reasonably known that same constituted double jeopardy, was in violation of plaintiff's federal constitutional rights, and maliciously intending to deprive plaintiff of such rights and cause him other injury thereby.
- 39. That after the Order adjudicating the Contempt Order of the defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, dated June 22, 1977, was null and void had been entered, the said defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI caused a Notice of Appeal to be filed and prosecutes same.

- 40. That as a result of such Notice of Appeal the Contempt Order against plaintiff is still in full force and effect pursuant to the stay provided in CPLR § 5519(a)(1).
- 41. Despite the fact that such Contempt Order is in full force and effect and any new proceeding based on the same facts would be double jeopardy, the defendants have instituted and prosecuted to sentencing new criminal contempt proceedings, knowing or they should have known that such proceedings violated plaintiff's federal constitutional rights and has caused him injury.
- 42. That because bail procedures are unavailable to plaintiff in Surrogate's Court, as heretofore stated, and because of the limited term that defendants ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI and HARRY E. SEIDELL could and did sentence plaintiff (thirty days), it is the ulterior intention of the defendants to incarcerate plaintiff for the maximum term, which term will have expired before appellate review can be had. Furthermore, defendants content that such convictions are not subject to review under state law because rendered on default.
- 43. Because of this fact, any incarceration of plaintiff will escape review or even if same is reviewed, plaintiff will have served his entire term in prison prior to appellate adjudication and any reversal will be meaningless or an inadequate remedy.
- 44. That defendants, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, ANTHONY MASTROIANNI, HARRY E. SEIDELL, and VINCENT G. BERGER, JR., are proceeding in bad faith, maliciously intending to deprive plaintiff of his federal constitutional rights and cause him injury thereby.

AS AND FOR A THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION AGAINST THE DEFENDANTS COUNTY OF SUFFOLK AND CHARLES BROWN.

- 45. Plaintiff repeats, reiterates, and realleges each and every allegation heretofore made in every paragraph of the complaint as if more fully set forth at length and further alleges:
- 46. That on information and belief the defendant, CHARLES BROWN is a former employee of the County of Suffolk.
- 47. That the defendant, COUNTY OF SUFFOLK, has and exercises various police powers.
- 48. That on information and belief the defendant, County of Suffolk permits certain former employees to carry and exhibit certain badges, shields, and other documents which superficially resemble those carried by police officers having police powers in every part of the County of Suffolk and in every part of the State of New York.
- 49. That on information and belief, the defendant, CHARLES BROWN, is a civilian without police authority or power, but carries such badge, shield, and documentation as if he is such police officer.
- information and belief an employee or agent of defendants, anthony mastroianni and vincent G. Berger, Jr., and indirectly of Ernest L. Signorelli, and with their knowledge and consent the said Charles Brown has been used (with his spurious badge or shield) to harass and embarrass plaintiff, as more fully set forth hereinafter.

51. By permitting defendant CHARLES BROWN and others to use similar spurious badges, shields and documentation, these defendants are depriving the general citizenry of the County of Suffolk and the State of New York or their rights under the Constitution and laws of the United States.

AS AND FOR A FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION AGAINST THE DEFENDANT, COUNTY OF SUFFOLK.

- 52. Plaintiff repeats, reiterates, and realleges each and every allegation heretofore made in every paragraph of the complaint as if more fully set forth at length herein and further alleges:
- 53. That with respect to the Writ of Habeas

 Corpus secured on behalf of plaintiff, the plaintiff had to

 deposit a cash bail of \$300 which as yet has not been returned.
- 54. That with respect to the return of said \$300 the defendant has an onerous procedure, deducts a service charge, and does not pay any interest on said deposit.
- 55. That on information and belief such bail funds are deposited by the County of Suffolk and it does or should receive interest on same.
- on said monies to plaintiff and others similarly situated constitutes a deprivation of property without due process of law and violates the Constitution of the United States.
- 57. That furthermore, the onerous procedure employed is such that many persons forfeit their bail money

rather than go through the time and expense to justly recover same.

58. That in effect, monies that are posted for bail, are non-returnable payments, partiallly or completely.

AS AND FOR A FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION AGAINST THE DEFENDANTS, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, JOHN P. FINNERTY, AND THE COUNTY OF SUFFOLK

- 59. Plaintiff repeats, reiterates, and realleges each and every allegation heretofore made in every paragraph of the complaint as if more fully set forth at length herein and further alleges:
- 60. That by law, custom or usage in the State of New York and County of Suffolk, the Sheriff serves judicial processes on behalf of litigants and their attorneys.
- of service are not feasable if assurance is desired that service will not be disputed or inability to serve is to be effectively asserted.
- influence of the defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, the Office of the Sheriff of Suffolk County refuses to serve or properly serve subpoenas on behalf of the plaintiff, as more fully set forth hereinafter, thereby obstructing plaintiff's access to the courts where service must be made in Suffolk County.

defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, and his conduct, as more fully set forth hereinafter, the plaintiff cannot receive a constitutionally proper trial in any Court presided over, controlled or influenced by the defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI or in Surrogate's Court: Suffolk County.

AS AND FOR A SIXTH CAUSE OF ACTION AGAINST THE DEFENDANTS, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, VINCENT G. BERGER, JR., AND ANTHONY MASTROIANNI.

- each and every allegation heretofore made in every paragraph of the complaint as if more fully set forth at length herein and further alleges:
- 65. That heretofore the plaintiff herein has proceeded against these defendants in the courts of the State of New York and United States, and continues to do so.
- aforesaid courts and in order to obstruct and hinder such further proceedings these defendants have been using the funds and credits of the Estate of EUGENE PAUL KELLY and Surrogate's Court: Suffolk County for their private purposes in order to annoy, harass, embarrass, and investigate plaintiff, his family and associates.
- 67. That further in retaliation for proceeding in the aforesaid courts and in order to obstruct and hinder further proceedings these defendants have been misusing the authority of the Surrogate's Court; Suffolk County for their personal purposes.

68. That by so acting these defendants know or reasonably should know that their actions violate federal constitutional rights and maliciously intend to deprive plaintiff of such rights and cause him injury thereby.

AS AND FOR A SEVENTH CAUSE OF ACTION AGAINST THE DEFENDANTS, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, ANTHONY MASTROIANNI, AND VINCENT G. BERGER, JR.

- each and every allegation heretofore made in every paragraph of the complaint as if more fully set forth at length herein and further alleges:
- authority these defendants on or about June 15, 1977 induced and compelled plaintiff to give certain papers and documents to defendants, ANTHONY MASTROIANNI and VINCENT G. BERGER, JR., relying on the representations of these defendants that copies would be forthwith be delivered to plaintiff and these defendants knew that plaintiff relied on such representations.
- 71. That these defendants knew that plaintiff needed such papers and documents in order to protect and preserve his legal rights in the courts of the State of New York and the United States.
- 72. Under color of state law and authority these defendants have failed to give copies of those papers and documents as represented with the intent of prejudicing plaintiff in the aforementioned courts.

AS AND FOR A EIGHTH CAUSE OF ACTION AGAINST ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, ANTHONY MASTROIANNI, VINCENT G. BERGER, JR., HARRY E. SEIDELL, and THE COUNTY OF SUFFOLK

- 73. Plaintiff repeats, reiterates, and realleges each and every allegation heretofore made in every paragraph of the complaint as if more fully set forth at length herein and further alleges:
- 74. That on March 8, 1978, the defendant, HARRY E. SEIDELL, acting jointly and in concert with the other defendants in this cause of action entered an Order adjudging plaintiff, an attorney, guilty of criminal contempt.
- 75. That on and prior to March 8, 1978, the plaintiff never saw the defendant, HARRY E. SEIDELL, and on information and belief, the defendant, HARRY E. SEIDELL, never saw the plaintiff.
- 76. That on March 7, 1978, the defendant, HARRY E. SEIDELL, held a hearing at Surrogate's Court, Suffolk County while the plaintiff was actively engaged as attorney in Supreme Court, Bronx County and these defendants knew of such fact at the time of such hearing.
- 77. Such hearing was unlawfully held in the absence of plaintiff or any representation and at the conclusion thereof, plaintiff was found guilty by the defendant, HARRY E. SEIDELL. Thereupon without allocuation or affording plaintiff the right to allocution, the defendant, HARRY E. SEIDELL, unlawfully imposed sentence for criminal contempt.

- 78. That the practices and procedures employed herein were known to be unconstitutional by the defendants herein.
- 79. That according to express rule in three of the four departments of the Appellate Division of the State of New York and on information and belief, as an accepted practice in the fourth Department, criminal contempt is considered a "serious crime" for which disbarrment or suspension proceeding must be commenced and in the disciplinary proceedings so instituted

"a certificate of conviction ... shall be conclusive evidence of his guilt of that crime ... the attorney may not offer evidence inconsistent with the essential elements of the crime for which he was convicted." (e.g. NYCRR §603.12)

80. That as a result of the aforementioned, plaintiff faces disbarment or suspension, loss of livelihood and public disgrace thereby, and deprivation of liberty without due process of law.

AS AND FOR A NINTH CAUSE OF ACTION AGAINST ALL THE DEFENDANTS EXCEPT CHARLES BROWN AND LEONARD J. PUGATCH.

- 81. Plaintiff repeats, reiterates, and realleges each and every allegation heretofore made in every paragraph of the complaint as if more fully set forth at length herein and further alleges:
- 82. On or about the 8th day of March, 1978, there was delivered to the defendant, JOHN P. FINNERTY, an Order of Criminal Contempt and Warrant of Commitment against the plaintiff dated the same day.

- 83. That at the time of delivery and thereafter all of the defendants knew or reasonably should have known that the Order of Criminal Contempt and Warrant of Commitment were unconstitutionally made and entered, inter alia, for the same reason that caused the adjudication of invalidity of the Order of Criminal Contempt and Warrant of Commitment dated June 22, 1977.
- 84. That the enforcement vel non of such Order of Criminal Contempt and Warrant of Commitment dated March 8th, 1978 was left to the desires of the defendants ANTHONY MASTROIANNI and VINCENT G. BERGER, JR., by defendants, JOHN P. FINNERTY, ALLAN CROCE, and ANTHONY GRZYMALSKI, who were acting in concert with the defendants, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI and HARRY E. SEIDELL, who knew that they were not authorized by law to privately negotiate for private purposes with plaintiff on the basis of same, which they did, through other parties authorized by them.
- 85. Although plaintiff has denied the validity of the aforesaid Order of Criminal Contempt and Warrant of Commitment he nevertheless offered to accommodate the defendants, JOHN P. FINNERTY, ALLAN CROCE, and ANTHONY GRZYMALSKI by making himself available at the convenience of these defendants at Special Term in New York, Bronx, or Westchester counties.
- and in concert with the other defendants herein has refused to execute the aforementioned invalid Warrant of Commitment at the aforesaid places or in any place wherein plaintiff has readily available access to the courts in order to obtain a Writ of Habeas Corpus outside of Suffolk County.

- and in concert with the other defendants herein has expressed the intention of seizing the plaintiff under the aforementioned invalid Warrant of Commitment, denying him any and all access to any Court or Judge prior to reaching the County Jail in Suffolk County, which is a great distance from the home and business of plaintiff and wherein the defendants have power and influence and intend to corruptly employ same.
- 88. That the defendants herein know that in rejecting plaintiff's offer to voluntarily permit execution under the aforesaid invalid Warrant of Commitment, as stated in paragraph "85" hereinabove, they are delaying its execution, expending more time, effort and public monies than if they accepted plaintiff's offer.
- 89. That in order to unlawfully coerce plaintiff to submit to such invalid Warrant of Commitment within Suffolk County or in places outside of same where a Court or Judge in not readily available they have made embarassing inquiries and intend to make further embarassing inquiries with his family, friends, and business acquaintances, injuring thereby plaintiff's name and reputation in his community and adversely affecting his profession.
- 90. Furthermore, the probabilities are that under the circumstances the plaintiff will be arrested in public needlessly and irreparably damaging his professional standing, his family and friends.

AS AND FOR A TENTH CAUSE OF ACTION AGAINST ALL THE DEFENDANTS.

- 91. Plaintiff repeats, reiterates, and realleges each and every allegation heretofore made in every paragraph of the complaint as if more fully set forth at length herein and further alleges:
- 92. Prior to and until March 17, 1977, plaintiff was recognized as the sole executor in the estate of EUGENE PAUL KELLY having been so designated in the Last Will and Testament of the deceased.
- 93. Prior to and until March 17, 1977, plaintiff as such executor, had the express authorization of all attorneys representing all the parties in the aforementioned estate to enter into a contract of sale with respect to a certain property owned by the estate and assume liabilities as a result thereof.
- 94. Prior to and until March 17, 1977, plaintiff was recognized as such executor by the defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, the officials and employees of Surrogate's Court, Suffolk County and they knew, authorized and consented to such contract of sale by plaintiff on behalf of the aforementioned estate.
- payments made under a mortgage obligation of the deceased, taxes and other charges that had to be paid which were paid by plaintiff with the knowledge and consent of defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, the attorneys and parties involved in the aforementioned estate.

- 96. Prior to and until March 17, 1977, plaintiff had been authorized and directed by the defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, and some of the attorneys representing parties interested in the aforementioned estate to perform various other acts as executor of such estate.
- 97. That as late as March 14th, 1977, Certified Copies of Letters Testamentary were issued to plaintiff as executor in the aforementioned estate by the Surrogate's Court: Suffolk County.
- 98. That in March of 1977, notwithstanding all of the aforementioned in this cause of action, the defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, asserted that plaintiff had been removed as executor in March of 1976 (approximately one year earlier).
- 99. The defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI knew that he had no jurisdiction to remove plaintiff as executor in March of 1976 and this orchestrated proceeding in March of 1977 was based in part on false and tampered documents in Surrogate's Court.
- comply and cooperate in this illegal and irregular procedure, the defendants, SIGNORELLI, BERGER, and MASTROIANNI (and thereafter others), acting jointly and in concern, conspired to hold a "mock trial" in plaintiff's absence, try plaintiff for criminal contempt, illegally arrest him and do such other necessary acts as might be warranted to cause plaintiff to silently submit to their wishes knowing that jurisdiction did not exist over plaintiff for such purposes.

- 101. On June 22, 1977, the defendants, SIGNORELLI, BERGER, and MASTROIANNI, without proper notice to plaintiff held this "mock trial" in his absence, took testimony, and the defendant, SIGNORELLI, found plaintiff guilty of criminal contempt in accordance with the aforementioned preconceived plan.
- still in the absence of plaintiff, these defendants, in accord with their preconceived plan, dispensed with plaintiff's right of allocution and sentenced him to be incarcerated for 30 days in the Suffolk County Jail.
- 103. Thereupon on June 22, 1977, the defendants, SIGNORELLI, BERGER, and MASTROIANNI, drew up a Contempt Order asserting false and contrived facts on the face thereof in order to purport jurisdiction.
- SIGNORELLI, BERGER, and MASTROIANNI together with the defendants, FINNERTY, CROCE, and GRZYMALSKI, agreed that defendants, CROCE and GRZYMALSKI would journey to plaintiff's residence in the early hours of June 23, 1977, and without prior notice to him would cause his arrest, bring him to the defendant, SIGNORELLI and not to the Suffolk County Jail as provided in the Contempt Order.
- 105. That all these defendants in the planning and execution of the aforesaid knew or should have known that same violated plaintiff's federal constitutional rights, and they maliciously intended to deprive plaintiff of such rights and cause him injury thereby.

- agreed, expressly or impliedly, by defendants, SIGNORELLI, BERGER, MASTOIANNI, FINNERTY, CROCE, and GRZYMALSKI, that they would not permit plaintiff access to any other court or judge, directly or indirectly, knowing that such course of conduct was illegal and unconstitutional.
- defendants, CROCE & GRZYMALSKI, despite repeated requests by plaintiff, they refused to communicate with their superiors while at the place of the arrest for instructions as to whether they should permit plaintiff access to any judges or courts other than the defendant, SIGNORELLI, or the Surrogate's Court: Suffolk County.
- 108. That in the morning of June 23, 1977, the defendants, CROCE & GRZYMALSKI, despite requests by plaintiff refused to go to any impartial court or judge, State or Federal, for instructions under the circumstances.
- defendants, CROCE & GRZYMALSKI, while at plaintiff's home and while he was under arrest refused to permit plaintiff to communicate with an attorney with respect to same, neglected to advise plaintiff of his constitutional rights, or afford him the right to exercise same.
- Westchester County to Suffolk County, the defendants, CROCE and GRZYMALSKI, repeatedly refused plaintiff's requests for access to various courts or judges for the purpose of securing a Writ of Habeas Corpus and further refused plaintiff's

demands that they seek advice from their superiors as to the legality of their conduct until these defendants were in or near Suffolk County.

GRZYMALSKI, were in or near Suffolk County, these defendants did request instructions with respect to plaintiff's requests that he be permitted access to a court or judge to present his Writ of Habeas Corpus and they were advised that on instructions from the defendant, SIGNORELLI, that they should not permit plaintiff such access, and the defendants, CROCE and GRZYMALSKI knew or should have known that such advice was illegal.

to the Suffolk County Jail in accordance with the Order of Contempt but the defendants, CROCE and GRZYMALSKI, wilfully disobeyed such Order of Contempt and instead took plaintiff to the building housing the Surrogate's Court: Suffolk County, the office of defendant, ANTHONY MASTROIANNI, and various other governmental departments.

plaintiff was kept under arrest in the aforementioned building, and not in any courtroom, the defendants, CROCE and GRZYMALSKI, refused plaintiff's repeated requests that he be permitted to present his Writ of Habeas Corpus and make telephone calls to an attorney, but all such requests were refused.

114. That during such period of approximately two
(2) hours, three (3) times the defendant, CROCE, did honor

plaintiff's requests that he go and speak to the defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, with respect to the presentment of a Writ of Habeas Corpus and communicating with an attorney, and each time plaintiff was informed that such requests were denied by the defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI.

- 115. That immediately after the last request made of defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, came out of his office, looked at the plaintiff, and exhibited a big grin of glee on his face.
- 116. That during such two (2) hour period, at no time was Surrogate's Court: Suffolk County in session, and the status of defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, was at best, that of a jailor.
- 117. That at about 12:30 p.m., the defendant, VINCENT G. BERGER, JR., emerged from the office of defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, and while in the custody of defendants, CROCE and GRZYMALSKI, they permitted defendant BERGER to wilfully assault plaintiff, and one of them put a restraining hand on the plaintiff.
- 118. That shortly thereafter on June 23, 1977, the defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI convened the Surrogate's Court during which time he knowingly and wilfully attempted to intimidate plaintiff, knowingly and wilfully violated plaintiff's constitutional and statutory rights, or reasonably should have known same were being violated, including the right to have counsel, the right not to be questioned on incriminating subjects, after plaintiff had opted to remain mute, threatening to and in fact did punish plaintiff for

remaining mute, and denying plaintiff access to any court or judge for habeas corpus relief, and other similar rights.

- instructions from defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, to remove plaintiff to Suffolk County Jail, plaintiff was permitted to make only one (1) telephone call, which was fruitless because of the absence of the attorney-recipient. When plaintiff wanted to make further telephone calls in view of the aforementioned, at his own cost and expense, the defendants, SIGNORELLI, BERGER, CROCE, and GRZYMALSKI, objected and refused, particularly when plaintiff expressed a desire to telephone the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of the Second Judicial Department.
- 120. That prior to June 22, 1977, there was intense hostile feelings and bias against plaintiff by the defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, in fact there was litigation between the plaintiff and the defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI pending at the time.in Supreme Court: Suffolk County.
- 121. That despite the aforementioned litigation, the defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, refused to recuse himself despite plaintiff's request and the aforementioned was principally motivated in retaliation for plaintiff seeking relief in another court.
- made to the Grievance Committee of the Bar Association are confidential prior to the imposition of discipline in recognition of the fact that such complaints may not be meritorious, nevertheless, the publicity damages the reputation of the attorney and hinders his earning ability. Despite the knowledge

of defendant, SIGNORELLI and defendant, BERGER, of such fact and practice, the defendant, BERGER, made complaint to the Bar Association against plaintiff (which was his right) mailing sufficient copies to various other persons so as to assure that same would receive extended publicity (which was not their right) with the intention of denigrating plaintiff's reputation and earning ability, which it did. Such complaints were made only when plaintiff sought redress in the courts against defendants and as a direct result thereof.

- 123. Thereafter when one of such complaints was rejected by the District Attorney of Westchester County as a "fishing expedition" and when the District Attorney of Suffolk County found no evidence of wrongdoing these results were suppressed by defendants.
- and prejudicial statements to be circulated to the public press in order to damage plaintiff personally, in his profession, and to prejudice plaintiff's rights in the pending criminal action, the habeas corpus proceeding, and in the federal court. That during such period of time the defendants, SIGNORELLI, BERGER, and MASTROIANNI, were and assumed the role of prosecutors, but had no official designation or capacity for such role.
- a. Shortly prior to June 27, 1977, defendants, SIGNORELLI, BERGER, and MASTROIANNI, made such statements to the public press or same were made at their instigation and approval.
 - b. On June 27, 1977, by defendant BERGER, the

secretary of defendant, SIGNORELLI, ROBERT CIMINO and NOEL ADLER, an employee of Surrogate's Court: Suffolk County were in Supreme Court: Suffolk County at a time when they were on the public payroll and getting paid for work purportedly performed in Surrogate's Court not the Supreme Court, they made similar statements to the public press or assented to those made as officials for defendants and the Surrogate's Court.

- c. On June 27, 1977, defendant, BERGER, who was not a party or recognized attorney in the proceedings in Supreme Court made voluntary, gratuitous, prejudicial, and irrelevant statements in open court with the knowledge that a representative of the press was present and for his benefit.
- d. By false statements made to defendant LEONARD

 J. PUGATCH by defendant SIGNORELLI and/or his secretary,

 ROBERT CIMINO, with the knowledge that such statements would

 be placed in an affidavit of LEONARD J. PUGATCH, filed in

 Court and available to the press thereby.
- e. By gratuitous statements made by defendant BERGER, before Hon. GEORGE F.X. McINERNEY, when the said defendant BERGER was not a party to the proceeding, not an attorney for any party in the proceeding, and when he was told, advised, and knew that he had no standing for making any statements, but clearly made to prejudice plaintiff in the pending proceeding and having it carried in the public press.
- f. By similar remarks made under similar circumstances in Supreme Court on June 27, 1977 by the defendant BERGER.

- g. By inviting interviews with the public press and conveying false and prejudicial information at times and places unknown to plaintiff at the present time.
- 125. Prejudicing plaintiff's legal rights, the defendants, SIGNORELLI and GRZMALSKI, caused plaintiff's subpoena that was to be served on defendant SIGNORELLI, to be served improperly so that the defendant SIGNORELLI could avoid testifying as a witness.
- 126. In attempting to prejudice the rights of plaintiff, the defendants, SIGNORELLI, BERGER, and MASTROIANNI, impeded and obstructed plaintiff's right to obtain court minutes from a court stenographer and which in fact did prejudice the rights of plaintiff.
- MASTROIANNI intentionally caused the defendant, LEONARD J. PUGATCH, to serve an Order with Notice of Settlement with a false affidavit of service or in such manner that plaintiff would not receive same and the decision of the Court until after the noticed settlement time and thereby prejudiced plaintiff's rights.
- known that the Contempt Order of June 22, 1977 was still in full force and effect, since the Order annulling such contempt had not been entered. Nevertheless, the defendants, SIGNORELLI, BERGER, MASTROIANNI, and PUGATCH, in concert with Hon. OSCAR MUROV, reinstituted the Criminal Contempt proceedings against plaintiff although they knew or should have known that same

violated plaintiff's constitutional right against double jeopardy.

- such knowledge, that the reinstituted Order to Show Cause to hold plaintiff in criminal contempt was jurisdictionally defective, the defendants, SIGNORELLI, BERGER, MASTROIANNI, and PUGATCH, in concert with Hon. OSCAR MUROV, transformed the judicial tribunal of Hon. OSCAR MUROV into a forum to denigrate plaintiff in his profession and in the public medea.
- been most explicit in his opinion that in the case at bar testimony in criminal contempt proceedings could not be taken in the absence of the plaintiff accused, and knowing that there was no jurisdiction over plaintiff, nevertheless, the defendants, SIGNORELLI, BERGER, and MASTROIANNI, caused testimony to be taken again in another sham proceeding in order to denigrate plaintiff in his profession and in the public medea.
- by defendants, SIGNORELLI, BERGER, MASTROIANNI, and PUGATCH, and knowing that the Order annulling the Contempt Order had been stayed by virtue of the Notice of Appeal served and filed on behalf of defendant, SIGNORELLI, and despite the fact that these defendants knew that any newly reinstituted criminal contempt proceedings were constitutionally improper, nevertheless these defendants reinstituted several such criminal

contempt proceedings.

- and PUGATCH, knowing that the Contempt Order of June 22,
 1977 contained false and contrived statemnts of which if
 truthfully disclosed would have caused the Writ of Habeas
 Corpus to be immediately and summarily sustained, suppressed
 such information in order to harass plaintiff in making
 numerous distant and arduous trips to court in order to
 prove the obvious falsity of such statements.
- 133. The defendants, SIGNORELLI, BERGER, MASTROIANNI, and PUGATCH, knowing that they did not have a single respectable case or authority to support such Contempt Order, nevertheless resisted plaintiff's Writ of Habeas Corpus as a means of aggravated harassment.
- responsible case or authority to support such Contempt
 Order, these defendants are intent in using public funds to
 prosecute a meritless appeal to harass plaintiff and cause
 him to expend his private funds.
- Court, the defendants, SIGNORELLI, BERGER, MASTROIANNI, and FINNERTY, conspired that FINNERTY should accept plaintiff's legal papers and fees for serving same but not serve them on the defendant BERGER and Hon. OSCAR MUROV until the return date had passed.
- 136. Although plaintiff and another advised defendant, CHARLES BROWN, who masquerades as a police official

that if papers were mailed to plaintiff he would mail a Notice of Appearance (which would be just as effective as personal service), the defendant, CHARLES BROWN, after consulting with the defendants, SIGNORELLI, BERGER, and MASTROIANNI, conspired to harass, embarrass, and interfere with plaintiff's business, by loitering and annoying those with whom plaintiff has business relations at their place of business.

- 137. Defendants, SIGNORELLI, BERGER, and MASTROIANNI, caused a representative of theirs to loiter around plaintiff's residence for many hours on August 10, 1977, making embarrassing inquiries of neighbors, under the pretense that he desired to serve legal papers, which these defendants knew were meritless and void and which were so declared void.
- 138. On January 25, 1978, while plaintiff was in Surrogate's Court: Suffolk County and deprived of movement in a significiant manner, the defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, acting in concert with defendants, ANTHONY MASTROIANNI and VINCENT G. BERGER, JR.,
- a. interrogated plaintiff on matters wherein it was openly disclosed that plaintiff was the subject of a criminal accusation and purposefully did not give plaintiff the mandatory federal constitutional warnings.
- b. continued such interrogation after plaintiff expressed his constitutional desire to remain silent.
- c. continued such interrogation even after plaintiff expressed his constitutional desire to have counsel.

- d. repeatedly made "directions" that plaintiff respond to the aforementioned accusations after plaintiff expressed desires to remain silent and/or after expressing a desire to have counsel.
- e. made threats regarding the failure to respond as directed by the defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI.
- f. directed that plaintiff appear the following day "with" his counsel because plaintiff chose to remain silent.

These defendants knew they were acting in violation of plaintiff's federal constitutional rights, maliciously intent on infringing upon them with consequent injury.

- 139. On January 25, 1978, without legal authority or cause, restraining and imprisoning plaintiff within the confines of the court building of Surrogate's Court, and then, on information and belief the defendants, SIGNORELLI, MASTROIANNI, and BERGER, had plaintiff followed and kept under surveillance by a court officer restricting plaintiff's lawful activities.
- 140. In order to intimidate plaintiff, the defendants, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, VINCENT G. BERGER, JR. and ANTHONY MASTROIANNI, conceived, planned, and executed a scheme to harass and burden plaintiff's wife by having her
- a. subpoensed to a place a great distance from her residence or office on a date when proceedings were not scheduled and to keep her from her busines and personal

грегети.

b. Knowing that they had no jurisdiction over her, defendants, SIGNORELLI and BERGER, "directed" her to appear in Supreme Court: Suffolk County and then the defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, employing the State office of the Attorney General falsely represented to the United States District Court that only a request had been made to her to appear when plaintiff sought injunctive relief.

containing threats and intimidating remarks.

and BERGER, were advised that plaintiff would be engaged in the Appellate Division on January 26, 1978 and expressing no desire to know any particulars with respect to such official authority and governmental facilities, harassed, Division of the Supreme Court, First and Second Judicial Division of the Supreme Court of The Supreme Court

General to oppose plaintiff's motion on February 3, 1978, which sought, inter alia, to restrain, defendant, SIGNORELLI, "from hearing or adjudicating any matter wherein (plaintiff) is a party or an attorney", the defendant, SIGNORELLI, falsely represented to the United States District Court that "there (was) no present action", that it was "concluded", and that "there "there are no present action", that it was "concluded", and that

statements and representations to the United States District Court, the defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, employing his official authority and power went on a personal rampage three weeks later, by causing to be published a defamatory statement referring to plaintiff by name, which patently concerned matters over which defendant, SIGNORELLI, never had nor could ever have jurisdiction to decide or determine as part of his judicial duties since it did not occur in Surrogate's Court and such defendant was a party litigant. In such published "Decision" dated February 24th, 1978, the defendant, SIGNORELLI,

- a. maliciously made false and misleading reference to a Writ of Habeas Corpus secured by plaintiff wherein this defendant claimed that plaintiff presented same to the Supreme Court and falsely represented therein that no previous application had been made by plaintiff, when in fact a prior application had been made by plaintiff to the Appellate Division, and knowing that such false charge, if true, was punishable by disbarment or suspension.
- b. falsely asserted that plaintiff's Writ of
 Habeas Corpus was granted only on "technical" grounds, when
 he knew that it was sustained on most fundamental, constitutional
 grounds.
- c. misrepresented that the Writ of Habeas Corpus was erroneously granted and that this permitted plaintiff to "flaunt with impunity" Orders of the Surrogate's Court, when he knew that no one contends, including the defendants themselves, that the Order of Criminal Contempt was lawful.

- d. falsely stated that plaintiff improperly presented an application to the Supreme Court, Nassau County with a factually meritless claim, when in fact no such adjudication was ever made.
- e. falsely claims that plaintiff's present action in the United States District Court is "essentially (a) duplication" of one already dismissed, a determination which had not been made and could not be made by the defendant, SIGNORELLI, since he was a litigant therein.
- f. falsely asserted that "it became apparent that (plaintiff) was evading process", referring to a time that this defendant was not a Surrogate and had no jurisdiction over the parties or the cause.
- 143. Furthermore, the defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, having decided to recuse himself, had no jurisdiction to influence future litigation, both criminal and civil, by making false, misleading, prejudicial, inflamatory and derogatory comments against the plaintiff, generally and with regard to those matters which were the subject of future litigation and specifically mailing a copy of same to his appointee, HARRY E. SEIDELL, who was to sit in judgment of plaintiff, civilly and criminally.
- 144. That the aforementioned did in fact influence the said HARRY E. SEIDELL to the extent that the said HARRY E. SEIDELL knowingly and wilfully chose to disregard his oath of office and duty to obey the Constitution of the United States in his trial (inquisition) of the plaintiff.

- 145. That the said HARRY E. SEIDELL, acting in concert with the other defendants, and knowingly intending to deprive plaintiff of his constitutional rights and knowing that plaintiff was engaged in another court of at least equal importance, tried plaintiff and pronounced a verdict against him all in his absence, and without allocution or affording plaintiff such right to allocution imposed sentence, also in plaintiff's absence.
- HARRY E. SEIDELL, the defendants have perfected their appeal and are attempting to reverse the Order of Mr. Justice GEORGE F.X. McINERNEY (which invalidated the Order of Criminal Contempt dated June 22, 1977), with knowledge that any such result would be constitutionally impermissible since it would constitute double-jeopardy. This meritless appeal is motivated solely by a desire to cause a further and needless expenditure of plaintiff's private funds and efforts while defendants employ public resources and other improper and unlawful objects.
- 147. That in violation of plaintiff's constitutional right to be arrested without the needless loss of dignity, his right to access to the courts to present a Writ of Habeas Corpus at the earliest practical and most effective time and place, the defendants have harassed plaintiff, his family, business associates, and friends in an attempt to compel him to waive his constitutional rights causing him thereby severe personal injury and business and status in his profession, as more fully set forth in this "Ninth Cause of Action" herein.

148. That on information and belief and on July 20, 1977, while the plaintiff and the defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, were oppositing parties in litigation in Supreme Court: Suffolk County, the defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, ex parte, directly and/or indirectly, over the luncheon recess communicated with the Judge and affected a ruling to his advantage and to the prejudice of the plaintiff.

That on information and belief he had on other times communicated with other judges wherein the plaintiff and this defendant were adverse parties to his advantage and to the prejudice of plaintiff.

149. That the defendants have done many other acts and continue to do so violative of plaintiff's constitutional and civil rights, in retaliation for plaintiff's availing himself of his legal rights in the Courts of the United States and State of New York and thereby attempted to impair, impede, and obstruct plaintiff in such courts.

WHEREFORE, plaintiff prays that a judgment be entered in favor of plaintiff and against the defendants, with respect to the first cause of action, enjoining the defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI from hiring any further employees for Surrogate's Court: Suffolk County, directly or indirectly, except for personal assistants, enjoining the discharge of any employee of that Court except personal assistants, and except for cause; mandating that impartial reporters be assigned to such Court; enjoining the defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI from awarding any fees or any disbursements, except such fees as may be provided by statute, to his appointees or otherwise; enjoining any appointments, directly

or indirectly; restraining defendants, ANTHONY MASTROIANNI and VINCENT G. BERGER, JR., from acting as Public Administrator and Attorney for the Public Administrator respectively; enjoining them from receiving any fees or disbursements, directly or indirectly, from Surrogate's Court: Suffolk County, and from the Estate of EUGENE PAUL KELLY, in particular and compelling them to account for any and all fees and disbursements received. With respect to the second cause of action, staying, staying and restraining the defendants, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, JOHN P. FINNERTY, and THE COUNTY OF SUFFOLK from incarcerating plaintiff until determination of this cause of action or Order of this Court. With respect to the third cause of action restraining the defendants, CHARLES BROWN, or any other non-peace person from using any shield, badge, or identification which resembles that used by a police office and compelling the defendant, COUNTY OF SUFFOLK, to prohibit such use thereof. With respect to the fourth cause of action directing that defendant, COUNTY OF SUFFOLK include interest on any bail money returned, dispense with onerous conditions with respect to the return of such monies as may be reasonable and appropriate. With respect to the fifth cause of action enjoining the defendant therein from interfering with plaintiff's right to have legal papers served by the Sheriff timely and properly, directing JOHN P. FINNERTY and THE COUNTY OF SUFFOLK to properly and timely serve legal papers on behalf of plaintiff in the same manner as everyone else, and directing JOHN P. FINNERTY and THE COUNTY OF SUFFOLK to account and return such monies as were

paid by plaintiff for service of papers which were not served or properly served; enjoining all trials or proceedings by defendant, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, involving the plaintiff. With respect to the sixth cause of action enjoining the defendants, ERNEST L. SIGNORELLI, VINCENT G. BERGER, JR. and ANTHONY MASTROIANNI from using any funds except personal in any proceedings involving plaintiff and without color of authority except that which may be given by an impartial court or judge. With respect to the seventh cause of action direcing the named defendants therein to deliver copies of the records which plaintiff delivered to them. With respect to the eighth cause of action enjoining the enforcement of the Order of Criminal Contempt dated March 8, 1978. With respect to the ninth cause of action directing the defendants that upon the arrest of plaintiff, immediately and reasonably permit him to present a Writ of Habeas Corpus in the County of his arrest or in any county wherein he is being transported while under arrest. With respect to the tenth cause of action awarding judgment in favor of plaintiff against the defendants for \$15,000,000 together with costs and disbursements of this action, together with any other, further, and/or different relief as to this Court may seem just and proper in the premises.

> GEORGE SASSOWER, Esq. Attorney for plaintiff-pro se.

STATE OF NEW YORK

) ss.:

COUNTY OF

GEORGE SASSOWER, first being duly sworn, deposes, and says:

That he is the plaintiff in the within action and has read the foregoing complaint and knows the contents thereof.

That the same is true to his own knowledge except as to those matters stated on information and belief and as to those matters he believes same to be the.

GEORGE SASSOWER

Sworn to before me this day of April, 1978.

Such lamen

Potery Public, State of New York No. 60-3457772 Qualified in Westchester County Lerze Expires March 30, 19 7