

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

SIBEL EDMONDS,  
6631 West Wakefield Drive  
Alexandria, VA 22307,

Plaintiff

v.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Defendant

)

**CASE NUMBER: 1:05CV00540**

**JUDGE: James Robertson**

**DECK TYPE: Personal Injury/Malpractice**

**DATE STAMP: 03/16/2005**

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**COMPLAINT**

NOW COMES Plaintiff, Sibel Edmonds, by and through undersigned counsel, pursuant to Rules 3 & 8, Fed.R.Civ.Proc., and for her Complaint against Defendant United States of America, avers as follows:

**JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

1. This action arises under the Federal Tort Claims Act ("FTCA"), 28 U.S.C. § 2671 *et seq.* This Court has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1346(b) & 1402(b).
2. Beginning on March 22, 2001 and continuing to the present, Defendant has injured Plaintiff through negligent acts and omissions constituting, *inter alia*, negligent endangerment, negligent investigation, conversion of property, false light invasion of privacy, infliction of emotional distress and interference with prospective economic opportunity resulting in financial loss, actionable under the FTCA.
3. Defendant's complained of acts and omissions have occurred within the District of Columbia.
4. Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2672, Plaintiff submitted an administrative claim for negligence encompassing the allegations contained herein to the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI") on March 21, 2004, within two years of the beginning of

their occurrence. A denial letter was mailed to Plaintiff by the FBI on October 27, 2004. Plaintiff's Complaint is filed within six (6) months thereafter.

5. Venue is proper in the District of Columbia pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1402(b).
6. Service of process on Defendant may be accomplished pursuant to Rule 4, Fed.R.Civ.Proc.

#### **FACTS<sup>1</sup>**

7. Plaintiff was formerly employed by the FBI, an agency of Defendant, as a contract linguist. Published media reports have stated that she is fluent in Turkish and Farsi, and conversational in Azerbaijani.
8. Plaintiff is a citizen of the United States of Turkish descent. She first came to the United States in 1988 and became a citizen in 1996. Plaintiff has never formally renounced her Turkish citizenship to the Government of Turkey, however.
9. Plaintiff's entire family continues to reside in Turkey, with the exception of two sisters. Plaintiff owns real property in Turkey, including a country summer house and a small apartment in Istanbul. She previously engaged in a real estate investment business with her mother and a textile manufacturing business with her uncle, both in Turkey. Plaintiff owned a partial interest in her late father's medical clinic in Turkey. Plaintiff also obtained Turkish clients for her husband's information technology consulting business. The grave site of Plaintiff's late father is in Turkey. Between 1993 and 2000, Plaintiff visited Turkey on twenty-two separate occasions for family and business reasons, spending an average of two or three months each year in Turkey.

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<sup>1</sup> Text in quotations, unless otherwise attributed, is excerpted from the unclassified summary of the Department of Justice, Office of Inspector General ("DOJ/OIG") report of its investigation into Plaintiff's allegations and the conduct of the FBI, entitled *A Review of the FBI's Actions in Connection With Allegations Raised By Contract Linguist Sibel Edmonds*, released in January, 2005.

10. In September, 2001, Plaintiff was retained by the FBI as a contract linguist, on a six month renewable contract, to perform translation services at the FBI Washington Field Office ("FBI/WFO"), located within the District of Columbia. After September 11, 2001, Plaintiff was assigned to work on FBI counter-terrorism and counterintelligence investigations.
11. FBI contract linguists perform document-to-document or audio-to-document translation services, translating into English from the target language the speech and/or writings of non-English speaking individuals and, on occasion, render translations from English into the target language. FBI contract monitors perform summary translations of voice recordings.
12. Plaintiff's primary duties for FBI/WFO were working as a contract linguist in the Language Administration and Acquisition Unit ("LAAU"), translating information from the foreign languages in which she is fluent into English. Between September, 2001, and March, 2002, Plaintiff performed translation services as an FBI contract linguist in Turkish, and Plaintiff performed some services as a contract monitor in two other languages.
13. As a condition of employment all FBI contract linguists and FBI contract monitors are required to pass a polygraph examination and a 10-year single-scope background investigation in order to obtain a TOP SECRET security clearance.
14. Plaintiff passed a polygraph examination and a full background investigation and was granted a security clearance by the FBI prior to commencing her employment in September, 2001.
15. Prior to her retention, FBI officials assured Plaintiff that her Turkish business interests and family members would not be jeopardized by her FBI work because all of her co-workers would also have passed similar background investigations and hold a TOP SECRET security clearance. Therefore, they assured her that she

need not use an alias to protect her true identity.

16. Between January and March, 2002, Plaintiff reported a number of whistleblower allegations to FBI management officials concerning serious breaches in the FBI security program and a break-down in the quality of translations as a result of willful misconduct and gross incompetence by FBI officials.
17. Plaintiff's reports included, but were not limited to, the following:
  - (a) that a contract FBI monitor, Melek Can Dickerson, who was granted a TOP SECRET security clearance by the FBI, had immediately prior to her FBI position been employed for more than two years by an organization that was a target of an ongoing FBI investigation;
  - (b) that Ms. Dickerson had past and ongoing association with at least two or more targets of an ongoing FBI investigation (who subsequently fled the United States);
  - (c) that Ms. Dickerson was translating information obtained from FBI wire-taps concerning one or more targets with whom she had past and ongoing improper contacts;
  - (d) that Ms. Dickerson was suspected of leaking information to one or more targets of an FBI investigation to which she was assigned to perform translation services;
  - (e) that Ms. Dickerson had improperly instructed Plaintiff and another monitor not to listen and translate certain FBI wire-taps because she knew the subjects and was confident that there would be nothing important to translate concerning those subjects or their conversations;
  - (f) that Plaintiff's supervisor, Supervisory Language Specialist ("SLS") Mike Feghali, issued instructions that assisted Ms. Dickerson in carrying out

misconduct;

- (g) that in December, 2001 and again in January, 2002 Ms. Dickerson threatened to disclose Plaintiff's true identity to the target organization, thereby jeopardizing the lives and safety of Plaintiff and her family members, who were citizens of and resided in Turkey, because Plaintiff refused to go along with Ms. Dickerson's scheme to block translations and because Plaintiff reported her concerns about Ms. Dickerson's wrongdoing to FBI management;
- (h) that both as a result of misconduct by Ms. Dickerson and SLS Feghali, and as a result of gross incompetence in the FBI, numerous translations were improperly conducted or not conducted, which threatened intelligence and law enforcement investigations related to the September 11<sup>th</sup> attack, and other ongoing counter-terrorist, counter-intelligence and law enforcement investigations;
- (i) that work order documents concerning translations related to the September 11<sup>th</sup> investigation were falsified and contained forgeries of Plaintiff's name and/or initials;
- (j) that SLS Feghali issued an instruction forbidding Plaintiff from raising her concerns to the FBI Special Agent assigned to the case, or others, without the permission of SLS Feghali
- (k) that extremely sensitive and material information was deliberately withheld from translations; and,
- (l) that FBI management had failed to take corrective action in response to Plaintiff's reports and serious concerns, and instead retaliated against Plaintiff for reporting her concerns.

18. Prior to Plaintiff raising these concerns, Ms. Dickerson and her husband, Air

Force Major Douglas Dickerson, had unexpectedly visited Plaintiff and her husband at their Alexandria home in early December 2001. During this visit Major Dickerson talked extensively to Plaintiff's husband about meeting his wife in Turkey; about his job, which he said had been in weapon's procurement; dealing with Turkey and several central Asian countries. He said that he had lived in Turkey and later in Germany. He asked whether Plaintiff and her husband were active in the Turkish community here or whether they had many Turkish friends, to which they replied no. He said that he and his wife had some high level Turkish friends in the United States that they saw regularly and named one of them. He said that they regularly shopped for this person at a middle-eastern market in Alexandria, and then mentioned an organization, the *American Turkish Association* ("ATA"). He brought up another Turkish organization, the *American Turkish Council* ("ATC"), which he said he and his wife were very active in, and said that it was a very good organization to belong to and have ties with. He said that a relationship could insure that a person would be able to retire early and be guaranteed a very good and lucrative life afterwards in Turkey, what he and his wife planned to do shortly. He then asked whether Plaintiff and her husband were members of ATC, and Plaintiff's husband replied that they were not although they were familiar with it, but believed that they would have to have some business relationships with Turkey before they could become members. Major Dickerson then turned and pointed to Plaintiff and said, "all you have to do is tell them who you work for and what you do and you will get in very quickly." At that point Plaintiff quickly changed the conversation to other topics. Plaintiff subsequently verbally reported the Dickerson visit and conversation to SLS Feghali.

19. Plaintiff formally raised her concerns to SLS Feghali in writing on January 22,

2002 and then again orally at a meeting on January 25, 2002. Plaintiff emphasized the serious national security implications of her concerns, specifically that sensitive ongoing criminal and counter-terrorism investigations were being compromised, including those of the September 11 attack and certain of the detainees captured in its wake. FBI management at FBI/WFO failed to take prompt, corrective action as requested by Plaintiff and instead Plaintiff herself became subjected to a concerted pattern of reprisal and retaliation as a direct result of raising her concerns.

20. Although Plaintiff's supervisor informed an FBI manger about her allegations, the matter was not reported to the FBI Security Office until more than two weeks later, on February 11, 2002.
21. On or about February 8, 2002, Plaintiff wrote a detailed memorandum to the Acting Assistant Special Agent in Charge ("ASAC"), documenting her concerns about security and management problems in the language department, emphasizing the serious national security implications and requesting that prompt corrective action be taken. Although Plaintiff's supervisor had given her permission to write the memorandum on her home computer because of concern of retaliation by SLS Feghali, the FBI later concluded that the memorandum contained classified information and seized Plaintiff's home computer.
22. Plaintiff also informed the ASAC and other FBI management officials that Plaintiff was deeply concerned for her personal safety and the safety of her family as a result of the conduct of and threats made by Ms. Dickerson and Plaintiff requested that the FBI take immediate steps to address these problems.
23. On February 12, 2002 Plaintiff was finally interviewed by the FBI Security Office about her allegations. The following day Ms. Dickerson also was interviewed. Both were deemed credible by a Security Officer. However, a subsequent

investigation by the DOJ/OIG found that “the Security Officer did not challenge . . . [Ms. Dickerson] with respect to any information . . . [she] provided although that information was not consistent with FBI records.” It found that “the Security Officer’s investigation of . . . [Plaintiff’s] claims . . . was significantly flawed,” and labeled it “superficial.”

24. During this period, Plaintiff advised her sister living in Turkey of the threats by Ms. Dickerson to disclose the identity of Plaintiff to the target organization. Fearing for her own safety, Plaintiff’s sister immediately fled Turkey and currently resides in the United States where she has applied for asylum. In order to flee Turkey, Plaintiff’s sister was forced to abandon her employment with KLM Airlines and suffer substantial financial hardship. To date she resents Plaintiff and has not spoken to her for nearly three years.
25. By letter dated February 13, 2002, Plaintiff wrote to Executive Assistant Director for Counterterrorism/Counterintelligence Dale L. Watson, notifying him of her serious security concerns which potentially put Plaintiff’s personal safety and the safety of her family at risk. In her letter Plaintiff informed Mr. Watson that she had already reported her concerns to the management in her department but that no corrective action had been taken and that Plaintiff’s management expressed a “let’s just sweep it under the rug” attitude. Plaintiff again emphasized that sensitive ongoing criminal and counter-terrorism investigations were being compromised.
26. On February 14, 2002 SLS Feghali sent an e-mail to the LAAU Chief and another FBI official asserting that “there was no basis for . . . [Plaintiff’s] allegations.”
27. On February 22, 2002 Plaintiff met with Supervisory Special Agent (“SSA”) Tom Fields, and SLS (and acting ASAC) Stephanie Bryan to discuss her concerns. “Immediately after the meeting, . . . [FBI management] began to explore whether

- the FBI had the option to cease using . . . [Plaintiff] as a . . . [contract linguist].”
28. In an internal memorandum drafted on February 25, 2002 the FBI recommended that both Plaintiff and Ms. Dickerson undergo a polygraph examination to assist in the investigation. However, the proposed questioning of each was to focus on whether either had made any unauthorized disclosures of classified information, “rather than [on] the threat that had been alleged by . . . [Plaintiff].”
  29. On February 27, 2002, Mr. Watson signed the certified mail Domestic Return Receipt that was attached to Plaintiff.s letter dated February 13, 2002.
  30. On or about March 7, 2002, Plaintiff personally met with Deputy Assistant Director for Counterterrorism/Counterintelligence James T. Caruso, who was Mr. Watson’s direct deputy, about her concerns. During the course of their meeting, which lasted between one and a half to two hours, Mr. Caruso listened to Plaintiff’s reports of misconduct, and her detailed concerns about serious security breaches and misconduct in the language department. However, Mr. Caruso did not take any notes during his meeting with Plaintiff and at the conclusion of the meeting he failed to commit to taking corrective action of any kind.
  31. Also, on or about March 7, 2002, Plaintiff filed complaints with the FBI Office of Professional Responsibility (“FBI/OPR”) and the DOJ/OIG in which Plaintiff reported her allegations of serious security breaches and misconduct. Plaintiff also alleged in her complaints to FBI/OPR and DOJ/OIG that she was being subjected to harassment and retaliation for making reports of serious security breaches and misconduct.
  32. Also, on or about March 7, 2002, the FBI renewed Plaintiff’s contract as a linguist for an additional six month period.
  33. On March 8, 2002, Plaintiff underwent a polygraph examination which determined she was not being deceptive in denying having made any unauthorized

disclosures of classified information.

34. By March 15, 2002, Plaintiff noted to SLS Feghali that “in the past few weeks, ‘coincidental’ to her reports of wrongdoing, she had received no new work assignments and no offers of temporary duty assignments.”
35. Despite the open status of the “investigation” of Plaintiff’s allegations, by March 20, 2002 an FBI draft Electronic Communication (“EC”) stated that “some of . . . [her] allegations . . . were not substantiated and that she had not been completely forthcoming . . . and recommended that . . . [the FBI] immediately discontinue using her as a linguist . . . .”
36. On March 21, 2002, Ms. Dickerson similarly underwent a polygraph examination which determined that she was not being deceptive in denying having made any unauthorized disclosures of classified information.
37. Despite the fact that FBI officials “later expressed disappointment with the questions asked in the polygraphs, . . . as they were not responsive to the allegations raised by . . . [Plaintiff], . . . the FBI never considered doing any additional polygraphs and continued to rely on the [existing] polygraphs as support for its position that . . . [Plaintiff’s] allegations were unfounded.” Indeed, “the Polygraph Unit Chief [later] admitted that questions directly on point could have been asked but were not.”
38. On March 22, 2002, as she was about to leave FBI/WFO for the day, Plaintiff was summoned to a meeting with SLS Stephanie Bryan, SSA Frields and SSA in charge of WFO Personnel Security George Stukenbroeker. Plaintiff was first instructed to wait in the office of SLS Bryan. As Plaintiff waited, SLS Feghali stopped by the open office door, faced Plaintiff, tapped on his watch and stated, “[i]n less than an hour you will be fired, you whore.” He then smiled and returned to his office next door. This incident was witnessed by, Liz, a secretary and SLS

Janice (LNU). Minutes later Plaintiff was summoned into the office of SSA Fields. Also present were SSA Stukenbroeker and SLS Bryan, where she was advised that her employment with the FBI was being summarily terminated and was ordered to surrender her security badge. Plaintiff requested a written explanation for her termination. In response, SSA Stukenbroeker threw a security form in front of her and stated, “[y]ou want something written, here it is. That form has all the reasons why you have been fired. You have violated every single item in that form.” Plaintiff reminded those present that her reports of misconduct were still pending before DOJ/OIG and FBI/OPR. SSA Fields replied, “[w]e have already called them. OIG and OPR are not willing to take your case and have told us that there will not be any investigation.” SSA Stukenbroeker added, “[t]hey won’t process your case.” Plaintiff requested to return to her work station to retrieve her personal belongings, including a personal calendar, notes and family photographs, but her request was denied. As Plaintiff was escorted from the building, she was told that she would never set foot in the FBI again. Plaintiff told SSA Fields, “[y]ou are only making your wrongdoing worse, and my case stronger. I will see you very soon.” SSA Fields replied, “[s]oon maybe, but it will be in jail. I’ll see you in jail.”

39. Immediately after leaving FBI/WFO Plaintiff met with John Roberts, Unit Chief of FBI/OPR, who informed her that he had personally checked the results of her polygraph examination, and that she had passed it with absolutely no deception indicated.
40. By letter dated April 2, 2002, Defendants officially notified Plaintiff that her contract was “terminated completely for the Government’s convenience.” However, the subsequent DOJ/OIG investigation found that “the FBI has not asserted that . . . [Plaintiff’s] contract was terminated because it had no further

