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# Lawsuit widens; includes bank

*Employee suing  
for defamation  
of character*

by **Michael Lewis**  
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An investigator for Richmond Bank is now suing the bank for defamation of character, not just two of its officers.

John Landreth originally named only the bank's chief executive officer William E. Walters and security officer Bernie Reddy in the suit, which was filed last year in Madison Circuit Court.

But Landreth, who is on administrative leave of absence from the bank, enjoined the bank in his lawsuit Feb. 9, according to his attorney, Robert L. Abell of Lexington.

"Testimony was developed in depositions that warranted bringing the bank in," Abell said today.

Walters said the allegations contained in Landreth's suit are "totally unfounded."

"We're going to fight this as hard as we can," Walters said today.

Landreth says the bank damaged his reputation by suggesting he was involved in illegal activity.

"He is asking for damages to compensate him for injuries inflicted on his reputation, and loss of income," Abell said.

Landreth's suit and an age-discrimination lawsuit filed against the bank by former Richmond Bank vice president Robert E. Puckett have caused allegations to fly.

Puckett, 46, was fired by Richmond Bank in June 1994 after nine years of employment there

for allegedly discussing possible money laundering through the bank with federal authorities. In his lawsuit, Landreth claims the bank defamed him by linking him to "gun-running and kidnapping and selling illegal machine guns to the Ku Klux Klan," Abell said.

Abell represents both Landreth and Puckett.

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