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Award Winning Hollywood Director Files a \$40 million Suit Against the State of California and the L.A. District Attorney's Office for False Imprisonment

Claims civil right violations and discrimination based on national origin; will share any potential award with Michelle Seward's victims



Film Director / Activist Dror Soref

LOS ANGELES, CA (August 9, 2017) – Award winning Hollywood director, Dror Soref (“Not Forgotten”) filed a suit today against a variety of governmental agencies and employees including the Los Angeles District Attorney’s Office, the California Department of Business Oversight and the California Department of Insurance.

Mr. Soref’s claims allege that he was falsely accused, arrested and imprisoned for over 140 days when he was taken into custody for violations of California securities laws associated with raising funds for filmmaking. His co-defendant was Michelle Seward, who was identically charged with these violations. While Ms. Seward was active in raising funds, review of investigative reports establish that Mr. Soref was not involved with fundraising, and virtually unknown to investors prior to his arrest. Mr. Soref was completely exonerated of the charges.

While under arrest, Mr. Soref spent over 140 days in jail when faced with a \$2.7 million bail, because it was asserted that his “ties to Israel” (Mr. Soref is an American citizen who was born in Israel) made him a “flight risk.” In comparison, Ms. Seward – who was well known to the complaining investors - was released on her own recognizance upon her arrest. Despite his alleged “ties to Israel,” Mr. Soref has strong ties to the Los Angeles community, including a family with three children and service on the Board of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce.

The complaint alleges another misconduct employed by the defendants to deny Mr. Soref his civil right to liberty and dignity: concealing the investigative evidence possessed by the defendants until after the initial bail hearing, while

professing to the judge that Mr. Soref is 'more culpable' than Ms. Seward to justify the disparate treatment regarding bail. Said investigative memoranda clearly vindicated Mr. Soref, focusing all the culpability for alleged criminality on Michelle Seward.

Mr. Soref, who is claiming \$40 million in damages for his false arrest and imprisonment, states that a portion of any potential award will go to his co-defendant's victims. "While I have done nothing wrong, I feel a kinship for Michelle Seward's victims," says Soref. "Therefore, I will allocate a certain portion of my award resulting from this lawsuit to these people, in the hope of alleviating some of their suffering."

Mr. Soref's ultimate release came only after an abnormally long preliminary hearing in which the judge found: "The Court... [in a preliminary hearing] only determines whether there is probable cause... to determine if a crime was committed and that [Mr. Soref] is guilty of that crime. It is an extremely low standard... but there is a quantum of evidence required, however minimal it is. As I look to the totality of the evidence in this case and the reasonable inferences that can be made, I find the People have not met [this] burden..."

Mr. Soref's non-pecuniary damages include the devastation to his family, negative publicity which has resulted in his inability to find meaningful employment, emotional stress associated with being falsely charged and incarcerated, as well as the continuing stigma associated with the unproven charges.

Mr. Soref's case was filed in The United States District Court, Central District of California on August 9, 2017 (case no. 2:17-cv-05901).

Mr. Soref is represented by The Law Offices of Etan Z. Lorant (818.990-3990; Esq8ton@Gmail.com) and the firm, D. Shawn Burkley, Attorney-at-Law (818.386-8408; Shawn@BurkleyHouse.com). Mr. Lorant is best known for his successful representation of several officers who were falsely arrested as part of the Rampart scandal and Deputy James Mee, who settled a civil suit related to Mel Gibson's drunk driving incident in 2006.

For additional information, please refer to the attached document entitled *Background Information to Complaint*, available through Mr. Soref's attorneys.

Mr. Soref was falsely accused, arrested and imprisoned for over 140 days, facing \$2.7 million bail, even though investigative reports clearly vindicated him, focusing all alleged criminality on Michelle Seward. The latter was identically charged yet was released on her 'own recognizance'. To keep Mr. Soref in jail the defendants asserted that his "ties to Israel" made him a "flight risk." The complaint alleges other misconduct employed to deny Mr. Soref his civil right to liberty and dignity, including concealing the investigative evidence until after the bail hearing, while professing to the judge that Mr. Soref is 'more culpable' than Ms. Seward to justify the disparate treatment regarding bail. Mr. Soref was later completely exonerated of the charges.

