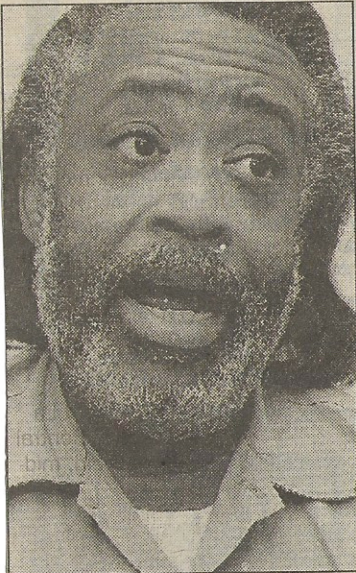


Sharpton sues Navy for 1M

Says he was mistreated during Vieques arrest



The Rev. Al Sharpton

E.M. GALLAGHER
SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

Imprisoned Rev. Al Sharpton is suing the United States Navy for \$1 million.

Sanford Rubenstein, who represents Sharpton, yesterday announced he filed a claim for Sharpton against the Navy on Monday.

Sharpton is seeking payment for the cruel and unusual treatment he says he received from the Navy when he was arrested for trespassing at the Naval base in Vieques, Puerto Rico, Rubenstein said.

"It is important that the Navy's outright disregard for civil rights ... [is ceased]," Sharpton said in

a statement.

Rubenstein said Sharpton was strip-searched in the presence of males and females and forced to sit in mud on a roadway for an unreasonable amount of time.

Sharpton also said he was forced to lie handcuffed in "pools of water" on the floor of a Navy barge for four and a half hours while additional water coming into the barge hit him. Officials then also loosely chained vehicles next to Sharp-

ton causing him to "fear for his life" as well as inhale pollution, Rubenstein said.

"At Camp Garcia, Vieques, Puerto Rico, claimant suffered physical and psychological injuries while being taken into custody by U.S. Navy personnel and while in custody of U.S. Navy personnel," the claim reads. "Claimant further alleges that the U.S. Navy maintained a deliberate indifference to claimant's safety and health."

Rubenstein said the recently freed Vieques three — Councilman Adolfo Carrion, Assemblyman Jose Rivera and Bronx Democratic Party chairman Roberto Ramirez — will be witnesses to

Sharpton's allegations.

Naval Cmdr. Greg Smith said the Navy clearly recognizes the individual's right to protest, but action must be taken when its security personnel is put in danger.

While he could not comment directly on the Sharpton lawsuit, Smith said proper procedure was followed when the protesters were arrested. The Navy does not arrest or confine individuals, he said, as security personnel and federal marshals are responsible for such matters.

"It is often a lengthy process, but there is control over it," he said. "The individuals are treated with respect."