

plea goes to governor

at the hearing that courts have reviewed Savory's case numerous times and found him guilty.

"The defendant puts nouns and verbs together in different forms every year or two and runs it up the flagpole and sees if anyone salutes it," Lyons said

after the hearing. "It's such a tired old thing that he continues to go for."

Savory was convicted in July 1978 and sentenced to 50 to 100 years in prison. But the 3rd District Illi-

nois Appellate Court in Ottawa threw out his confession, ruling that police had coerced Savory.

He was convicted after a second trial in 1981 and sentenced to 40 to 80 years in prison.

Apart from the flawed confession, Savory's attorneys have noted that federal and state courts have contradicted each other on the significance of physical evidence and prosecution witnesses' testimony. His

legal advocates also have noted that hair found in the victims' hands does not match Savory's hair and that two of the three key prosecution witnesses have recanted since Savory's second trial.

Lyons countered that the physical evidence is less significant than Savory's attorneys say. Lyons also said the witnesses, despite having recanted certain elements of their testimony, maintain that Savory shared with them incriminating details of the murders.

"They may have said I was wrong or mistaken or I lied when I said this or that," Lyons said, "But none of them have ever recanted that Johnnie Lee Savory told them some things about those murders before anybody else on the planet knew them."

The confidential recommendation, required by state law in clemency proceedings, is expected to reach Blagojevich next week. He has no deadline for making a decision and has broad discretion in granting clemency.

Ex-FBI agent sues ABC

Muslim man says he was defamed

By Todd Lighty

Tribune staff reporter

A former Muslim FBI agent has sued ABC News, a Chicago FBI agent and a retired agent, charging they defamed him in a national television broadcast in December 2002.

Gamal Abdel-Hafiz alleges that the ABC broadcast and stories posted on the network's Web site falsely stated that he had refused orders to secretly record fellow Muslims as part of FBI investigations into terrorist activities, including a 1999 Chicago-based investigation into the fundraising activities of the militant group Hamas.

The stories suggest he placed "his religion over his duty as an agent" and left viewers with the impression he was a "sympathizer to terrorism and other religious fanatics," according to the lawsuit.

While his two former colleagues did not mention Abdel-Hafiz by name, the lawsuit alleges that "co-workers understood that the broadcast and articles referenced him, due to the fact that he was the only Muslim special agent working for the Federal Bureau of Investigation at that time."

Abdel-Hafiz, 45, who was fired by the FBI in May, could not be reached for comment. His lawyers also would not discuss the lawsuit.

The FBI declined to say why Abdel-Hafiz was terminated. But the PBS television program "Frontline" has reported that he failed to reveal on his job application that he once was involved in an insurance lawsuit.

Abdel-Hafiz, who was born in Egypt, has been credited with obtaining a crucial confession in a 2002 FBI investigation of a six-man Al Qaeda terrorist cell based in Lackawanna, N.Y.

Abdel-Hafiz, who lives in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area, filed his lawsuit last month in Tarrant County, Texas.

Jeffrey Schneider, vice president of ABC News, said Tuesday that the sources used in the broadcast, including the two agents and a former federal prosecutor, were impeccable.

"We are confident in the accuracy of our story," Schneider said. "We are hopeful the court will dispose of this meritless case quickly."

Besides ABC News, Abdel-Hafiz is suing the reporters involved in the broadcast, Charles Gibson and Brian Ross, and two of his former colleagues, retired Chicago agent John Vincent and Robert Wright Jr., who is assigned to the Chicago anti-terrorism squad.

Wright and Vincent declined to comment.

Their lawyer, Todd Hutton of the public interest group Judicial Watch, called Abdel-Hafiz's allegations groundless.

In the past, Wright has been outspoken about what he called the FBI's inability to conduct terrorism investigations and its failure to prevent the Sept. 11 attacks.



Savory

ool unifies

