

**ERNIE L. RASMUSSEN • 2200 Columbia Pike Apt 412 • Arlington, VA 22204  
(703) 979-5351**

April 26, 1988

Rick Rudy  
President  
High Tech Gays  
P.O. Box 6777  
San Jose, CA 95150

Dear Rick:

Enclosed is a check for \$25.00 for my membership renewal for this year.

Just thought I would drop a few lines to let you know of a "success story" that shows WE can win (sometimes) if we fight the system, and because of efforts of organizations like HTG.

You probably don't recall, but last summer I phoned you to ask for a recommendation for an attorney in the Washington, DC area who was experienced in dealing with security clearance law. At the time we spoke, you suggested I try NGRA for a recommendation. I did just that, and based on Leonard Graff's recommendation, I called a local attorney (Harvey Friedman) who specializes in just these issues. I had decided I needed legal help because DIS had threatened to withdraw my TOP SECRET clearance. They had been notified (by the National Security Agency - NSA) that I was gay. During the course of routine processing for an NSA clearance, and after the investigation was completed, I had admitted to a polygraph examiner that I was gay (an experience which, in hindsight, I would not repeat as the subsequent two hour grilling into every minute detail of my sexual life was excruciatingly humiliating). I had been appealing NSA's denial of my SCI access for slightly over a year at the time (unsuccessfully), and while I could do my job with my company without the NSA SCI access, I could not expect my company to keep me employed if my DoD TOP SECRET and SCI accesses were withdrawn. It was critical that I win this issue with DIS.

You might be interested to know that the reasons which DIS cited for taking action to withdraw my clearance were two:

I was a target of potential blackmail because I was gay ; and

I had shown poor judgment by not informing my supervisor and co-workers in my company that I was gay, and therefore was also a potential subject of blackmail.

The DIS objections were so absurd, that were it not for the seriousness of the matter I would have ignored them. However, to satisfy their objections I informed my company President (who is my immediate supervisor), as well as all my employees in our Washington office, that I was gay. I was very pleasantly surprised to find universal support - from the company President right on down. Armed with this support, I appealed to DIS, pointing out that their objections were mute: I was openly gay on the job as well as in my personal life (though frankly I thought it improper of the government to in effect require me to discuss my sexual preferences with anyone). Included in my appeal were letters from my employees here in Washington attesting to their knowledge of my sexuality and the fact it did not change their opinion of my trustworthiness or lessen their confidence in my ability and judgment. A similar letter

from the company president indicated I had told him I was gay, I had given permission for him to inform any/all company employees of this fact, and that the company retained their confidence in my abilities, trustworthiness, and loyalty, and supported me to the fullest extent.

Based on the success of the HTG case against DIS, I guess I should not have been surprised by the outcome, but frankly I was. DIS withdrew all objections, and instructed DISCO to grant the necessary clearances at the required level. Based on that action, I have retained my TOP SECRET clearance and DoD SCI accesses.

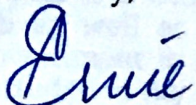
This whole painful experience has a positive side: I can now be fully open in all aspects of my life, not just in my personal life. This has meant a great deal to me and my lover. After twenty years in the Navy (in Intelligence, no less), where I had to hide not only my preference, but my lover as well, I now no longer live with the fear that someone at work will "find out". My company (DELFIN SYSTEMS - based in Sunnyvale) has been exceptionally supportive - not only morally, but financially and emotionally as well. My lover is now routinely included in company social functions, (and when the company flew all the East Coast employees and their spouses to California to celebrate the company's fourth anniversary, my lover was included as well). And more importantly, virtually everyone made him feel welcome and not the least uncomfortable. The company has also paid half my legal fees for fighting the case with DIS and with NSA.

Unfortunately my success with DIS has not been paralleled with my NSA case. After nearly two years of appeals, NSA still has not granted the requested SCI access, despite my unblemished and exemplary twenty year record of intelligence service during which I had access to information far more sensitive. With the company's backing I am continuing to fight the case, and while there is no doubt NSA can "outlast" me in the appeals process, I don't intend to go away quietly and hide in the "closet". They may ultimately "win", but in the meantime I will be a genuine headache for some bureaucrat somewhere who will wish he never heard of the case. And at times like this it's good to know there are organizations like HTG around to provide moral support and encouragement to keep up the fight.

I hadn't meant to ramble on for so long, Rick, but did want to share this "success" with you. I also have a favor to ask: my employer (DELFIN SYSTEMS) is a very small, young company that does not have a formal gay policy in writing. However, as we are approaching the 50 employee mark at which time we will be required to have an Equal Opportunity policy, this will be an opportunity for me to try and get gays included in the non-discrimination policy. It would be useful to have a suggested gay policy to use in discussions with the corporate administrator. Do you have examples of policies at other companies that you could provide me, or a suggestion on where I might get such a copy? Any help you can provide would be most appreciated.

Once again many thanks for all the support and help, and keep up the good work with HTG.

Sincerely,



Ernie L. Rasmussen