



## **Model claims Abercrombie & Fitch referred him to 'sexual predator'**

By Wisconsin Gazette

June 20, 2012

<http://chicago.gopride.com/news/article.cfm/articleid/30494196>

---

A model is alleging that Abercrombie & Fitch and Hollister Co. referred young and vulnerable employees to a "sexual predator."

The predator allegedly asked models to pose nude and masturbate to look relaxed for the camera. That allegation is made in a 41-page complaint that [Courthouse News Service](#) says was filed by model Benjamine Bowers.

Bowers, according to CNS, claims, "Abercrombie & Fitch and Hollister Co. are delivering the names, photographs, addresses and telephone numbers of its young employees to a sexual predator."

The complaint continues, "Store employees are recruited as models at casting calls held at Abercrombie & Fitch and Hollister Co. stores. Abercrombie & Fitch and Hollister Co. give a second hope to those employees not selected for these coveted modeling jobs by giving those employee's names, photographs and personal information to a modeling agent that they highly recommend, but had never investigated."

The agent, Brian Hilburn, is identified in the complaint as a "sexual predator" who instructs "vulnerable employees" "to pose nude and masturbate in front of Hilburn while he photographs and videotapes them. Instead of being rewarded with a selection as a coveted model for Abercrombie & Fitch or Hollister Co., the young employees are subjected to shameful and embarrassing sexual harassment."

Bowers, in the suit, said he was 18 when this happened to him at Hilburn's office in Jackson, Miss. He says after losing out on an in-store modeling job with Abercrombie & Fitch, a casting director with Abercrombie referred him to Hilburn, saying the agent was experienced and trustworthy.

The complaint says in June 2011, "After inducing Benjamine to sign a contract with him and offering Benjamine what he thought was an opportunity of a lifetime, Hilburn coerced Benjamine into posing nude and masturbating in front of him, while Hilburn shot photographs and video. Hilburn then exposed himself to Benjamine in a failed sexual advance. Benjamine was shocked and horrified by Hilburn's lewd conduct and by the fact that his employer, Abercrombie & Fitch and Hollister Co., had delivered and subjected him to Hilburn."

Bowers also alleges in the complaint that Hilburn told him if he didn't pose nude for the photographs, that Abercrombie's acclaimed photographer Bruce Weber would get "mad," according to CNS. Weber is not a focus of the lawsuit.

Bowers is asking for more than \$1 million in damages.