

Corbisgate for Bill Gates?

Written by Bob Snyder
29 July 2010

While Steve Jobs battles "Antennagate," Bill Gates is riding under the radar with **Corbisgate**.

A 6-person company near Seattle sued stock photo company Corbis (Bill Gates is sole owner) and won a \$20 million judgment. Naturally Corbis is appealing the decision.



The Superior Court jury decided Corbis did enter business with Infoflows and then developed the company's ideas into a service for identifying objects in its digital photo collection. The court called Corbis's behaviour "fraudulent."

If you've been in the computer business for a while, you'd heard stories and allegations like this. Wouldn't it be ironic if Bill's fingers are caught in the Corbis cookie jar?

Infoflows, run by mostly former Microsofties, launched to create tech to identify digital objects. Corbis made an agreement with Infoflows around 2005, but gave info from Infoflows to its outside patent counsel (presumably to figure how best to legally re-engineer similar technology). Corbis terminated the agreement in 2006, just days after receiving some key software designs.

How involved was Bill Gates? According to Infoflows, before going to court they first complained in Feb. 2006 about Corbis directly to The Man himself—in Bill Gates' office at Microsoft HQ in February 2006.

The content of that meeting between Infoflows and Corbis has been sealed by the courts, but the President of Infoflows says tantalizingly, "There's a big fat secret in there. I'll tell you this: We would be happy to have it unsealed."

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