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CIA Agent Joined As Defendant in Civil Slander Suit

A federal judge in Alexandria approved yesterday a U.S. government request to join a CIA agent as a defendant in a civil suit in which purported national security secrets might be revealed.

Judge Oren R. Lewis gave Justice Department attorney Stanley Wright until Jan. 14 to tell him specifically what action the government wants to take in the \$2 million slander suit brought by former CIA agent C. Phillip Liechty against a current CIA employe, Robert F. Bodroghy.

Liechty's attorney, Thomas Fortune Fay, argued against the government request, saying, "We're not talking about national security . . . we're talking about American officials with their hands in till . . . No government agency has the right to conceal criminal acts."

Liechty has said outside of court the CIA officials "covered up" information about attempts by Korean official to bribe U.S. congressmen in the early 1970s. The CIA has declined comment, and Fay did not elaborate on his allegation yesterday.

Lewis, however, accepted the argument by government attorney Wright that national security matters were involved. "It's an important question—does a person who has knowledge of national security matters have the right to divulge them in a private suit?" Lewis said.

Lewis also ordered government attorneys to inform him by Monday whether the FBI or CIA is conducting "electronic surveillance" on Liechty or his attorneys.

Another attorney for Liechty, Sol Z. Rosen, said he "suspected" the government was tapping his phone because of recent unexplained "disruptions" in his phone service. Wright said he would respond by Monday.