

THE ANDERSON LAWSUIT

At 54, journalist Jack Anderson has achieved much. He is the most widely syndicated political columnist in the world: some 990 newspapers carry his column, distributed domestically and overseas by United Features.

Anderson also appears on the ABC-TV show "Good Morning, America" and some 200 radio stations affiliated with Mutual Broadcasting. He publishes a "business letter," writes books and articles, and lectures at least once a week for a \$2500 fee. He employs a staff of 10 reporters and helps train six interns a year.

He is the father of nine children and the grandfather of two. He works in Washington, D.C., but resides in Bethesda, Md. He claims that during the Nixon Administration, "I was probably the most harassed reporter in the nation."

Last Sept. 27th, Anderson, a practicing Mormon, filed suit against various agencies and employees of the federal government--Richard Nixon, Henry Kissinger, John Mitchell, Richard Helms, Bob Halde- man and many others.

He charged that he had been "the victim of the most massive, intensive government harassment in U.S. history" and sued for approximately \$22 million in damages, stipulating that he would donate any proceeds won from the lawsuit "to other newsmen to fight freedom of the press abuses."

If and when the Anderson case comes to trial in the U.S. district court for



COLUMNIST JACK ANDERSON AND WIFE OLIVIA AT THEIR BETHESDA, MD., HOME

the District of Columbia, one of its most comic chapters will deal with the Central Intelligence Agency.

Although the CIA has no right to conduct a domestic surveillance of a reporter like Anderson, it conducted one of him and his staff under the code name "Project Mudhen" from January to April 1972.

Under a freedom of information request, Anderson's lawyers have obtained the "Mudhen" files from the CIA. They are a riot. They reveal that the CIA wanted to find out where Anderson was obtaining information. At first the agency assigned eight automobiles and agents to the project. Later, they increased the number to 18 and established command posts near Anderson's office and home to direct the radio cars and photograph visitors.

During the course of the surveillance, one of Anderson's daughters, Tina, whipped out her own camera and began taking pho-

tos of the CIA agents who were following her.

Says the CIA report: "The unidentified woman was driving a dark green or black Ford station wagon...Her apparent age was 20 to 30 and she had long brown hair...." The CIA withdrew its surveillance cars, later returned with rental cars.

Jack Anderson later lunched at the Madison Hotel with the then CIA Director Richard Helms, who was wired with a hidden tape recorder. Helms learned nothing.

Last month a New York jury agreed that the CIA had invaded the privacy of three U.S. citizens by opening their mail to and from the Soviet Union. The jurors recommended awards ranging from \$2500 to \$10,000.

Anderson has asked for a jury trial in his lawsuit, and it will be interesting to learn what the jurors recommend in his case. Can you imagine a reporter being awarded damages of \$22 million?