

T-P
2-21-68

COPPOLA SUES FOR \$5 MILLION

Claims Libel, Slander in Life Magazine Article

State Police Capt. Roland F. Coppola filed a \$5 million suit for libel and slander Tuesday in federal district court against Time, Inc., in connection with an article which appeared in Life Magazine Sept. 29, 1967.

It is alleged in the suit that the article, entitled "Brazen Empire of Crime," purported to publish an expose of "extensive criminal and nefarious activities of the criminal society known as the Cosa Nostra in and about Lafayette, Louisiana."

Coppola claims that he is a career police officer, having served since November, 1952, with an unblemished record and has risen to the rank of captain in command of Troop I in Lafayette.

The suit further contends that the article "did deliberately link the name of complainant with that of one Carlos Marcello who was reported in said article to be 'Cosa Nostra's' top man in Louisiana in such a way as to create the necessary and inescapable impression that certain of the criminal activities of the said Marcello and the said 'Cosa Nostra' alleged to be conducted in and about Lafayette, were made possible by the connivance of the complainant with the said Marcello and the 'Cosa Nostra.'"

The article necessarily implies that the alleged criminal activities were made possible only by Coppola's dereliction in his duties, the suit charges.

Coppola claims that the article is false and libelous and

has achieved wide notoriety through the public news media of Louisiana and throughout the nation.

Shortly after its publication, it is alleged, Gov. John J. McKeithen met in New York with employees of the defendant corporation and slanderous and false statements were made to the governor and resulted in Coppola being summarily suspended.

The actions complained of, according to the suit, were done deliberately with actual malice in a deliberate attempt to embarrass and humiliate Coppola.