

ACLU Files Suit in CIA

Mail Opening

PROVIDENCE, R.I.—Thirty present or former officials of the Central Intelligence Agency and other government agencies yesterday were accused in a class-action suit of illegally opening mail.

The suit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union in U.S. District Court here alleges that officials of the CIA, the FBI and the Postal Service opened the first-class mail of plaintiff Rodney Driver and other Americans.

Driver, a University of Rhode Island mathematics professor, said three letters he sent to mathematicians in the Soviet Union were opened and copied. He said the letters contained personal and mathematical information.

The Rockefeller commission, which investigated CIA activities, reported in June that the agency opened some mail to or from the Soviet Union from 1952 to 1973.

The suit asks the court to order compensatory damages of \$20,000 for each letter opened and read by the CIA and punitive damages of \$100,000 for each person whose mail was opened.

Among those named in the suit are former CIA officials Richard M. Helms and James R. Schlesinger, former FBI Director L. Patrick Gray III; former Attorney General John N. Mitchell, and former Postal Service officials Lawrence F. O'Brien and Winton M. Blount.

NYTimes (longer)
filed Surv.