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# S.L. psychologist says refusal led to harassment, assault, searches

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A Salt Lake man says he and his wife were followed, physically assaulted and subjected to unauthorized searches of their home by FBI and CIA agents after he refused to participate in U.S. covert activities in Finland.

Lee Lasater, a Salt Lake counseling psychologist, filed suit Monday in U.S. District Court asking for records he says the FBI and CIA accumulated on him when he lived in Finland between June 1978 and October 1979.

Lasater was joined at a press conference Monday by Shirley Pedler, executive director of the Salt Lake American Civil Liberties Union, which is sponsoring the lawsuit.

Ms. Pedler said the complaint asks for an injunction to force the CIA and FBI to surrender Lasater's records in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act. Both agencies have refused to turn the documents over, citing national security reasons. But Ms. Pedler says the FOIA requires the government to give a point-by-point explanation for refusal to comply with the act.

"The protections against improper governmental intrusions into the lives of U.S. citizens, as afforded per the terms of the FOIA, are virtually meaningless if the government can issue, without justification, blanket denials by invoking unilateral national security claims," Ms. Pedler said in a press release.

Lasater said he was invited to go to Helsinki, Finland, to lecture at universities. During that time, he was approached by representatives of the American Embassy and asked to participate in surveillance activities of Finnish military personnel.

Lasater said he refused. "You just don't accept the hospitality of someone else in their own home and then turn around and rip them up the back."

Since that time, he and his wife, Sinikka, have been subjected to harassment that he believes has been perpetrated by the CIA in Finland and by the FBI once he returned to Salt Lake City.

Lasater cited numerous instances in which, he claims, the hand of government is evident. He said he and his wife have been followed and their home searched. On one occasion, he said, his wife was physically assaulted.

He also said his wife received anonymous phone calls in which the caller claimed Lasater was seeing other women. The immigration status of his wife, a Finnish national in

the process of emigrating to the United States, has been questioned on technicalities.

He said he and his wife are scared to be challenging the government, but they feel they must put a stop to such tactics.

"I learned long ago that a bully only gets more aggressive if you refuse to stand up to him," he said. "My wife and I have been subjected to such a bully."