

Rocky Anderson to file suit against NSA for 'criminal' surveillance during Olympics

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Kristin Murphy/Deseret News, File Photo

By Angie H. Treasure, | Posted - Aug 12th, 2015 @ 8:12pm

SALT LAKE CITY — Former Salt Lake City Mayor Rocky Anderson is asking for the public's help in filing claims against the National Security Agency for what he called the "illegal" and "criminal" gathering of information during the 2002 Winter Olympic Games.

In an interview with KSL NewsRadio, Anderson said he first became aware of the alleged surveillance when he read an article detailing the NSA's activity in the [Wall Street Journal in 2013](#). The publication disclosed that every phone call and text message in Salt Lake City was subject to surveillance by the NSA and FBI before and during the 2002 Olympic Games held in Utah.

The Olympic games took place less than six months after the terrorist attacks of 9/11.

"Every bit of it was illegal. It was a criminal act," Anderson said. "Every instance was a criminal act and a massive violation of our constitution and other domestic laws."

Anderson said he had since spoken with a source who worked within the NSA at the time of the Olympics, and said the truth is even worse than the Wall Street Journal alleges.

According to the source, not only was the greater Salt Lake City area under NSA surveillance, but the areas surrounding all the Olympic venues were being watched, meaning that the NSA was collecting information on all the calls made, how long they lasted and what numbers were involved. Anderson said his source also claimed that the NSA targeted specific people and recorded their conversations.

"Here's how this man put it to me: They saw this as a golden opportunity to put a security cone over an entire geographic area and grab everything. And he said they did it all outside the Fourth Amendment, outside the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act," said Anderson.

"Now think of this," Anderson said. "All of it without a warrant, all of it without probable cause. It is absolutely unprecedented in our nation's history."

It's what [Anderson's website](#) calls "The most massive, indiscriminate, illegal spying on the contents of communications in United States history."

"It used to be that we'd looked at what the Stasi did in East Germany, or what the KGB did in the Soviet Union and we would be appalled," Anderson said. "We would never stand for that from our government. We, the people, would stand up against that. And the fact is, we the people are not standing up. And that's why, in large part, I'm pursuing this now."

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Anderson said that his pursuit of a lawsuit is a way to prevent further surveillance of this kind from happening in the future.

"We can't let complacency set in to the point where we're clearing the path toward greater totalitarianism," said Anderson.

The lawsuit is about reversing the behavior before it becomes an irreversible trend, according to Anderson.

"A lot of people say, oh, you're doing it for the fees. Believe me," Anderson said, "I would've been happy just being a plaintiff. I tried to get other organizations to handle this case."

Although the statute of limitations for this kind of lawsuit is usually two years, the timeline has been delayed in light of the 2013 Wall Street Journal article. Anderson is asking that the public step forward and file claims.

From [Anderson's website](#): "If, during the period of approximately Oct. 1, 2001, to February 28, 2002, you sent or received emails or text messages or engaged in telephone calls while you or the other person to the communication was in Salt Lake City or an area near another Olympic venue, your communications were likely illegally and unconstitutionally surveilled, intercepted, and analyzed by the FBI and/or NSA. If that is the case, then you are likely entitled to the recovery of money damages."

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— Rocky Anderson (@RockyAnderson) August 12, 2015

Those damages, according to one statute cited by Anderson, could pay up to a minimum of \$10,000 in damages to each person who has received this kind of violation of the law.

Anderson is asking that people go to [his website](#), fill out five documents and bring them to the Winder & Counsel offices at 460 S. 400 East in Salt Lake City by Monday, Aug. 17, to be filed.

Anderson added that he tried to speak to the head of public affairs at the NSA last week and when he asked her about the allegations in the Wall Street Journal article, he was told she was aware of them but that she did not admit, deny, nor would she discuss them.

The former mayor hopes that people will join him in the lawsuit, saying, "The government should fear the people, not the people fearing the government."

Contributing: Mary Richards

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