

Trying to close it

Bill collection firm is sued by Carey

By William Gaines
and Daniel Egler

STATES ATTY. Bernard Carey filed suit yesterday asking the Circuit Court to close down a North Side collection agency and prohibit the owner, Marshall Zeidman, from ever operating as a bill collector again.

The suit asks that Zeidman, 38, also be held in contempt of court, fined, and that the corporate charter of his firm, J. O. M. Accounts Services International, 7646 N. Sheridan Rd., be revoked. It also asks the court to dissolve the company, which was incorporated in 1966.

In a rarely used legal tactic, the state's attorney's office contends that Zeidman has forfeited his right to operate a collection agency by persistently using illegal tactics.

"IT IS unthinkable that the State of Illinois would create a legal entity and allow it to conduct business in violation of state law," Carey said.

The suit notes that Zeidman was convicted in February,

1973, of deceptive practices and charging exorbitant interest rates. Yet, it contends, he continues to use these tactics. He is on two year's probation imposed by Judge Daniel J. Ryan in that case.

In May, 1973, Zeidman signed a consent decree in a federal court suit filed by legal aid attorneys in which he agreed to stop impersonating policemen, intimidating debtors, and reciting the law.

Carey's suit alleges that Zeidman's tactics are "injurious to the public welfare." Other abuses cited in the suit are threatening debtors with arrest, violating the Assumed Names Act by using a name designed to sound like a law firm, preparing court orders, and impersonating an attorney.

DOCUMENTS FILED with the suit show that the lawyer ruse even fooled the police department's Internal Affairs Division when Zeidman, using the name Bennet, Brady, Collins, and Klein, attempted to collect a crossing guard's bill.

The Chicago Bar Association charged Zeidman with eight instances of unauthorized practice of law in another suit filed last month.

Zeidman was one of nearly a dozen collectors exposed in a Tribune Task Force series on debt collection abuses.