

Newsmen Urge Subpoena Fight

By Jerry Buck

NEW YORK, Feb. 4 (AP)—Three of television's top newsmen said today that the news media must fight government efforts to subpoena a reporter's notes and unused news film.

"This is dangerous business," said Chet Huntley of NBC, who appeared in a panel discussion with Walter Cronkite of CBS and Frank Reynolds of ABC.

Cronkite said, "A news source is going to be very careful about talking to any reporter when he thinks it may end up in a court of law. What official is going to talk off the record when a reporter's notebook can be laid open in court?"

He said two potential news sources had refused to talk to CBS in the past few days for this reason.

The newsmen's remarks were prompted by court subpoenas in recent days for the unused pictures and files of CBS, Time, Life, Newsweek and The New York Times regarding the Black Panther Party. They appeared at a newsmakers' luncheon at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel sponsored by the International Radio and Television Society.

Reynolds said that as communicators, "We haven't done a very good job of informing the silent majority, or however you want to categorize them, of the danger to them. We've got to make it very clear we're not defending our right to broadcast but the people's right to know."

Cronkite said, "We cannot function. Our people cannot be informed if we have to work under these conditions."

Asked if the networks had been intimidated by recent criticism from Vice President Spiro T. Agnew, the newsmen said, no. "I don't think anybody is really intimidated," said Reynolds. "He huffs and puffs, but he'll go away."

Cronkite said Agnew's criticism was valid in some cases, "but that's not the issue here. We're concerned here with intimidation by a high government official of an industry that is licensed by the government."

