

Schorr, to Avert 'Tension,' Resigns From CBS News After 23 Years

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Daniel Schorr, suspended with pay by CBS since February while a House committee vainly sought to discover who had leaked him a report on the CIA, resigned from the network yesterday.

In an exchange of "Dear Dan" and "Dear Dick" letters with CBS News President Richard Salant, Schorr said he believed his "reinstatement would be a source of tension within an organization whose future success I still care about." He has been a television reporter with CBS for 23 years.

The resignation followed two days of negotiations in New York over terms of a final settlement of his contract, which had two years to run.

Schorr will be paid his full salary through the end of 1978, then will begin receiving pension payments from a vested CBS retirement fund. He is 60.

In a telephone interview yesterday, Schorr said his immediate plans include "a lot of lectures," a memoir and a short-term professorship at a large university, which "I can't name at this time."

He did not preclude an eventual return to network TV. But he pointed out that under terms of his settlement he would forfeit his CBS pay—believed to be between \$50,000 and \$70,000 annually—if he joined another network.

Schorr, whose career with the network has been marked by both public and in-house controversy, made headlines last February when he revealed he had turned over for publication in

The Village Voice a House intelligence committee report that was critical of various CIA and FBI activities.

The House ordered the report classified and asked its ethics committee to discover Schorr's source. CBS suspended Schorr pending outcome of that inquiry.

From the start, Schorr maintained he was protected under the First Amendment from revealing his sources. The network backed him, and paid his attorney, Joseph Caifano, for legal work connected with the committee inquiry.

In hearings held two weeks ago by the ethics committee, Schorr refused to reveal his source and was publicly praised by Salant and others for his demeanor before the committee—compliments that yesterday's Salant letter repeated.

The ethics committee refused to prosecute Schorr for contempt, and the question of his permanent status with CBS arose again.

Schorr said yesterday that, early in the controversy, published comments by unnamed CBS executives indicated to him that his career at the network "was on its way downhill."

Meanwhile, within CBS, old resentments against the aggressive, sometimes abrasive Schorr surfaced.

He angered some people by indicating to management that a colleague, Lesley Stahl, might have leaked the report to the Voice. Within 24 hours he acknowledged himself to be the source.

In addition, a long-simmering feud surfaced between Schorr and other correspondents at the CBS Bureau here.

It traced back to a speech two years ago at Duke University in which Schorr allegedly claimed that several co-workers had knuckled under to CBS management orders the night of President Nixon's resignation to "go easy" on the fallen President.

Schorr later said he wasn't talking about the correspondents, but "about an atmosphere that I sensed in the control room (that night), as passed down by management."

All these elements figured in the negotiations that began Monday in New York.

In the exchange of letters yesterday, Schorr made a point of his management troubles, citing his awareness "of the polarizing effects within CBS News of the controversy involving me" and expressing his "doubt of my ability to function effectively if reinstated..."

"I leave CBS News with sadness," Schorr concluded, "but without rancor. Despite some disappointments I cherish my 23 years as a staff correspondent (and my four previous years as a stringer). I shall always admire the tradition, which first attracted me to CBS News, of being the best in broadcast journalism."

Salant, in his reply, said he shared "your sadness. Your many years of reporting... have been unusually distinguished and a major contribution to American broadcast journalism."

Salant also praised what he called Schorr's "superb and eloquent service to all of us in journalism and, above all, to the principles of the First Amendment and the public's right to know."