

Cronkite, Chancellor Allegedly 'on CIA List'

Washington

A former CBS and ABC correspondent said yesterday he was told that Walter Cronkite and John Chancellor are on a long CIA list of reporters who have performed secret intelligence work.

Cronkite and Chancellor immediately denied they ever had been employed by the CIA or FBI.

Sam Jaffe, an admitted FBI informant while working for the networks, said he has learned from several sources of a list of between 40 and 200 reporters who allegedly have informed for U.S. intelligence agencies.

Jaffe said he had not seen the list and could not prove it exists.

He said in addition to learning about the list from former White House speechwriter Patrick Buchanan and House committee sources, he had been told by former ABC correspondent Bill Gill that Cronkite Chancellor and the other big names are on it.

Jaffe said Buchanan told him Richard Nixon demanded the list

of names from the CIA "two or three years ago" to use for possible retribution against what he felt was unfair coverage of Watergate.

A. Searle Field, staff director of the House Intelligence Committee, called CBS News in Washington yesterday after Jaffe's remarks and said:

"Jaffe's allegations about newsmen have been made in interviews with our staff. We have carefully checked them — including going over CIA files — and have concluded they are without foundation. This refers specifically to CBS newsmen he has named to us — Walter Cronkite, Marvin Kalb and Daniel Schorr.

"We have also concluded that Jaffe is not a credible witness," Field said.

Cronkite, anchorman for CBS news, vehemently attacked Jaffe's accusation.

"I have never knowingly had any contact with the CIA in any capacity whatsoever except as a reporter seeking information," he said.

Chancellor, former head of the Voice of America and now anchorman on the NBC nightly news, said, "This is not only totally untrue, it's ridiculous. I have never done a thing formally or informally for either the CIA or the FBI."

Jaffe also said Bill Sheehan, president of ABC news, is on the list, which "includes some of the biggest names in our business."

Sheehan said "I categorically, without qualification, deny any involvement, formal or informal, with any intelligence organization of the United States or any other country."

The president of CBS news, Richard S. Salant, said "at least as far back as 1971, Sam Jaffe has been peddling his story about his alleged relationships with the CIA."

"The charge is as irresponsible and outrageous as it is false. Mr. Cronkite has assured me that he has never had any relationship of any kind with the CIA, directly or indirectly, formally or informally, covertly or overtly. I know Walter Cronkite too well to believe that he ever engaged in an action so inconsistent with his functions and responsibilities as an American journalist.

"My confidence in Mr. Cronkite is as complete as my contempt for Mr. Jaffe is total."

In an interview on a local television show (Panorama, WTTG), Jaffe said he had been told by House Intelligence Committee sources such a list exists, and "it's dynamite."

He said he had been told he is not on the list.

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