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Contempt Move Against N.Y. Times

Miami

A federal judge has begun criminal contempt proceedings against the New York Times because of the newspaper's disclosure of portions of a secret U.S. grand jury report on the Internal Revenue Service undercover investigation called Operation Leprechaun.

United States District Judge C. Clyde Atkins ordered the Times Monday to send representatives to a hearing January 24, at which they must show why they shouldn't be held in contempt for publishing a story on the report on January 6.

The judge also directed the newspaper's representatives to reveal how the Times obtained a copy of the report.

During Operation Leprechaun, the Internal Revenue Service was alleged to have spied on the sexual and drinking habits of a number of persons, including lawyers and judges.

The Miami News and other newspapers published several stories about the operation. The stories led to congressional investigations and the grand jury's probe.

The grand jury did not issue any indictments but did present a report to Atkins. The panel told the judge it wanted the report made public, but Atkins said Monday that he needed extensive research on the request because federal grand juries rarely issue reports.

Associated Press