

Reporter in Contempt Case Being Held in Isolation

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LOS ANGELES, Dec. 14 — William Farr, the Los Angeles journalist jailed two weeks ago for refusing to reveal his news source, is being held here in isolation.

Officials at the Los Angeles County Jail said today that state law demands that Mr. Farr be separated from other prisoners because he is being held in civil contempt and not on a criminal charge.

As a result, rather than be housed in the general cell blocks along with 3,700 other prisoners, Mr. Farr is being kept isolated in an 8-foot by 12-foot room with no window and no bars.

"The first couple of days it was rough to adjust to the confinement," Mr. Farr said in an interview, "but if I have to be here for years, I'll be here." He added: "I can't say I'm happy to do so, but I'm willing to do so."

Superior Court Judge Charles H. Older ordered the jailing of the 37-year-old Los Angeles Times reporter after he refused to name the attorneys who were the source of an article he wrote during the 1970 murder trial of Charles M. Manson, the hippie cult leader. Mr. Farr covered the Manson trial for another Los Angeles newspaper, The Herald-Examiner.

Attorneys for Mr. Farr appealed Judge Older's ruling but the newsman was jailed when those appeals were exhausted without success. The issue has since been taken into the Federal courts.

Mr. Farr's cell is in the jail's hospital wing. It is sealed with a heavy metal door that has a 6-by-6 inch opening at the top. That opening had also been

sealed but Mr. Farr said that guards had recently been leaving it open, enabling him to peek out and see a portion of the hallway.

In his interview Mr. Farr did not complain. He said that the food was as good as that he received years ago when he was in the Marines. He said that the jailers had treated him nicely.

And he said that interviews with reporters had "kept me from going buggy."

His meals are served in his room and he eats alone. He must also get his exercise there.

Few Books and No TV

Unlike other prisoners, he does not have access to television. He said that he had been buoyed recently by the number of letters that he had received from the general public, although until a few days ago jailers had turned back any mail that did not bear his identification number, 2215819.

Judge Older has ordered that Mr. Farr be granted no special privileges. As a result, he cannot have a typewriter, he cannot have any books unless they come directly from the public library and he cannot mingle with any other prisoners.

"Time is my biggest enemy," Mr. Farr said. But he added that "if I can get enough reading material, I'll be all right."

Unlike other newsmen who have gone to jail recently to protect their sources, Mr. Farr has not been given a specified jail term. Unless Judge Older relents, his incarceration could last for years.

At that time he wrote the article that led to his jailing, Mr. Farr was able to keep his source unidentified because of protections granted him and

other reporters under a state newsman's privilege law.

However, just after the Manson trial Mr. Farr left his job at the newspaper. Judge Older then called him in and ordered a disclosure of the source. When Mr. Farr refused, he was found in contempt of court.

Judge Older's original request was made in October, 1970. His second, which came seven months later, was some 50 days after the Manson trial had ended.

"It was over and done with," Mr. Farr said. "That's the unfairness of it."