

PRESS

Who is Farr protecting? The District Attorney?

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Imprisoned reporter Bill Farr may surprisingly be protecting District Attorney Busch and his recent opponent, former Deputy District Attorney Vincent Bugliosi, from the court room order of Judge Charles Older forbidding attorneys to divulge information about the Manson case to the press.

A secret informant within Busch's own office has revealed to this reporter and others that Farr actually obtained his story from a cell mate of a Manson Gang member (not from attorneys, as has been widely reported) and later checked his facts with Busch and Bugliosi before publication, thus involving them in a possible conflict with the gag order.

Information concerning the involvement of the women has apparently been common knowledge among some members of the court house press corps for several weeks. There has been reason to believe that some judges, including Judge Charles Older, may very well have knowledge of this information.

Part of the story was first revealed Monday by reporter-columnist Bill Mayer in the *Antelope Valley Daily Ledger Gazette*, a daily newspaper published in Lancaster and circulated throughout the northwestern portion of the county.

Mayer was once a public relations man for the previous District Attorney of Los Angeles. He was on the staff of Evelle Younger and obtained his information about Farr and Busch from a person who still works in the DA's office.

Mayer told of Busch's probable involvement on Monday and plans to give details about the probable involvement of Bugliosi when his column appears next week.

Not one word of the possible involvement of Busch and Bugliosi has appeared in any of the major papers in Los Angeles until Mayer's story appeared on Monday. This was in spite of extensive knowledge by several reporters, presumably including the very media leadership who have been screaming foul over the Farr Case.

Mayer issued a challenge with his revelation of Busch's potential involvement. He said, "A judge who has given an order and has seen it ignored may, in his wounded pride, forget that the First Amendment of

the Constitution deals with freedom of the press. No real news man ever will."

Then Mayer says, "Let me prove my point by putting myself in the same spot. I'll write something told me in confidence and if any pompous self-inflated dignitary in black robes wants to jug me for contempt, he may call me to the bench, find a cell and bury the key."

Mayer then said Busch knew about Farr's story before it appeared in print and had given Farr the idea it was all right to run the story.

Several reporters (including myself) have this week been given this same information by Mayer's secret District Attorney's informant, detailing Bugliosi's and Busch's role in the story which ultimately led to the jailing of William Farr. We have all pledged a willingness to use this story and maintain the secrecy of the informant.

We are doing this in defense of freedom for ourselves and all other persons needing the guarantees of the First Amendment. This is not being done out of any feeling of masochism or martyr complex. Rather it is being done to forcefully speak out now while an opportunity still exists.

The informant revealed that a girl who was a cell mate of Susan Atkins, a member of the Manson Family, had been given knowledge of the list of the influential people allegedly scheduled to be attacked by the Manson Family. The girl was released on probation and then apparently offered the information to Farr as long as her name would be kept secret. She was afraid any public disclosure would result in her losing probation status.

The informant claims Farr then went to see Bugliosi to check out the facts in the case. Bugliosi was supposed to have said the story was accurate.

Farr then wrote his story. He has always been a very cautious reporter with a background of many investigative stories in Orange County. Because of this caution our informant claims Farr then showed his story to Busch asking if the story would get Farr in trouble or not. Again he was supposedly told the information was

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basically correct. The question then is: Are knowledgeable attorneys subject to a judge's gag order in contempt of court if they even confirm a reporter's facts that he has gathered elsewhere. And is Farr now protecting both his original source, the girl, as well as Busch and Bugliosi.

Throughout the case the implication has been that Irving Kanarek is the one who gave out the information. However, this is completely out of character with Kanarek's previous actions. He has always avoided discussing with reporters any problems of his clients and has even been a supporter of courtroom gag orders because he feels adverse publicity can hurt his clients.

Bugliosi and Busch were thus apparently both involved in a possible violation of Judge Older's gag order, which kept each from really attacking the other during the recent campaign. Perhaps this also explains why Busch was obviously very nervous throughout the first Farr hearing and has taken unusual pains to make comfortable arrangements for Farr's family.