

NYTimes JAN 1 2 1973  
**REPORTER FREED  
IN CONTEMPT CASE**

**Douglas Orders the Release  
of Farr Pending Appeal**

**By WARREN WEAVER Jr.**

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Jan. 11—William T. Farr, a Los Angeles newspaperman who has spent 48 days in jail rather than reveal his sources for an article, was ordered released today "in the interest of justice" by Associate Justice William O. Douglas of the Supreme Court.

The reporter's freedom, however, is guaranteed only until the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit has reviewed his case. Justice Douglas emphasized that he was not judging the merits of the case but only whether a substantial legal question was involved.

Mr. Farr was imprisoned for civil contempt when in defiance of an order by the judge, at the murder trial of Charles Manson, he wrote an article based on private information from at least two trial attorneys and later refused to say who they were.

Mr. Farr, who was then a reporter for the Los Angeles Herald-Examiner, argued at the time that he was protected by a California statute explicitly guaranteeing newsmen freedom to conceal their sources and by the freedom of the press provisions of the First Amendment

**A Recurring Case**

"The case is a recurring one," Justice Douglas wrote in issuing today's order, "where the interests of a fair trial sometimes collide with the requirements of a free press. A fair trial requires that a jury be insulated from the barrage of prejudicial news stories that is sometimes laid down on the courtroom.

"The issue is not free from doubt. Yet since the precise question is a new one not covered by our prior decisions, I have concluded in the interest of justice to release Farr on his personal recognizance."

The California Court of Appeal had affirmed Mr. Farr's contempt sentence. The California Supreme Court refused to review that decision last March, and in November the United States Supreme Court declined to take the case. At that time, Justice Douglas was the only dissenter; the application he granted today was not directed to him for that reason but because he is the member of the Court who handles all such requests for California and six other Western states.

After Mr. Farr went to jail in late November, he began a second court challenge, based on arguments that the Manson trial judge who sentenced him for contempt was not impartial and had exercised "judicial entrapment" by assuring him earlier that he was protected by California newsman's law.

At the time of his contempt conviction, Mr. Farr had left The Herald-Examiner and was on the staff of the Los Angeles County District Attorney. He is now a reporter for the Los Angeles Times.