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Lawyers Map Strategy on News Leaks

By Judy Nicol

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Lawyers for reporters subpoenaed in the Spiro T. Agnew case met for more than three hours yesterday to map strategy for contesting the attempt to track down sources of news leaks about the criminal investigation of the Vice President.

The lawyers met in the offices of Mitchell Rogovin, personal attorney for Fred Graham, a CBS Washington correspondent who was subpoenaed with eight other reporters and two national news magazines.

Following the meeting, which began at 2:30 p.m. and continued until about 6 p.m., three of the lawyers present referred all inquiries to Joseph A. Califano Jr., lawyer for Washington Post reporter Richard M. Cohen and Newsweek magazine.

Califano could not be reached in repeated attempts to contact his home and office.

The lawyers had indicated Saturday they would discuss united strategy for fighting the attempt to force disclosure of sources of news about the criminal investigation in Baltimore of Agnew.

Subpoenas were served Friday on newsmen and, reportedly, on top Justice Department officials under an extraordinary order by U.S. District Court Judge Walter E. Hoffman. The judge authorized Agnew's lawyers to subpoena testimony and notes of anyone they think has knowledge of news leaks in the Agnew case.

Reporters at the four newspapers, two television networks and two news magazines were subpoenaed.

The reporters who have been subpoenaed, in addition to Graham and Cohen, are Sandy Smith, a Washington-based reporter for Time magazine, Ronald Sarro and Robert Walters of The Washington Star-News; Nicholas Gage of the New York Times; William Sherman of The New York Daily News; Ronald Nessen, a Washington correspondent for NBC, and Stephan Lasher of Newsweek.