

Publisher, Editor, 10 Reporters Subpoenaed on Watergate Data

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 26 — President Nixon's re-election committee obtained subpoenas today ordering a dozen reporters and news executives to turn over all their notes, tapes and other private material relating to news articles on the bugging of the Democratic national headquarters here last June.

The subpoenas, which were issued in connection with a series of civil suits, were aimed most heavily at The Washington Post, which published articles last summer and fall linking the bugging and other alleged political espionage to high-level Republicans, including some White House aides.

The Post's publisher, Katharine Graham, and managing editor, Howard Simons, were

served with subpoenas. Three Post reporters, Carl Bernstein, Bob Woodward and Jim Mann, will be served, according to the Republicans' lawyer.

The lawyer, Kenneth Wells Parkinson, said that reporters at The Washington Star-News, The New York Times and Time magazine would also be sub-

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poenaed.

"We're not asking for confidential sources," Mr. Parkinson said. "We're asking for information they secured in interviews."

He said this information would include "false, libelous, malicious statements" allegedly made by Lawrence F. O'Brien, former Democratic party chairman, about several high-ranking Republicans.

Soon after the bugging was discovered,

Mr. O'Brien and some other Democrats charged that it had been engineered with the help of Maurice H. Stans, a former Secretary of Commerce, who was President Nixon's chief fund-raiser. Other Republicans were also accused by Mr. O'Brien of conspiring "to commit political espionage."

The Democrats filed a \$3.5-million lawsuit; the Republicans countered with a \$5-million libel suit and a second suit alleging "abuse of process" by the Democrats. Mr. Parkinson said today that after various additional

claims and counter-claims, the Democrats were now asking \$14-million and the Republicans \$7-million.

These suits are separate from the criminal case, in which five

defendants pleaded guilty and two were convicted of breaking into the Democratic offices at the Watergate complex and planting listening devices.

The subpoenas are the latest in a wave of court orders requiring the testimony and notes of reporters in various parts of the country.

The Supreme Court ruled last June that newsmen have no constitutional right to refuse such testimony. Several reporters have since been cited for contempt of court and have spent time in jail for refusing to identify their confidential sources.

Newsmen have argued that in investigating wrongdoing they must be able to assure some people anonymity if they are to get tips, leads, documents and other information from them.

Mr. Parkinson declined to address himself to that issue. He said that the subpoenas were quite broad and that they were designed to cover private, as well as public, conversations between reporters and various Democratic officials. He said the notes and other documents, as well as the reporters' own testimony, could lead to the identification of sources.

Besides those at The Post, subpoenas were issued for four reporters at The Washington Star-News, Joseph Volz, Patrick Collins, Jeremiah O'Leary and James Polk.

John M. Crewdson, a reporter for The New York Times, Dean E. Fisher of Time and Walter J. Sheridan, an author, are being subpoenaed, Mr. Park-

inson said. He said that all of them had not yet been served.

Meanwhile, a subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee heard from a number of Congressmen on pending legislation that would grant newsmen the right to refuse to answer such subpoenas.

The subcommittee chairman, Robert W. Kastenmeier, said there was a "real possibility" that no bill would be reported out by the subcommittee. The Wisconsin Democrat said that a consensus had failed to develop among the members on what form a bill should take.

Some legislators who once wanted to give newsmen only limited immunity from forced testimony are now calling for absolute immunity and are adding that a limited bill would be worse than no bill.