



AP Wirephoto

DANIEL SCHORR
He cited constitutional rights

Schorr Defies House On Revealing Source

Washington

Asserting that First Amendment rights protect him from having to divulge news sources, television newsman Daniel Schorr defied the House ethics committee yesterday by refusing under oath to explain how he obtained a copy of a secret House report on U.S. intelligence activities.

The CBS News correspondent also declined to furnish to the House ethics panel four reproduced copies of the original report of the House Select Committee on Intelligence that he said he now has in his possession.

Schorr declined to explain why he had the other copies, saying that to do so would infringe upon his legal rights as a journalist.

Committee chairman John J. Flynt Jr. (Dem.-Ga.) warned Schorr nine times during his appearance before the panel that he could be held in contempt of congress and fined and imprisoned for refusing to answer committee questions concerning the secret document.

Schorr received a copy of the House report in January. The document was generally critical of the American intelligence community. After disclosing some contents of the report on CBS television, he later turned the report over to the Village Voice, a New York City weekly, which published extensive excerpts of the document in two February editions.

Government officials said publication of the report injured national security because it contained classified information.

After the hearing adjourned, CBS News President Richard S. Salant in New York sent Schorr a telegram congratulating him on his appearance.

Also subpoenaed to appear before the ethics panel yesterday were Clay Felker, publisher of the Village Voice and New York and New West magazines; Aaron Latham, a New York magazine senior editor who wrote a textual introduction to the excerpts in the newspaper, and Shelly Zalaznick, then a company editorial director who oversaw the actual printing process.

The three journalists testified that they did not know who had given Schorr a copy of the report. They joined Schorr in contending that First Amendment rights of freedom of the press give newsmen the authority not to reveal such information.

At issue here is the recurring clash between government officials and the press over reporters' rights to gather and publish information that the officials believe should remain secret.

The press contends the public has the legal privilege to be informed; the politicians contend they have a constitutional mandate to guard the secrets of state.

Over the years, few journalists have been compelled to appear before a committee of Congress to disclose information.

One of the more notable instances when such action was taken was in 1862 when a reporter for the New York Herald was briefly held in police custody for having published portions of Abraham Lincoln's first State of the Union message to Congress shortly before it was to be delivered by the President.

Committee chairman Flynt said he did not know if the ethics panel, formally known as the House Committee on Standards and Official Conduct, would recommend to the full House that Schorr be cited for contempt.

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