

Film Makers Lash Back

Federal Subpoena Hassle

Los Angeles

Withdrawal of a government subpoena for an unfinished documentary film on the Weather Underground terrorist group was "a ploy, a trick and a gimmick" by the FBI to avoid embarrassment, film maker Emile de Antonio said yesterday.

De Antonio was one of three moviemakers, including Mary Lampson and Academy Award Winner Haskel Wexler, who criticized the Justice Department action as government harassment and intimidation based on its own fear regarding the contents of the film.

De Antonio said "The film is one of the most embarrassing things that could come out about the Justice Department," but declined to elaborate.

The American Civil Liberties Union joined the film makers at a news conference in condemning what was called a "flagrant violation of the First Amendment right of freedom of the press and speech."

The film makers were subpoenaed to appear before a federal grand jury that is investigating the witnesses' alleged ties with the Weather Underground, which has



AP Wirephoto

FILM MAKERS HASKEL WEXLER, EMILE DE ANTONIO AND MARY LAMPSON
They accused FBI of a 'trick' to avoid embarrassment

claimed responsibility for bombings throughout the United States.

The subpoenas were withdrawn without explanation by the government Thursday. *SUN*

"Our own strong defense and strong community support are the reasons the subpoena was withdrawn. The withdrawal of the subpoena was a ploy, a trick and a gimmick to stop production of a film embarrassing to the government," De Antonio said.

"The American people have a right to know what

the Weather Underground is all about and it is the government that is preventing this," ACLU Executive Director Ramona Ripston said.

She accused the government of "attempting to stifle the flow of information to the people."

De Antonio denied reports that four leaders of the Weather Underground posed as a television news crew interviewing striking Los Angeles doctors recently.

"That report was incorrect," he said. He said he would not cooperate with the

grand jury should the suspension of the subpoenas be lifted.

"And, I see no duty to divulge the identities of those involved in the film. Absolutely no one is going to tell me to be an informer."

He and the others said they were prepared to go to jail rather than surrender the subpoenaed film or cooperate with the grand jury.

The U.S. attorney's office said the subpoenas were withdrawn "for the time being" and may be issued again.

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