

Watergate Case

Subpoenas for Newsmen Killed

Washington

The U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia yesterday blocked efforts by President Nixon's campaign organization to compel ten reporters and news executives to turn over notes and other unpublished material in the Watergate case.

Judge Charlea R. Richey, acting on First Amendment grounds, quashed subpoenas served on representatives of four news organizations by the Committee for the Re-election of the President.

"This court cannot blind itself to the possible chilling effect the enforcement of . . . these subpoenas would have on the press and the public," Richey said in an oral opinion immediately after oral arguments on the issue.

JOURNALISTS

He said he did not believe that journalists had an absolute privilege against testifying, but he held that the courts "must be flexible to some extent, and that the current cases "are all exceptional."

Richey said that lawyers

for the Nixon committee had made no showing that other sources of evidence "have been exhausted or even approached." They also failed to show that the material demanded of the ten journalists is central to the case, he said.

The subpoenas had been served on representatives of the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Washington Star-News and Time magazine in connection with civil lawsuits dealing with the Watergate affair.

LEADERS

The Democratic national committee and party leaders have demanded \$3.2 million in damages from the Nixon organization and others in connection with the break-in and bugging of the party headquarters in the Watergate apartment-office complex last June.

In response, Republican leaders filed suits charging Lawrence F. O'Brien, the former Democratic national chairman and a plaintiff in the original case, with libel and malicious abuse of the judicial process.

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