

SFChronicle **'Oil Spy Threatened Suicide'**
 MAR 2 1976

Dallas

The Dallas Times Herald said yesterday it published a report on the spying activities of retired oil company engineer Norman John Rees despite a telephoned threat by Rees that he would commit suicide if the story were published and he were identified.

Rees, 69, was found shot to death at his home in Southbury, Conn., Sunday, hours after the newspaper reported his espionage activities.

"In this instance, it was decided that the story could not be suppressed even in the face of Mr. Rees' threat," Ken Johnson, execu-

tive editor of the Times Herald, said in a statement yesterday.

The newspaper said in a copy-right story Sunday that Rees passed petroleum industry secrets to the Russians and became a double agent for the FBI in 1971 when federal agents told him they knew of his work for the Russians.

The Times Herald statement yesterday said its story about Rees' spying activities was developed from various sources over a period of some three months.

"Once the basic information had been verified, Mr. Rees was contacted and asked for comment. He acknowledged during the tele-

phone interview that he had been an agent for the Soviet government," the newspaper said.

The FBI, in a weekend statement, also verified that Rees had been a spy for the Soviets.

The Times Herald said Rees twice came to Dallas for interviews and voluntarily submitted to lie detector tests. During these contacts, he asked the newspaper to withhold the story and refrain from identifying him.

"On Saturday afternoon, just hours prior to publication, Mr. Rees telephoned the Times Herald and asked if the story was going to be printed and would he be identified.

When he was told that he would be identified, he said that such a disclosure left him no choice but to commit suicide," the newspaper said yesterday.

Johnson said that because of the interviews and lie detector test, Rees "was fully aware throughout our contact with him that we intended to identify him and to publish a full account of his espionage activities."

In Southbury, Dr. Marcus Cox, an assistant state medical examiner, said an autopsy he performed Sunday showed Rees died of a single bullet wound to the head

Associated Press