

(450) DN NOTE

-ALL POINTS-

NEW YORK, AUG. 11 (AP)-A NOTED NEWSPAPER EDITOR TODAY TOLD THE AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION THAT OFFICIALS WHO "LEAK" INFORMATION ARE AS MUCH RESPONSIBLE AS THE PRESS FOR DAMAGING PRE-TRIAL PUBLICITY.

FELIX R. MCKNIGHT, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND EDITOR OF THE DALLAS TIMES HERALD, CALLED ON THE BAR TO "FIGHT AS HARD FOR A FREE PRESS...AS WE MUST FIGHT FOR THE MOST ASTRINGENT PURITY OF FAIR TRIAL WITHIN OUR COURTS."

MCKNIGHT SPOKE BEFORE THE ABA'S ANNUAL CONVENTION, WHICH WILL HEAR AN ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT JOHNSON AT 2 P.M. TOMORROW. SOME 18,000 DELEGATES ARE ATTENDING THE SESSIONS BEING HELD IN A DOZEN MIDTOWN HOTELS.

THE DALLAS EDITOR DESCRIBED THE PERFORMANCE OF SOME MEMBERS OF THE PRESS, RADIO AND TELEVISION DURING THE AFTERMATH OF THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY, AND THE TRIAL OF JACK RUBY, SLAYER OF THE ALLEGED ASSASSIN LEE HARVEY OSWALD, AS DISTORTED AND INACCURATE.

BUT, MCKNIGHT SAID, "THE MAJORITY REPORTED FAITHFULLY TWO SICKENING EPISODES OF HISTORY...

"COPYRIGHTED STORIES BY THE DOZENS HAVE COME FROM THE SAD KENNEDY STORY," MCKNIGHT SAID. "STEP BY STEP THE STORY HAS BEEN REVEALED TO THE PUBLIC...THE DRIBBLETS OF INFORMATION FROM INVESTIGATIVE BODIES, THE ENDLESS CONJECTURES, THE PREMATURE RELEASE OF EXPERT TESTIMONY AT THE RUBY TRIAL, THE CEASELESS DEGRADATION OF A CITY FROM BACKDOOR GOSSIP.

"WHERE DOES IT ALL COME FROM? LEAKS, GENTLEMAN, AND RATHER OFFICIAL LEAKS. IT IS A PROBLEM AS OLD AS GOVERNMENT ITSELF...

"THE SOURCE OF SUCH PREJUDICIAL INFORMATION IN THE PRESS MAY BE A PRIVILEGED CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATION. IT MAY BE AN UTTERANCE BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, ACCOMPANIED BY FINGER-SHAKING AND THE ELABORATE WINDOW DRESSING OF A TELEVISED PRESS CONFERENCE. IT MAY BE THE INDICTMENT OF AN INDIVIDUAL WHICH SETS IN MOTION A TIDAL WAVE OF SPECULATION AS TO HOW MANY OTHERS MAY BE INVOLVED...

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"IT MAY BE A CALCULATED LEAK TO THE PRESS, SOMETIMES FROM HIGHLY AUTHORITATIVE AND RESPONSIBLE OFFICERS OF THE COURT, OF INFORMATION NOT YET PROVED OR EVEN ADMITTED AS EVIDENCE IN COURT BUT DEFINITELY PREJUDICIAL TO THE RIGHTS OF AN ACCUSED IF HE EVER GETS INTO COURT."

SAYING THAT SOCIETY AS A WHOLE, NOT THE PRESS ALONE, MUST BE INDICTED FOR ANY "EROSION OF JUSTICE" IN THE NATION,

INDICTED FOR ANY "EROSION OF JUSTICE" IN THE NATION, MCKNIGHT SAID THE PRESS HAS "SOUND PURPOSE IN RESISTING THE SHACKLES OF CENSORSHIP."

"WE ARE JUST AS FALLIBLE AS THE DALLAS JUDGE WHO ALLOWED THE RUBY TRIAL TO END IN A TELEVISION NIGHTMARE," HE SAID. "BUT THE REMEDY IS NOT TO RETURN TO PROHIBITIONS AGAINST PUBLISHING, TO PRINTING ONLY BY LICENSE FROM THE COURT.

"RATHER, IT IS TO DEEPEN AND CARRY FORWARD THE TRADITION OF NEWSPAPER RESPONSIBILITY...

"FAITH IS SOMETIMES A SLENDER REED, BUT FAITH IN CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT OF THE RESPONSIBILITY THAT MUST ACCOMPANY FREEDOM OF THE PRESS, AND FAITH IN THE PROGRESS OF OUR WHOLE SOCIETY TOWARD A MORE SOPHISTICATED CIVILIZATION, IS A BETTER REED TO LEAN ON THAN A RETURN BY THE COURTS TO THE USE OF SUMMARY CONTEI

RETURN BY THE COURTS TO THE USE OF SUMMARY CONTEMPT IN PUNISHING NEWSPAPERS."

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