

Judge bars paper for information leak

O.J. Simpson



ON TRIAL

LOS ANGELES — The judge in the O.J. Simpson case intensified his battle with the news media Tuesday by barring the city's second-largest newspaper from his courtroom because of a leaked story.

The Daily News of Los Angeles had held one of four permanent seats designated for a newspaper during the trial.

Superior Court Judge Lance Ito revoked the seat as punishment for an article in Friday's paper that

detailed a questionnaire that the paper had obtained a day before it was officially released, a court spokeswoman said.

The Daily News filed court papers saying the judge's action was unconstitutional and has a "chilling effect on the ability of the press to fulfill its historic role in ensuring the openness and integrity of the judicial process."

Ron Kaye, the paper's managing editor, said the motion speaks for itself and "the issue will be resolved in court."

A hearing was set for Nov. 7, the same day Ito takes up the issue of whether to ban cameras and electronic media from the courtroom.

He received more than 1,000 letters Tuesday after a newspaper columnist called for a citizen rebellion against TV coverage of the trial.

Ito's clerk was struggling just to open and read the stacks of mail,

said court spokeswoman Jerriane Hayslett.

"We're trying to get an intern or someone over there to help her," she said.

The letters came in response to a Sept. 27 column by Mike Royko of the Chicago Tribune that was re-published in numerous other newspapers, including the Daily News.

"Let the trial begin with no TV coverage in the courtroom," said one letter from Chicago. Another declared: "Please stop the O.J. Simpson circus. My husband and I are sick of it and the news media is just making fools out of everyone. Enough is enough."

Simpson, 47, is being tried for the June 12 slayings of his ex-wife Nicole Brown Simpson and her friend Ronald Goldman. Jury selection started Sept. 26, but opening statement aren't expected until November.

In recent weeks, the actions of

reporters covering the case have often generated as much attention as the case itself. Ito has been particularly critical of TV reporters and last week ousted the pool television camera from the court hallway for broadcasting the faces of jurors in other cases.

The action against the Daily News was the most severe taken by the judge. There are only 27 seats allocated for all media in the courtroom. The Los Angeles Times, city's largest newspaper, the Daily News, which has a circulation of about 192,000; the Los Angeles Sentinel and USA Today had been assigned the four full-time, permanent newspaper seats.

Many newspaper and broadcast reporters share seats on a rotating basis.

Royko defended mainstream newspaper coverage — even as he urged his readers to tell the judge they were disgusted with television

coverage of the case.

"Newspapers are incapable of being sensational," he wrote. "We are dull. ... We have no background music. Just the dull printed word, which is not multimedia or interactive."

He acknowledged that TV ratings have soared when the Simpson case has been on the air.

"It is bigger than Haiti, health care or even Monday Night Football," he wrote.

"Yet, the polls tell us something else," he said. "The majority of Americans are disgusted by what they see as a sensational media circus."

He provided Ito's address and urged readers to write to him "if you feel that you are being overexposed."

The columnist was on vacation Tuesday and couldn't be reached for comment.

Quake felt throughout Pacific

TOKYO — A major undersea earthquake killed at least 16 people in Russia's remote Kuril Islands late Tuesday, jolted Japan and triggered fears of tidal waves on both sides of the Pacific.

A quake with a preliminary magnitude of at least 7.9 hit near the sparsely populated Kuril Island chain north of Japan. At least 176 people in northern Japan were injured by broken glass and falling objects, but only three of the injuries were considered serious.

A 6.0 magnitude aftershock was felt early Wednesday in the same area. There were no immediate reports of additional damage or injuries.

The first quake sent 10-foot-high tidal waves smashing into the Kurils, destroying moorings and hurling small boats onto land. The waves were smaller and less destructive farther from the epicenter.

By early Wednesday, about 40 small tsunami waves had been observed in Japan. Most were less than 3 feet high, although one was 6 feet. There were no reports of any damage.

Hawaii closed its public schools and beaches early Tuesday and ordered residents of coastal areas to evacuate. The tsunami warning was lifted Pacific-wide about six hours later.

In Moscow, Russia's Ministry for Emergency Situations said the bodies of at least 16 people were found on three islands in Kuril chain. Most were killed by falling debris, ministry spokesman Anatoly Streltsov said.

In some parts of the Kurils, 18-inch cracks were visible in the earth after the quake, Streltsov said.

Viktor Sankov, spokesman for Russia's regional government on Sakhalin Island, said all of the dead were believed to be Russian military.

Telephone service to the Kurils was cut off, and an airport in the town of Burzvestnik on hard-hit Iturup island was badly damaged and closed, authorities said.

Yevgeny Krasnoyarov, governor of the Kurils region, spoke to the islanders by radio and urged them not to panic.

About 50,000 Russians, including several thousand troops, live in the southern Kurils.

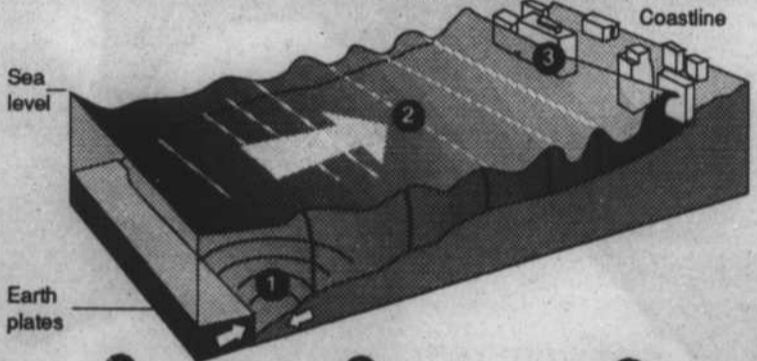
Three large cargo planes carrying rescue workers and equipment were headed for the disaster area from Moscow and Siberia, Sankov said.

Japanese authorities said an air force plane sent to survey damage was missing with two pilots aboard.

The quake — which lasted more than a minute — was centered 13

Tsunamis: the killer sea waves

A strong undersea earthquake centered 13 miles beneath the floor of the Pacific Ocean, about 125 miles east of Nemuro, jolted northern Japan, shaking buildings as far away as Tokyo. Warnings for tidal waves were issued for parts of Hokkaido.



- 1 ■ Tsunamis are generated by massive underwater earthquakes and are common around the Pacific.
- 2 ■ The waves move inland from deep ocean to shallow water, growing larger. Individual waves may occur at intervals of 15 minutes, or 125 miles apart.
- 3 ■ Approaching a coast, the waves slow down, bunch up and rise. They may rise as high as a 10-story building. When the waves break, they can cause great destruction.

Source: The Random House Encyclopedia, Our Violent Earth

miles beneath the Pacific Ocean floor, near the southern end of the Kuril chain.

Japan's Central Meteorological Agency estimated the quake's preliminary magnitude at 7.9, making it the strongest to hit the region in 26 years.

On Japan's lightly populated Hokkaido island, the late-night quake cracked roads, caused gas leaks and flooded streets. One fire was reported in the town of Nemuro, and more than 13,460 households in eastern Hokkaido lost electric power, said Kazuhiro Kojima of Hokkaido Electric Co.

More than 1,000 evacuees spent the night in public buildings in Kushiro and Nemuro alone, according to local officials.

Emergency warning sirens alerted Hawaiians in coastal areas to evacuate their homes. Oahu Civil Defense told tourists in Waikiki to return to

their hotels for further instructions, and people living on the lower floors of high-rise condominiums in coastal areas were told to go to the third floor or higher.

A tsunami wave was spotted Tuesday afternoon at Shemya, in the western Aleutians, about 1,000 miles east of Hokkaido, said Coast Guard Lt. Ray Massey in Juneau, Alaska.

In Canada, about 2,500 residents of Masset, a village on the Queen Charlotte Islands north of Vancouver, were told to move to higher ground because high tide coincided with the time the tsunami was expected to arrive.

Japan Broadcasting Corp. said 196 people were injured in the quake, almost all on Hokkaido. No deaths were reported. Most of those injured were cut by broken window glass or bruised by falling objects, a hospital spokesman said.

The National Earthquake Center in Golden, Colo., estimated the earthquake's preliminary magnitude at 8.2.

News... in a Minute

It can happen here

OMAHA — When the director of the Nebraska Crime Commission looks at the numbers from police agencies around the state released Tuesday, one trend stands out: Total crime and arrests may be down, but violent crime isn't.

And more kids are committing violent crimes, said Allen Curtis, commission director.

"It's an absolute statewide trend," he said.

The 71-page annual report includes the number of arrests made and the number of crimes reported to police in 1993.

There were 41,502 crimes reported in the state, not including Omaha, according to the report. Nearly three-fourths of them, 74.9 percent, involved larceny or theft. Violent crimes — murder, manslaughter, rape, robbery and felony assault — made up 5.2 percent of that total.

Haitian coup leader flees

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — Police chief Michel Francois sneaked out of Haiti in the dark Tuesday, the first coup leader to abandon the struggle against American soldiers who poured into Haiti to install a democratic government.

The U.S. military announced that commercial airline flights could begin landing at the Port-au-Prince airport as early as Wednesday.

And exiled President Jean-Bertrand Aristide himself pledged to return quickly, telling cheering delegates at the U.N. General Assembly he would be back in Haiti in 11 days.

"Our hearts are filled with joy," said Wilkens Pierre, who watched Aristide's speech on television in a shack in a Port-au-Prince slum. "We don't know if this will mean an end to the terror, but it will mean a new beginning for Haiti."

Ag department shuffles

WASHINGTON — The Senate on Tuesday passed and sent to President Clinton bills reorganizing the Agriculture Department and overhauling how farmers are paid for crop losses due to floods, drought or other disasters.

The two bills represent legislative victories for departing Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy, who on Monday announced his resignation amid an independent counsel's investigation into his conduct.

The reorganization bill paves the way for Espy to begin reshuffling the Washington headquarters, cutting the number of agencies from 43 to 29, and cut the number of field offices by 1,100.

A new farmer service agency would combine farm-related programs into one agency that would provide one-stop shopping out in the field for farmers. The administration projects the bill will save \$2 billion through 1998, largely by cutting the number of employees by 7,500.

The department is the fourth-largest bureaucracy in the federal government and employs some 110,000 people full time.

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