

THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

ORDER NO. 323

Establishing a One-Year Pilot
Program Governing Media Cover-
age of Proceedings in the
Supreme Court and in the
Anchorage Trial Courts

IT IS ORDERED:

1. For the period of time and in the geographic area designated in this order, Canon 3(A)(7)(c) of the Code of Judicial Conduct is suspended and the following provisions apply:

Provided that a plan for media coverage has been approved by the supreme court, a judge may permit televising, recording, and the taking of photographs in the courtroom and areas immediately adjacent thereto during a judicial proceeding open to the public or during recesses between such sessions of court, under the following conditions:

(a) Permission shall first have been expressly granted by the judge and by counsel for all parties to the proceedings, except that for media coverage of supreme court proceedings only the permission of the court shall be required;

(b) The media activity will not distract the participants, impair the dignity of the proceedings, or interfere with the achievement of a fair and impartial hearing or trial;

(c) In trial court proceedings, no witness, juror, or party who expresses to the judge any prior objection shall be photographed by still or moving camera, nor shall the testimony of such a witness, juror or party be broadcast or telecast;

(d) The plan for media coverage shall contain safeguards to ensure compliance with (a) through (c) of this paragraph and shall include provisions governing the numbers and types of camera and broadcast equipment to be allowed, numbers of camera and equipment operators, location of cameras and equipment and media personnel, movement of personnel and equipment, lighting augmentation if any to be allowed, forms, designation of courtrooms approved for coverage, and other details as may be necessary to regulate the media activity in accordance with this order; and

(e) Participating members of the media shall agree to abide by the provisions of this order and the approved plan for media coverage.

2. The provisions of this order shall apply only to judicial proceedings held in the Anchorage court facility, except that plans for media coverage may be developed and submitted for supreme court proceedings in other court locations.

3. The Administrative Director shall monitor the media coverage activities permitted in this order. Each judge shall provide the Administrative Director on request information concerning any media coverage of proceedings before that judge, including written reasons for any denial by him of permission for media coverage.

4. This order establishes a pilot program only, and shall be effective from September 18, 1978 through September 14, 1979.

DATED: August 24, 1978.

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I am unable to agree with the order providing expanded media coverage for court proceedings. I am not convinced that the benefits of this program outweigh the burdens and difficulties which may ensue. The pressures on our adjudicatory apparatus are already heavy, without adding another potential source of distraction which may detract from the calm, dispassionate manner in which the courts should do their work.

Roger H. Conquest
Justice