

Murdoch Denies Role In Paper's Obtaining Of Berkowitz Pictures

Rupert Murdoch, the publisher of The New York Post, testified yesterday that he was out of the country and had no knowledge of the arrangements made to obtain illegal pictures in a hospital prison ward of David Berkowitz, the so-called "Son of Sam" killer.

Mr. Murdoch testified at a pretrial hearing in State Supreme Court in Brooklyn, where James Mitteager, a freelance writer and former police officer, is seeking dismissal of charges that he bribed a correction officer with \$5,800 to get the pictures of and information about Mr. Berkowitz. Mr. Berkowitz was convicted of murdering Stacy Moskowitz, a young woman in Brooklyn, and confessed to five other slayings.

Mr. Mitteager says he is being unfairly singled out for prosecution in the scheme while officials of The Post, who gave him the money, are not being charged because of their political influence.

The Post publisher, who controls properties in Australia and Britain as well as in the United States, said he would not normally be concerned with disbursements as little as the \$13,000 that was turned over to Mr. Mitteager for the Berkowitz material.

Details Handled by Editors

He said those details were handled by his editors. Peter Michelmore, The Post's metropolitan editor, testified on Monday that he had no idea the money was to be used for bribes when he turned it over to Mr. Mitteager.

Mr. Murdoch was asked by Mr. Mitteager's attorney, Felix T. Gilroy, if there were any guidelines he gave his editors. Mr. Murdoch, after consulting with his attorney, Howard M. Squadron, replied that he told them to "seek to publish the truth and if they have any doubts about legality to consult with counsel."

Following Mr. Murdoch on the stand was Allan Wolper, a columnist for The Soho Weekly News, who has written a series of articles on the case. Mr. Wolper said that Mr. Mitteager had told him that when Mr. Michelmore gave him the money he said "we're paying you and your guy at the hospital."

The hearing continues at 9:30 A.M. today.