

Top New Jersey Court Upholds Shield Law

TRENTON, Jan. 23 (AP) — The State Supreme Court upheld New Jersey's shield law today, ruling that a former newspaper reporter should not have to testify in the murder trial of a man he interviewed.

"The public perception conveyed by compelling Evan Schuman to testify will hinder the free flow of information from newspapers to the public," said a summary of the unanimous opinion.

Mr. Schuman, who worked for The New Jersey Herald in Newton, had been subpoenaed by the Sussex County Prosecutor, Richard Honig, in March 1987 to testify in the case of Gary Mayron, who was charged in the kidnap-

ping and murder of a 17-year-old girl. Mr. Mayron still faces trial.

The Herald published telephone interviews between Mr. Schuman and Mr. Mayron in which the defendant denied intending to kill the victim, but said he had sex with her before beating her to death.

The trial court quashed the subpoena, but an appeals court ruled that the shield law does not protect but not material willingly made public. The high court ruled today that protection should only be lifted when the reporter's testimony is critical to a suspect's defense.