

Favoritism Used in Novel's Bond, Connick Charges

By ALAN CITRON

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Criminal District Court Judge Frank A. Marullo Jr. showed favoritism in releasing convicted arson conspirator Gordon Novel on \$25,000 bond, Orleans Parish District Attorney Harry Connick charged Thursday.

"I don't know why Marullo would want to give Novel favored treatment," Connick said. "I haven't spoken to Marullo . . . I don't usually speak to him."

Connick's motion to have Novel's bond raised from \$25,000 to \$100,000 will be heard Wednesday in Judge Jerome Winsberg's court. Connick filed the motion following Novel's release on appeal of his conviction to the Louisiana Supreme Court.

"I think he's a threat," Connick said of Novel. "He's a three-time felon, and when you conspire to commit an arson in a downtown area, I think that's a dangerous criminal activity."

"He's entitled to a bond, but Marullo's is set at \$15,000 less than before he was originally convicted."

Marullo is on vacation and could not be reached for comment.

Following Connick's motion Wednesday, Novel threatened to hit the district attorney with a libel suit and claimed he was not given a fair trial originally.

"I think Connick is using his feud with Marullo to make something political out of this," Novel said. "I'm not going to run out. I'll sleep on the front

steps of the newspaper office if that's what it takes to convince people."

Novel was sentenced by Marullo last January to three years in prison for conspiracy to commit arson. The conviction came after two previous attempts to send Novel to jail failed.

In the second trial, Novel was forced to forfeit a \$40,000 surety bond when he failed to appear in court for his trial, claiming he had been admitted to an Atlanta hospital with symptoms of a heart attack.

Connick's motion was made on the grounds of Novel's previous no-show and on the basis Novel has failed to establish a permanent residence in Orleans Parish, living instead at his attorney's Metairie law office.

Novel said, however, he is currently shopping around for a house in Orleans Parish and offered to take a lie detector test "anywhere in the country" to establish his innocence.

Novel was convicted of possession and interstate transportation of unlawful electronic surveillance equipment in 1970 and of possessing illegal firearms in 1977.

The New Orleans native is a reported former CIA operative and was called as a witness in former District Attorney Jim Garrison's probe of the Kennedy assassination.

More recently, it was alleged he was hired by former President Richard Nixon to erase the Watergate tapes.