

Two Convicts Cite Proposition To Aid Garrison in Plot Inquiry

By GENE ROBERTS
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NEW ORLEANS, June 11—Two Louisiana prisoners have accused District Attorney Jim Garrison's office of offering them concessions if they would help him prove his charge that the assassination of President Kennedy was the result of a conspiracy.

The charges came as Mr. Garrison and his staff were preparing for a hearing here tomorrow in Criminal District Court at which attorneys for Clay L. Shaw, a New Orleans businessman who Mr. Garrison says helped plot the assassination, will seek the dismissal of conspiracy charges.

Miguel Torres, a one-time heroin addict who is in prison for burglary, said he had been offered his freedom, an ounce of heroin and three months' vacation in Florida if he would "cooperate" in the district attorney's investigation.

Another convicted burglar, John Cancler, said he had been told before his conviction in February that he might be needed to "put something" into Mr. Shaw's home in the French Quarter here.

Cancler said a representative of Mr. Garrison's office had told him that the burglary charges against him would be dropped if he were to break into Mr. Shaw's home. But after he refused, he went on, the district attorney's staff stepped up its prosecution against him.

The two prisoners made their accusations in recent interviews with this reporter, who visited them in prison. They were signed statements that outlined the major points in their stories.

When told by this reporter today that two prisoners had made charges against his office, Mr. Garrison said he was not surprised that men who had been convicted by his staff would make charges against it.

Cites Accusers' Background

As a result, he said, he wouldn't be interested in listening to the charges or in commenting on them. "I don't know how to deal with an answer," he added.

Mr. Garrison also said he was surprised that charges by Torres and Cancler would be given credence in view of their criminal records.

However, a large part of Mr. Garrison's investigation has centered on the interrogation of people who have less than conventional backgrounds.

One convicted burglar who Mr. Garrison's staff questioned at length in the assassination investigation is Emilio Santana, 30, of Miami. He pleaded guilty to burglary in Criminal District Court in New Orleans in 1964, was sentenced to three years on probation, and later given permission to move to Florida in the custody of the Florida Parole and Probation Commission.

R. W. Buckhalt Jr. of the Florida Commission said Mr. Garrison's office had Santana flown here on Feb. 12 of this year for questioning and kept him here until Feb. 17.

One Addict a Witness

It is also known that Mr. Garrison's staff has attempted to develop several alleged homosexuals as witnesses in his assassination case. Mr. Garrison has already used one former narcotics addict, who is now a prisoner in Orleans Parish prison, as a witness against Mr. Shaw.

He is Vernon Bundy, who testified that he was on the shore of Lake Pontchartrain preparing to inject a shot of heroin into his arm in the summer of 1963 when he saw Mr. Shaw talking to Lee Harvey Oswald, the man the Warren Commission says killed President Kennedy alone and unaided. Mr. Shaw denies that he ever knew Oswald.

In addition, Mr. Garrison said at a news conference in February that he and his staff were questioning Torres in an effort to get information about the Kennedy assassination.

Torres and Cancler are not the first persons to make charges about the conduct of Mr. Garrison's investigation.

\$3,000 Offer Charged

Last month, another Louisiana man, Alvin Beauboeuf, charged that an investigator for Mr. Garrison, who is district attorney for Orleans Parish, had offered him \$3,000 and a job with an airline if he would "help substantiate" the alleged conspiracy. He said, too, that a tape recording of the conversation was in existence.

Mr. Garrison responded then by releasing a notarized statement in which Mr. Beauboeuf swore that he was offered the money only after he had complained that he could not afford to take the time to cooperate with the district attorney's office.

Mr. Beauboeuf replied through his attorney that he had signed the statement only because of "threats and coercion."

Torres, who is 29 years old, made his charges against Mr. Garrison's office in a two-hour interview with this reporter in a prison conference room at the state prison at Angola, about 100 miles up the Mississippi River from New Orleans.

Speaking with only the faintest trace of a Spanish accent, the slightly built native of Cuba said he had served about three years of a nine-year sentence for burglary. After serving his term in the state prison, he faces three years in a Federal prison on a conviction growing out of his one-time addiction to narcotics.

Describes Questioning

According to Torres, two members drove him to the parish prison in New Orleans where January. Then about two weeks later, he said, one of the staff members drove him to the parish prison in New Orleans, where Mr. Garrison and his assistants questioned him sporadically.

At the first meeting with representatives from Mr. Garrison's office, according to a signed statement Torres gave this reporter, one investigator said: "What would be the thing you would like the most?"

"I said my freedom," Torres said. "And he [one of Mr. Garrison's representatives] said, 'We'll give you an ounce of heroin and send you to Florida for three months on vacation—just lay back and enjoy yourself.'"

"And he said, 'If you don't cooperate, Miguel, we'll make you do those nine years you have here plus the other times [three years] you have pending in the Federal penitentiary. You know the boss is very powerful. He can make you do all of this time or he can cut you loose right at this moment.'"

First Impression Changes

Torres said he was under the impression initially that the district attorney's office would help him get his freedom if he answered questions to the best of his ability. But he said he later came to the conclusion that the offer of freedom applied only if he were to provide testimony that would help Mr. Garrison bolster his charges that the Kennedy assassination was the result of a conspiracy.

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After he was brought to the station in New Orleans, Torres added, he was taken to Mr. Garrison's office and found the district attorney and several of his assistants drinking beer. He said Mr. Garrison had told him, "Have a couple of beers, Miguel," and then had begun showing him pictures of several Cubans and New Orleans residents.

Hypnosis Pressed

Torres said Garrison had given him a "rundown on each of them [the men in the photographs] and [kept] asking me if I knew them. I said, 'No.'"

At subsequent interrogation sessions, Torres went on, one member of Mr. Garrison's staff tried to persuade him to submit to hypnosis, and still another "stressed the point of going along with Mr. Garrison and reminded me how much Mr. Garrison could hurt me."

One of the interrogators, Mr. Torres said, "asked me if I knew Mr. Shaw. I said, 'No.' He said, 'Yes, you know Mr. Shaw. You frequented his house on Dauphine Street. You went to his sex parties. You better tell me, Miguel. You don't want to get the boss mad.'"

Torres, who moved to this country from Cuba in 1952 when he was 14 and was convicted of burglary in 1964, said the district attorney's staff seemed convinced that he had "been involved" in anti-Castro politics in the early 1960's in New Orleans and might have heard anti-Castro forces plotting to kill President Kennedy.

"But I wasn't involved in politics," Torres said. "At that time I had a \$120 to \$125 a day [narcotics] habit and was too busy stealing [in order to finance the habit] to have time for politics."

"Although they [Mr. Garrison and several of his staff members] had me over a barrel, it was immaterial," Torres continued. "I didn't want to frame anyone. I came to the conclusion that the only thing that I could do and have any principle as a man was to tell the truth."

Didn't Want to Get Involved
Cancler, the other convicted burglar, said he did not want to get involved in Mr. Garrison's investigation because he was "scared" of being connected with anything that big and important.

He told his story in a two-hour conversation in a visitors' room at the Orleans parish prison. He was dressed in a standard prison uniform, of blue denim and smoked an occasional Marlboro. Two days later, in the prison's records room, he wrote out the highlights of what he said were his dealings with Mr. Garrison's staff.

with committing a burglary on Nov. 6, and that he said he went to the district attorney's office, determined he was innocent and there was any way that the charges could be dropped.

He said he had been told that a member of Mr. Garrison's staff would get in touch with him later. The contact was made, he said, in mid-January.

At that time, he said, one of Mr. Garrison's aides drove him through the French Quarter of New Orleans, pointed to Mr. Shaw's house at 1313 Dauphine and, according to Cancler's statement, asked: "Do you think you could get in this house?"

Cancler said he asked why, and the investigator then told him: "I might want you to put something in there."

Cancler said that he had insisted on knowing "what's happening" and that the investigator had told him: "We're investigating the assassination of President Kennedy and we have reason to believe that the man [who] lives in that house had something to do with it."

According to Cancler, the investigator's attitude "changed completely in a belligerent sort of way after I refused to go along with the program."

Delay in Sentencing

And soon afterward, Cancler added, the district attorney's office took steps to bring him to trial. A jury convicted him Feb. 18 of simple burglary, but sentencing has been delayed in the case pending action on Cancler's request for a new trial.

Cancler made the request after another prisoner on his cell tier in New Orleans confessed to the burglary that led to Cancler's conviction.

The other prisoner, Donnell Carroll, 22, said in a signed statement that he and a friend named "Wolf," who lived on Eagle Street, had not only committed the burglary that led to Cancler's conviction,

but had also looted another house in the same block on the same night.

In a formal answer filed in an effort to block a new trial for Cancler, the district attorney's office said it had established that a man named Furrell (Wolf) Rhodes had once lived on Eagle Street. But the office said it had been unable to locate him.

The office said, however, that it doubted other parts of Carroll's story, and, as a result, planned to continue to press for a lengthy sentence for Cancler. Since Cancler's trial, the office has filed a "bill of information," pointing out that the Feb. 17 burglary conviction is Cancler's fourth conviction and asking that he be sentenced under the state's Multiple Offender's Act. This would mean a minimum of 20 years' imprisonment for Cancler, and a maximum of life.

quest for a new trial. Judge Oliver P. Schulingkamp of Criminal District Court No. 11 in New Orleans took the request for adjournment early last month, and was still considering it on June 1 when he left the bench for a month's vacation.

In fighting the request for a new trial, the district attorney's office pointed out that a New Orleans doctor, Morris Kloor, testified that he had seen Cancler, who is Negro, and a Negro woman enter the yard of one of the burglarized homes on the night of the robbery and return to their car with a bag and what appeared to be a suitcase.

The district attorney's office also said that there were several contradictions in Carroll's contention that he and the man named "Wolf" had committed the burglary.

The office said that Carroll had not accurately described the burglarized houses. In addition, the office argued, Carroll contended that three furs and \$20 had been taken from one home, while the victims said two furs and \$70 had been stolen.

Carroll says he could have been confused over what was taken because he served as a "lookout" while his friend, "Wolf" burglarized the house and stole the goods. Cancler concedes he was near the scene of the burglary on Nov. 6, but only because he was delivering a prostitute to a nearby college fraternity house.

He insists that the district attorney's office is prosecuting him for refusing to break into Mr. Shaw's home, while the office says it is prosecuting him because it considers him to be one of the city's major burglars.

Meanwhile, attorneys for Mr. Shaw have questioned both Cancler and Torres, and there are indications that they plan to use them both as witnesses for Mr. Shaw if he is brought to trial by Mr. Garrison.



Associated Press
Jim Garrison