

# GARRISON Charges Stir Freedom of Press Issue

Jim Garrison, whose investigation of the supposed Kennedy assassination "plot" in New Orleans has been nourished by television lights and newspaper headlines, now finds himself embroiled in a freedom-of-the-press controversy. The district attorney has been accused of attempting to intimidate news-

"This has now become a bigger issue than simply whether Mr. Garrison's tactics are open to public scrutiny," said Walter Sheridan, an NBC-TV investigator who has been charged by Garrison with bribing a witness. "It has now become an issue of freedom of the press and we intend to fight Mr. Garrison on those terms."

Sheridan made the statement at a news conference yesterday afternoon.

## Warrants Issued

Last Friday Garrison had issued warrants charging Sheridan with public bribery of Perry Russo, a key witness in the district attorney's case against Clay Shaw, a New Orleans businessman. Also charged with bribery and intimidation was Richard Townley, a correspondent for station WDSU in New Orleans.

Townley was arrested there yesterday, and if convicted faces a possible maximum sentence of 15 years at hard labor. Sheridan, a former investigator of the then Atty. Gen. Robert F. Kennedy, could be

sentenced up to five years at hard labor on conviction of the charges against him.

"In the next few days I intend to go to New Orleans and surrender to the appropriate authorities," Sheridan said. "I have no intention of avoiding meeting this issue which involves a basic principle of freedom of the press."

He called Garrison's charges "a blatant attempt to terrorize all those who might criticize his conduct as district attorney."

At the televised press conference in NBC's Washington studios, Sheridan said:

"I want, in the plainest and strongest terms possible, to deny totally the charges made against me by Jim Garrison."

Instead, he said, "it was Perry Russo who admitted to me and to others that his testimony, under oath, was probably 'a combination of truth, fantasy, and lies.'"

Garrison's charges against Sheridan and Townley grew out of an NBC show last month critical of the methods employed in district attorney's investigation. Garrison will be on TV Saturday night.

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 The Washington Daily News \_\_\_\_\_  
 The Evening Star (Washington) **BII**  
 The Sunday Star (Washington) \_\_\_\_\_  
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 The New York Times \_\_\_\_\_  
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 The Sun (Baltimore) \_\_\_\_\_  
 The Worker \_\_\_\_\_  
 The New Leader \_\_\_\_\_  
 The Wall Street Journal \_\_\_\_\_  
 The National Observer \_\_\_\_\_  
 People's World \_\_\_\_\_  
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