

Garrison and the case of the

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If you read the tabloids, and generically speaking that includes the New York Times and the networks, with special emphasis upon the first two of the three (CBS and NBC), there is no mystery at all about the cancelled banquet. They reported, quite simplistically, that Jim Garrison "angrily locked the National District Attorneys Association (NDAA) out of its convention banquet" when the organization "recoiled aghast at a proposed speech by the volatile New Orleans prosecutor." Garrison's actions were, "completely irrational" the President of the NDAA was widely quoted as saying. All quotes, in-

going to use profane language as well. The press quoted Mr. Raggio as having charged Garrison with having referred to "the xxxx-xxx President," or since we oppose censorship, "the fucking President." Surely, argued Mr. Raggio, such suggestions and such language would interfere with "propriety" at the convention banquet and, one might add, perhaps digestion as well.

According to the press, when Garrison was told that he could not abuse the President of the United States and use profane language at the dinner, he "angrily" or "petulantly" (depending upon the edition you read), but most certainly "irrationally" cancelled

quiet—the main event of the week-long convention—and he accepted.

On Wednesday morning when Garrison introduced the Governor of Louisiana to the delegates he made reference to the federal government's interference with local law enforcement efforts and the close relationship between large private corporations and the federal authorities. When the Orleans Parish grand jury sought to question Walter Sheridan (the former head of Bobby Kennedy's "Get Hoffa Squad" and now the head of NBC's "Get Garrison Squad") it found that he was immune from subpoena. Observed Garrison, "Sheridan works for NBC, RCA owns NBC. Most of RCA's contracts are with the federal government."

Garrison offered another example. Life magazine owns the 8mm motion picture film of the assassination taken by Abraham Zapruder. Those few who have seen the rather poor copy of the film at the National Archives agree that it is proof that the fatal shot came from the right front of the presidential car, certainly not from the book depository to the rear. Life has effectively suppressed the original for more than four and one half years, refusing to allow it to be shown to the American people either on television or in theatres, and refusing as well to publish the relevant frames in Life. The film, which both Garrison and I have studied, shows that as the fatal shot strikes President Kennedy in the head he is driven suddenly and with great force into the back of the seat.

David Chandler, a Life reporter living in New Orleans, charged that Garrison permits organized crime to flourish in New Orleans. The Orleans Parish grand jury, at Garrison's request, conducted an investigation into that charge. Garrison subpoenaed every possibly relevant party—from the Governor to the superintendent of the state police to Carlos Marcello. The grand jury called Aaron



District Attorney Jim Garrison and Author Mark Lane confer. Lane is now a member of Garrison's investigative staff.

cluding "recoiled aghast" (shades of Perils of Pauline), by courtesy of the Associated Press and the New York Times.

According to the repeatedly quoted William J. Raggio, the Reno, Nevada prosecutor (what there is to prosecute there is hard to define since the legislature appears to have made everything legal) who serves as President of the NDAA, Garrison was going to advocate the hanging of Lyndon B. Johnson, some similar punishment for the seven members of the Warren Commission, and was

the entire affair.

Now for the facts.

The largest previous attendance at a convention of the NDAA was approximately 250. When it was decided to hold the convention in New Orleans this year, Garrison, as host, made arrangements for that number. Within a short time 610 delegates made reservations, encouraged, many of them explained, by the hope that they would be able to hear Garrison speak about the investigation. Garrison was invited to address the Saturday evening ban-

cancelled banquet

Kohn as well, since Kohn had been Chandler's source of misinformation. But when Kohn was before the grand jury and thus behind the wall of secrecy imposed by the law (which secrecy we now publicly penetrate for the first time) Kohn admitted that he had "no evidence" at all. He added that he had "heard rumors."

The grand jury then called Chandler, who went directly into the federal court to secure an injunction to prevent his appearance. His basic argument was that Garrison might prosecute him for perjury if he testified, "Not if he tells the truth" was Garrison's

reply.

The district attorneys were startled to learn that the federal court granted the temporary injunction and thus thwarted the duties of a duly authorized grand jury. In fact, the federal court then waited months until the grand jury went out of existence (grand jurors serve for six months in New Orleans and are then replaced by new personnel) and then issued a permanent order preventing Chandler's appearance. This order could not be appealed to a higher court since the matter was rendered moot by the expiration

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