

Film on Assassination Aims to 'Clear' Dallas

Wade, Prosecutor of Jack Ruby, Heading Drive to Make 'Authentic' Documentary

BY NICHOLAS C. CHRISS

Times Staff Writer

DALLAS — Dist. Atty. Henry Wade is heading efforts to produce what he describes as an "authentic, factual" movie about President John F. Kennedy's death here but which appears to be aimed at cleansing the city's reputation, tarnished by the assassination.

A campaign to raise \$500,000 to finance the proposed 96-minute film, "Countdown in Dallas," is expected to start soon.

Wade and commercial film producer Robert Larsen said Marina Oswald, widow of the assassin; Mrs. J. D. Tippit, widow of the policeman shot by Lee Harvey Oswald, and 40 to 50 others involved in various aspects of the assassination tentatively have agreed to act their real-life roles.

Larsen said none of the principals had signed contracts yet.

He said the main stumbling block to the signing of Oswald's widow, now Mrs. Kenneth J. Porter, has been financial. Larsen said that if she accepts the role, she will receive a percentage of the receipts.

'Talk a Lot'

But Mrs. Porter, who lives in suburban Richardson, said she did not plan to sign a contract soon, adding, "They just talk a lot."

Larsen said the influence of Wade, district attorney at the time of the assassination and prosecutor of Oswald's slayer, Jack Ruby, had been helpful in gaining the con-

fidence of the principals.

Wade will play himself in the film. So will former Police Chief Jesse Curry and Judge Joe B. Brown, who presided over Ruby's trial, Larsen said.

After Ruby's Death

A corporation, Flag-Star, Inc., of Texas, has been set up to produce and sell the film and has exclusive rights to Wade's extensive confidential files covering the assassination. The firm is headed by Marvin Thomas, a partner in Wade's private law practice. Directors are Wade and Bob Benson, a private investigator who has worked with Wade and Melvin Belli, Ruby's one-time attorney.

Discussion about the film began about eight months ago. Wade said he had not thought about

such a story until after Ruby died of cancer last January in Dallas.

Six background scenes have been filmed, but no date has been set for the actual start of the story.

Larsen said the script—now in its fourth revision—was first written with a cast of 125 complete with dialog and then was shown to some of the principals.

In a foreword to the current screenplay, Larsen states: "The dialog is factual and is based on the files of the Dallas police force . . . and the district attorney's office. Actual filming details will be reconstructed on the site."

However, there has been

some change in these plans. Larsen said that about 60% of the movie would be filmed in mock-up studios and that, when necessary, voices would be dubbed in.

The producer also said that many of the quotes attributed to Oswald, Ruby and officer Tippit were not necessarily their own but were taken from various files or based on the recollection of Oswald's wife or Ruby's roommate, George Senator.

Both Wade and Larsen said the city of Dallas had no part in the financing or direction of the film, but a source close to the project said "everyone has been most cooperative."

"A lot of people in Dallas want this film made," the source added.

Wade said he thought he would have no difficulty raising the \$500,000.

Larsen said he thought the film "would make money even if it is bad."

As presently written and outlined by Larsen, who heads Robert Larsen Productions of Hollywood and Colorado Springs, Colo., the film would begin with a "scene setter" showing newsreel clips of the late President and his wife holding hands and walking together in a Ft. Worth hotel the morning of the assassination, Nov. 22, 1963.

Then the action moves to Dallas. The narrator describes the window from which Oswald fired at Mr. Kennedy:

"It's the window that a Louisiana sniper with a Chicago-bought Italian rifle killed a President of the United States . . . a man from Massachusetts."

The movie would end

with a street scene in New Orleans.

The narrator relates: "No city or its citizens are guilty . . . men murder . . . not cities . . ." Then the film switches to a "low angle shot of a typical street in New Orleans . . . camera moving down slowly."

Narrator: "The eyes of the world are turned to

New Orleans, La. . . . some of their authorities . . . including three district court judges feel that there is some evidence which indicates that Lee

Harvey Oswald did not act alone." The final scene in the script shows "New Orleans harbor . . . camera sees ships leaving in distance."

Both Larsen and the district attorney said a prime consideration throughout the filming would be respect for the Kennedy family and for the Warren Commission report. They said no one had contacted the Kennedy family.

Both said they were not attempting to "hide anything" or de-emphasize errors attributed to the Dallas Police Department. But Dist. Atty. Wade said he thought the city, and particularly the police department, had been maligned through what he called "sensational reporting" of the assassination.

In stressing some positive sides of the police department's role, Wade cited the arrest of Oswald about an hour and a half after the assassination and the stringent security precautions at the jail after Oswald's arrest.

Parts of the script play up police concern during the President's visit. It alleges that a three-ring circus atmosphere was created by about 400 newsmen who descended on the city after the assassination. And it includes re-creation of interrogation of Oswald by a Dallas police captain.

Larsen said, when asked, that the captain actually made no notes of the interrogation but that the

questions and answers in the script were of the type that would be considered routine in a police interrogation. Therefore, he said, he considered them factual.

The producer did not disclose how many persons in the cast had been shown the script or the

dialog attributed to them.

A random check disclosed that at least some persons had no prior knowledge of the movie nor of their parts.

Larsen said Dr. Earl Rose, who was in Parkland Hospital when the President was taken there, had consented to take part

in the film. But Dr. Rose said he had no knowledge of the film. Some scenes are supposed to take place inside the hospital, Larsen said, but hospital administrator Jack Price said he was unaware that permission to film there was granted.

Larsen said he had issued a nationwide casting call for actors resembling Oswald and Ruby. He said he found them by accident in Colorado Springs, Colo.,

while dining at a night club.

He said the two men were playing in the band.

Crime Panel Seeks Recusal Of DA, O'Hara

The Metropolitan Crime Commission today called for the recusal of Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison and Criminal Court Judge Malcolm V. O'Hara as legal and judicial advisers to the Orleans Parish Grand Jury.

Sixteen members of the crime commission have been subpoenaed to appear before the grand jury today in connection with a probe into allegations of organized crime in New Orleans.

Before showing up for the grand jury session, officials of the crime commission called a press conference and rec-

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ommended that the grand jury "act to secure an impartial, objective judicial adviser and legal adviser."

MCC managing director Aaron Kohn contended that there is a conflict of interest involving City Councilman Moon Landrieu. He said that Landrieu's membership on the Council and his position as a lawyer for the TAC Amusement Co. poses a conflict of interest.

Kohn said that City Council has taken little action with regard to revoking liquor licenses where pinball gambling violations have occurred.

"We are saying that City Council has failed to close up establishments which have licenses and which are using these licenses to break the law," Kohn said. He added that pinball and jukebox operators "have a big interest in seeing that establishments which use their machines are kept open."

Commission President E. C. Upton Jr. and Kohn said, "We believe there is need for an official examination of conflicts of interests as exist in Landrieu's case."

Upton said that the mem-

bers of the crime commission, when they appear before the grand jury, would present "detailed investigative leads pertaining to the following major problems of organized crime here:

"The pinball gambling racket, rackets influence on sports and the liquor license racket."

UPTON CHARGED that the liquor license racket involves "the complex, corrupt influence of pinball-jukebox operators and others to maintain the many hundreds of bars and other locations in which they operate their machines."

"Relative immunity from the law," he said, "has encouraged many of these locations to contribute to the alarming rate of murders, assaults and other crimes in this city."

Both Upton and Kohn commended the last grand jury for spotlighting the lack of action taken against liquor license holders who have violated the law.

ASKED SPECIFICALLY if the MCC was calling for the recusal of Garrison and Judge O'Hara for this particular grand jury, Kohn said:

"Basically, yes. And also members of District Attorney Garrison's staff over whom he may exercise control."

Upton said the MCC will suggest to the grand jury that it appeal "to the attorney general and the governor of this state for help in securing, as

their judicial advisor, someone who does not share Judge O'Hara's loyalties to racketeers and convicted felons, and a legal advisor who does not share District Attorney Garrison's violent refusals to objectively deal with organized crime."

THE MCC PRESIDENT said he also intends to recommend that the grand jury "formally request Mayor (Victor H.) Schiro and Police Supt. (Joseph I.) Giarrusso to assign for their assistance several members of the Police Intelligence Unit under command of Capt. Thomas Drake, with the un-

derstanding that these officers will work directly for the grand jury, and not under the supervision of the district attorney."

The crime commission called for the removal of O'Hara after the judge testified that he had acted as a "messenger" for convicted felons—Teamster Union president James Hoffa and New Orleans builder Zachary "Red" Strate.

Garrison asked the jury to conduct its investigation into organized crime, he said, after he became incensed at a Life Magazine article which alleged that racketeering and syndicated crime are flourishing in the city.

Garrison said he does not believe the Life charges are true and swore he would resign if the Grand Jury turns up any evidence to support the claims.

OTHER GRAND juries during Garrison's tenure have investigated the existence of mobsterism in New Orleans, each time returning a negative verdict.

MCC managing director Kohn, however, insists that racketeering is going full blast in the Crescent City, supported mainly by the forces of Carlos Marcello.

Shortly after the Life article hit the stands, Kohn, who was subpoenaed for today's session, announced that most of the magazine's information about New Orleans had come from crime commission files.

KOHN AND GARRISON have been the principals in a running feud over the past several years over the question of whether New Orleans is one of gangland's capital cities.

The DA said that if this grand jury fails to turn up any proof of mob activity, then Kohn should resign from the MCC.

The other MCC officials called before the jury today either are or have been members of the commission's board of directors. *EMJ*

O'Hara Ouster Move Tossed Back to MCC

(States-Item Bureau)

BATON ROUGE — Efforts to remove New Orleans Criminal Court Judge Malcolm V. O'Hara from office were tossed back to the Metropolitan Crime Commission today by Gov. John J. McKeithen.

The governor told a press conference that the law requires the attorney general to initiate an investigation of a judge if the governor or 25 citizens request it.

M'KEITHEN said he feels the MCC has not exhausted its local remedies.

O'Hara testified at a Chicago federal court hearing on a bid by Teamster leader James Hoffa to win freedom from prison that he had been the companion of a convicted man.

The governor said his office does not have the authority to probe the judge's conduct.

He said the MCC asked him to write Attorney General Jack P. F. Gremillion to initiate the investigation, but he is suggesting that the commission collect 25 names and make the same request.

Asked for his opinion on the propriety of O'Hara consorting with a convicted man, the governor replied:

"My opinion is not good."

McKeithen was quoted a week ago as saying after a meeting with the MCC that he would investigate Judge

O'Hara if requested, but said this morning he had said then he would consider it.

The governor said further that he did not want to prejudge any case for removal that might be brought against the judge. **END**