

D.A. Claims He's Got the Goods

In recent years, Jim Garrison and Clay L. Shaw had become two of New Orleans' best-known citizens. At times, their pictures and names had appeared in the city's newspapers almost as regularly as grocery ads.

Mr. Shaw's public image was that of a well-tailored, urbane man of international commerce who devoted a substantial part of this life to helping establish New Orleans as the major "gate-

way" for trade with Latin-American countries. When he retired two years ago after nearly two decades as director of the city's International Trade Mart, he left behind a monument to both himself and the city: the gleaming white Trade Mart Building that towers above downtown New Orleans.

Mr. Garrison's image, although of an entirely different sort, was even better known. He is the city's flamboyant, hard-hitting District Attorney — a man who appears never to have missed an opportunity for headlines or to have lost a murder case. He won office by defeating an entrenched political organization five years ago, then battled eight judges, the state legislature and the businessmen of Bourbon Street to carry out what he said was an all-out war on vice and crime in New Orleans.

Although it was a matter of some debate just how well he succeeded, enough people gave him enough credit to re-elect him last year. With six-foot, six-inch Jim Garrison, the "jolly green giant" around, there was seldom a dull moment. And no one in New Orleans was particularly surprised to learn three weeks ago that he was now taking on the Warren Commission's conclusions that Lee Harvey Oswald killed President Kennedy alone and that there was no conspiracy.

No one was particularly surprised, either, to hear Mr. Garrison claim that there was a "plot," and that he had "solved" the assassination. And there was no great outcry over the fact that Mr. Garrison offered no immediate proof to back up his accusations. That frequently has been Mr. Garrison's style.

But to say that New Orleans was surprised last week when Mr. Garrison's office suddenly arrested

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Mr. Shaw and accused him of participating in a plot to assassinate President Kennedy would be the grossest sort of understatement.

Today New Orleans is a city divided. Many appear to have complete faith in Mr. Garrison. Others question his sincerity and his motivation. They believe there is no justification for the investigation, and feel it was an outrage to arrest Mr. Shaw without filing formal charges and carefully detailing his reasons for the arrest, particularly in view of Mr. Shaw's categorical denial and of United State Attorney General Ramsey Clerk's statement this week that an F.B.I. investigation had shown there was no basis for the charge.

Mr. Garrison's explanation for the arrest rested on a search warrant application. In it, his office contended that a "confidential informant" had said that Mr. Shaw, Oswald and the late David W. Ferrie, a free-lance airline pilot, and "others" had agreed in a clandestine meeting in New Orleans in September, 1963 to kill the President.

At week's end, Mr. Shaw was still awaiting a formal charge, but no further explanation from Mr. Garrison appeared likely until a preliminary hearing on March 14.