

Drop Extradition

OHIO DISMISSES

Action

NOVEL CASE

A Columbus, Ohio, judge dismissed today extradition proceedings against Gordon Novel, wanted by Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison for questioning in connection with an alleged plot to assassinate President Kennedy.

Judge William Gillie of Columbus Municipal Court said the state had received no legal extradition papers, and dismissed three charges against Novel.

The judge said he saw no reason to hold the probe witness any longer.

ALL OF THE DOCUMENTS filed, he said, have had one defect or another which have not been corrected as requested, he said.

Judge Gillie dismissed Ohio detainers against Novel on three charges filed here by Garrison—one for conspiracy to commit burglary of a munitions bunker, one for burglary and one for theft.

Novel's attorney in Columbus, Jerry Weiner, today said he will return Novel to New Orleans for questioning without extradition if Garrison agrees to three conditions previously outlined by Novel:

—That Garrison drop charges pending against Novel.

—That Novel be granted immunity from arrest if he returns.

—That Novel be questioned at an open session of the Orleans Parish Grand Jury.

OTHERWISE WEINER said, Novel will remain in Columbus, where he has been for most of the time since he left New Orleans in March to avoid a subpoena issued by Garrison.

John McElroy, administrative aid to Ohio Gov. James A. Rhodes, said the court's action means that if Louisiana is intent on extraditing Novel, the state will have to start all over now.

McElroy said he had written to Gov. John J. McKeithen a week ago reminding him of a request he sent to McKeithen a month ago for necessary supplemental papers to make the extradition documents filed valid.

McKeithen, he said, did not reply.

THE TIME IN COURT was up, he said, "and we had no

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GORDON NOVEL

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reason to hold Novel. It would appear to me that Gov. McKeithen will have to start all over now."

Novel told a reporter recently that he has actually been back to New Orleans since the extradition fight started. He said he flew into New Orleans from New York, picked up his automobile and drove back to Ohio.

No one noticed him, he said, because he came in dressed as a priest, wearing a bowler, dark glasses and smoking a cigar.

During a press conference following the court's action, Novel said that he would also return to Louisiana if Garrison would set an irrevocable recognizance bond for him on the pending charges.

Asked why he had not been on a special documentary produced recently by the National Broadcasting Company, Novel replied that NBC prefaced its program by saying that none of the witnesses interviewed had been paid. Novel said that he had been on the NBC payroll from Feb. 1, 1967, through April 1, helping the network gather information and material for the program.

NOVEL SAID THAT he had never been an agent or an operative of the CIA, but said that he had acted as CIA intermediary until June of 1961.

He said the munitions taken from the Houma bunker, referred to in the charge against Novel by Garrison, were picked up, taken to the office of the late Guy Banister, former FBI agent and assistant superintendent of police, then later trucked to Miami.