

N.B.C. Questions Assassination Inquiry

The National Broadcasting Company last night joined the lengthening list of journalistic media questioning the legal propriety of District Attorney Jim Garrison's inquiry into the assassination of President Kennedy. As previously reported, the network found a fourth man alleging that the New Orleans prosecutor or his staff had offered financial inducements for testimony supporting Mr. Garrison's theory that the assassination was the result of a conspiracy.

The hour-long program, entitled "The J.F.K. Conspiracy: The Case of Jim Garrison," was not always easy to follow as N.B.C. wended its way through the multitudinous complexities of Mr. Garrison's contention that there was a plot to murder Mr. Kennedy. But the network did succeed in adding to the documentation that the case in New Orleans is fraught with questionable testimony and unresolved conclusions.

The program stated that it had learned of a homosexual who used the name Clay Bertrand and said that the

individual was not Clay L. Shaw, the New Orleans businessman. Mr. Garrison has charged that Mr. Shaw employed such a pseudonym in meeting with Lee Harvey Oswald, President Kennedy's assassin. N.B.C. said that it had forwarded its information to the Department of Justice.

N.B.C. was remiss, however, in not reporting that Mr. Garrison had objected to the network's program and had appealed to the Federal Communications Commission to prevent its presentation.

It was also puzzling that N.B.C. did not state clearly what efforts it had made to obtain Mr. Garrison's views. The circumstances of the journalistic inquiry into a prosecutor's investigation are part of the New Orleans story, which ultimately may shed a revealing new light on the running controversy between the bar and the Fourth Estate on pretrial publicity.

Last night's program raised the possibility in strong TV terms that such an inquisitive spotlight may be most necessary under a particular set of conditions.

J.G.