

Investigator out on bond

By Bruce Cadwallader
Dispatch Courts Reporter

A private investigator whose testimony was once sought in the conspiracy theories spawned by the assassination of President John F. Kennedy may also be a deadbeat dad.

Gordon Novel, 58, of New Orleans owes his ex-wife, Abby Novel, a former *Playboy* model, more than \$40,000 in support for their three children, the Franklin County prosecutor's office says.

All three children are now older than 18, but prosecutors are seeking to jail Novel for not making a payment since 1982.

The Franklin County divorce decree called for him to pay \$75 a week. According to county records, he has paid a total of \$500, Assistant Prosecutor Jamie Kaylor said. "We believe he has been working the whole time."

After his indictment in October on three counts of felony nonsupport, Novel was arrested in Columbus and taken before Common Pleas Judge David W. Fais for a bond hearing Jan. 9. He was represented by Columbus attorney Harry Reinhart and Ramsey Clark of New York, a former U.S. attorney general.

Standing before Fais, Novel described himself as a self-employed investigator who has worked with

U.S. presidents and foreign intelligence agents for years. Clark said Novel has been the primary investigator for him and the 80 plaintiffs in a \$900 million lawsuit against the U.S. Justice Department for its raid and 51-day siege at the Branch Davidian complex in Waco, Texas. Clark represents the wife and mother of former cult leader David Koresh, among others.

Mrs. Novel, 53, who owns a portrait studio and lives in Utica, Ohio, said the lack of support from her ex-husband put her on welfare for several years.

"Over the years he would hand the kids money, like \$20; but that's not child support, that's a gift," she said. "I always felt like a dog chained to a doghouse, with him."

Reinhart said the allegations against Novel are false and Novel has receipts to prove his contributions to his children.

"He owes absolutely nothing. His children will be a witness for us," Reinhart said. "It's an attempt by his ex-wife to get money she doesn't deserve."

Clark, 70, was the nation's attorney general from 1967 to 1969. He



Gordon Novel

... accused of nonsupport later became a critic of the Vietnam War and intervened in U.S. efforts to release hostages in Iran against the wishes of then-President Carter.

Fais set a \$10,000 bond in the nonsupport case but ordered that Novel not leave the continental United States without the judge's consent. Novel said he intends to relocate to Columbus so he can spend more time with his children. He posted \$1,000 cash bond and was released from jail.

Fais also ordered that he have no further contact with his ex-wife.

Novel was sentenced to 210 days in jail in Licking County after he was

found guilty of two counts of telephone harassment against his ex-wife in 1986. He earlier made news with the announcement he was collaborating with John DeLorean to build sports cars in Columbus.

In addition, Novel was sought for questioning before the 1967 Louisiana grand jury in the Kennedy probe conducted by James Garrison, then-New Orleans district attorney. Novel successfully fought extradition while living in Columbus.

Newsday in New York reported last week that a long-secret FBI document accuses Novel of attempting to doctor a photograph to make it appear that Lee Harvey Oswald had met with Cuban dictator Fidel Castro.

"The FBI report suggested that the investigator, Gordon Novel, wanted to raise doubt in the public's mind on whether Oswald alone murdered Kennedy," the newspaper reported.

Reinhart labeled the *Newsday* report "an FBI plant" and said it is filled with misinformation.

No trial date has been set in the nonsupport case before Fais.

"Over the years he would hand the kids money, like \$20; but that's not child support, that's a gift."

Abby Novel
investigator's ex-wife