

Bail Bond Case Moved to N.O. Criminal Court

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The case involving \$750,000 in forfeited bail bonds moved today to Criminal District Court with the Maryland National Insurance Co. holding that District Attorney Jim Garrison's office knew the company was being defrauded but failed to notify Maryland officials.

The question of whether Garrison can collect the \$750,000 has been tied up in Federal District Court since June. It was moved to Criminal District Court after attorneys for Maryland National and the DA agreed that primary jurisdiction in the case lies in Criminal District Court.

ATTORNEYS for Maryland National asked for a court order to prevent Garrison from moving to collect any of the \$750,000 until the case has been tried. The bail bond forfeitures piled up between 1965-68.

In the suit filed today, attorneys for Maryland made these contentions:

—Much of the \$750,000 in forfeited bail bonds were written on stolen powers of attorney that were taken

from a vault by an unnamed official of Century Surety Inc., a company acting as agent for Maryland National in New Orleans. The suit said these stolen Maryland National powers of attorney were sold to agents of Century Surety in New Orleans who used them to write bail bonds.

—An unnamed member of Garrison's staff knew that Maryland was being defrauded but failed to notify the company.

—Garrison's office failed to attempt to collect the forfeited bail bonds during 1965-68 and their negligence resulted in the company's not knowing of the stolen powers of attorney until 1968.

The suit argues that because the powers of attorney were stolen and because Garrison was negligent in neither informing the company of the fraud nor attempting to collect the forfeitures, there is no legal basis for the DA now to collect the forfeited bail bonds.

THE CASE is expected to be allotted to one of the 10 Criminal District Court judges tomorrow.

In briefs filed while the case was in Federal District Court, Garrison argued that Maryland must bear responsibility for all the bail bonds written in the company's name and that Maryland officials were negligent in not policing their own arrangement with Century Surety rather than counting on the DA's office to perform that function for them.