

PRESS FREEDOM ISSUE--SHERIDAN

Says He Will Surrender
to Authorities in N.O.

T-P 7/13/67
WASHINGTON (AP) — NBC
newsman Walter J. Sheridan,
saying freedom of the press is
involved, declared Wednesday
he would go to New Orleans to
surrender to authorities.

Sheridan has been charged
with trying to bribe a witness
in the probe of District Attor-
ney Jim Garrison into the as-
sassination of President John
F. Kennedy.

"I have no intention of avoid-
ing meeting this issue which in-
volves a basic principle of free-
dom of the press," Sheridan
said.

"In this I have the full sup-
port of NBC (National Broad-
casting Company)".

Sheridan said he would go to
New Orleans in the next few
days.

He was an investigative news-
man for NBC for a program
that was presented June 19.
The program criticized Garri-
son's procedures in the assassi-
nation probe.

Sheridan and two others in-
volved in the NBC program
appeared at a news conference
at NBC studios here.

INTIMIDATION HELD AIM

But Sheridan and Fred Freed,
producer of the show, said Gar-
rison's charges were an at-
tempt to intimidate NBC News.

"The real issue is whether
Garrison or any district attor-
ney can use the criminal pro-
cess to try to intimidate re-
porters," Sheridan said.

Sheridan added that "I, and
NBC News, are not going to be
intimidated. Neither are the
rest of the news media."

Sheridan was charged with
attempting to bribe Perry Ray-
mond Russo, 25, Baton Rouge,
La., a key witness in Garrison's
case charging that a conspir-

acy in 1963 to kill Kennedy was
hatched in New Orleans.

Sheridan said the charges
made against him by Garrison
are false and totally unfounded.

James Phelan, a writer who
worked with the NBC team on
the program, said that Russo
initiated the conversation with
him. Sheridan said it was Rus-
so who first contacted an NBC
News reporter. He said that
Russo "told me and others he
could no longer distinguish be-
tween fantasy and reality," and
"it was Perry Russo who sug-
gested he was in debt, worried
about his job, worried about
what might be revealed about
his past."

TO POST BOND

Richard Townley, a newsman
for WDSU-TV, NBC affiliate in
New Orleans, also charged with
trying to bribe and intimidate
witnesses in the Kennedy probe,
posted bond Tuesday in New
Orleans of \$2,500 on each of
three charges.

Sheridan said he "hopefully"
also would post bond when he
turns himself in to authorities.
His bond has been set at \$5,000.

In a statement read by a rep-
resentative at the news confer-
ence, William R. McAndrew,
president of NBC News, said
that "the bribery charges
brought against NBC News re-
porter Walter Sheridan is an at-
tempt by District Attorney Jim
Garrison of New Orleans to in-
timidate those news media who
have commented adversely on
Garrison's assassination inves-
tigation."

He said that NBC News sup-
ports its reporters and "NBC
News will not be intimidated."

Sheridan formerly was an in-
vestigator for the Senate rack-
ets committee and the justice
department.