

Post 6/21/67



Radio and Television

Garrison Case Neatly Rapped

Reprinted from yesterday's late editions

By Lawrence Laurent

REVIEW: NBC-TV preempted two of its regularly scheduled programs—"I Dream of Jeannie" and "Captain Nice"—Monday night for a showing of its investigative report on "The JFK Conspiracy: The Case of Jim Garrison" (Channel 4).

"Jeannie" is a fantasy and "Captain Nice" can't enforce the law until he's been fortified by a jolt of a secret chemical formula. Reporter Frank McGee found some of the same elements in the case that New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison has built against businessman Clay Shaw.

Shaw has been indicted on a charge of conspiring to assassinate President Kennedy.

This time Garrison was indicted by reporter McGee. He accused the New Orleans District Attorney of having damaged reputations, of "encouraging fear" and — "worst of all"—of having exploited "national sorrow over the death of President Kennedy."

With painstaking investigative reporting—rare in television—details of the New Orleans news story were examined. Again and again, the stories of star witnesses were found faulty. Stories of bribery-inspired testimony were many, along with McGee's judgments that fear prevented some witnesses from changing misleading stories.

Producer Fred Freed also left in some of the fun.

Louisiana lawyer Dean Adams Andrews Jr. (who faces a perjury indictment) airily described having chosen two names out of the air for Garrison.

He did this, Andrews explained: "Because he was plucking me like a chicken; shucking me like corn, and storing me like an oyster."

MUCH OF the material was old stuff that had been thoroughly detailed in print. NBC's main new contributions

were its claim to have located the real "Clay Bertrand" and the retraction of a statement by Fred Leemans.

Credit must be given, too, for the thorough film documentation that was directed against testimony of Garrison's star witnesses. This required the kind of tedious, vexing and grinding reporting that TV seldom does.

Annoying to many, however, was the brief superimposition of names of witnesses that were interviewed. If one were not familiar with the people, a lot of confusion must have resulted.

AT THE END of the hour, NBC said that filmed interviews had been edited. The announcer added that the unedited film will be made available to any authorized person with a valid reason to see it.

Much of the credit for the undoubted impact of this documentary must go to NBC's investigative reporter, Walter Sheridan, and to the news staff of New Orleans station WDSU-TV.

Sheridan was an investigator for the Senate Labor Rackets Committee while the then-Sen. John F. Kennedy was a member. Later, Sheridan worked on the staff of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy (D-N.Y.).