

Cancler Silent to Queries; Found Guilty of Contempt

T-P 7/13/67
Refuses to Answer Grand
Jury in DA Probe

A Negro convicted of burglary who refused to answer a grand jury question Wednesday was found guilty of contempt of court by Criminal District Judge Bernard Bagert in connection with the Garrison probe.

Sentenced to six months imprisonment was John Cancler, an inmate of Parish Prison currently awaiting a decision on a motion for a new trial on a burglary conviction. Additionally, Cancler was fined \$500, with the proviso that he serve a year in lieu of payment of the fine, the two prison sentences to run consecutively.

Cancler, who along with William J. Gurvich, until recently a member of District Attorney Jim Garrison's investigating team in the probe of an alleged conspiracy in the assassi-

(NBC newsman Walter J. Sheridan said he will come to New Orleans to defend himself against District Attorney Jim Garrison's charges. Story in Sec. 1, Page 5.)

nation of President John F. Kennedy, appeared before the grand jury Wednesday. According to a jury spokesman, Cancler took the Fifth Amendment before the grand jury when asked if a statement on television was true. Cancler was one of several individuals who appeared on a National Broadcasting Company network program highly critical of the Garrison investigation.

GO TO COURTROOM

Early Wednesday afternoon, the grand jury left from its usual chambers and journeyed en

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MOBILE, NEW ORLEANS, LA., THURSDAY MORNING,

CANCLER SILENT FOR GRAND JURY

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masse to the courtroom of Judge Bagert, where grand jury foreman Albert V. Labiche once again asked Cancler the question about his "statement" on television. Once again, Cancler refused to answer, reciting the Fifth Amendment, and was promptly found guilty of contempt of court by Judge Bagert.

Judge Bagert reportedly then asked Cancler, in light of his refusal to answer the grand jury's question, if he would be willing to return to the grand jury room and answer any questions. Cancler reportedly said he would rather not answer any questions and was taken directly from Judge Bagert's courtroom back to Parish Prison.

Although the actual statement referred to in the grand jury questioning was not disclosed, informed sources said that the question concerned dealt with a statement made by Cancler to the effect that the district attorney's office had him break into the residence of Clay Shaw, the only figure thus far actually charged as a conspiracy participant, in order "to plant something in the apartment."

After a two-and-a-half hour session during the afternoon with the grand jury, Gurvich emerged from the grand jury room at 6 p. m. Although bound by law to secrecy as to his actual testimony, he made one remark of interest to a bevy of newsmen waiting for him in the

upstairs hallway of the block-long Criminal Courts Building.

LESS FEAR OF ARREST

In reply to a question on his feelings of his possible arrest, Gurvich said, "I don't feel so much that way now as I had earlier this morning." He would not elaborate on the remark, however.

Also, Gurvich declined to answer any questions concerning a recent lie detector test he had taken concerning the probe, classifying such a reply in the field of official grand jury testimony.

Shortly thereafter, the grand jury was dismissed and foreman Albert V. LaBiche stated that he had no comment, adding there was nothing new to report in the grand jury's investigation of the Garrison probe.

Earlier Wednesday, Judge Edward A. Haggerty denied a motion by attorneys for Shaw seeking to block Garrison's scheduled appearance Saturday on a 30-minute NBC network television program in an "equal time" rebuttal-type program.

Attorneys F. Irvin Dymond and William Wegmann, on behalf of their client, sought an injunction to stop the NBC show in which Garrison is expected to answer the network's criticisms of the investigation. The half-hour show, scheduled for 7 p. m. Saturday was arranged following negotiations between the district attorney's office and NBC.

Judge Haggerty, who denied

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the Shaw motion, will be the presiding judge for the Shaw trial, expected to be held in either late summer or early fall.

DA DENIES CLAIM

In an interview Wednesday night following the address before the National Police Officers Association of America, Garrison denied charges made earlier by Gurvich who quoted Garrison as saying that he wanted a television newsman "handcuffed and beaten."

After his talk before the

NPOAA at the Fontainebleau Motor Hotel, Garrison said:

"This is my sixth year in office. What do you think?"

When first posed with the question, he replied, "I would not honor that question with an answer — no comment."

Then asked directly if Gurvich were lying in his claim, Garrison said, "Obviously; there's no question about it."

The question was in reference to an earlier statement made by Gurvich, a New Orleans private detective, who said that Garrison told him

that he (Garrison) wanted NBC reporter Walter Sheridan "handcuffed and beaten."