

PROTESTS 'CONFIDANT' CLAIM

L-I 4/15/67

Governor Threatens Novel With Jail on La. Return

Gov. John J. McKeithen has warned he will put Gordon Novel in prison if the fugitive witness returns to Louisiana and repeats under oath that he was a confidant of the governor.

McKeithen delivered the warning last night as he faced members of the Louisiana Press Association in an 85-minute news conference here.

He said he is personally eager to extradite the 29-year-old Novel, who is wanted for questioning in Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison's Kennedy death plot investigation.

NOVEL, FREE on \$10,000 bond at Columbus, Ohio, where he was arrested for conspiracy to burglarize a Houma munitions dump in 1961, has irritated the Louisiana chief executive with a series of public statements.

The onetime New Orleans bar owner, whom Garrison says is a "very important witness" in the Kennedy inquiry, displayed a Louisiana brigadier general's commission to reporters at Columbus and said it came from McKeithen.

"He's not going to come

back here and swear he was a confidant of mine or that he helped in my campaign," McKeithen told LPA executives.

"IF HE DOES," the governor asserted, "he's going to wind up in Angola state prison because I'm going to swear he wasn't."

McKeithen said he would like to hear Novel explain under oath how he came by the honorary commission as a brigadier general, an honor usually reserved for high-ranking visitors to the state.

"I know he didn't get it from me," he declared.

AT BATON ROUGE, a spokesman for the governor said extradition papers for Novel have been received there and will be dispatched to Ohio Monday. McKeithen telephoned Ohio Gov. John

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Today's Chuckle

Any wife with an inferiority complex can cure it by being sick in bed for a day while her husband manages the household and children.

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Rhodes last week and urged him to expedite Novel's return.

Garrison has accused Novel of conspiring with the late investigation figure David W. Ferrie and erstwhile anti-Castro leader Sergio Arcacha Smith, 44, to steal explosives from the Schlumberger Wells Service Co. bunker.

Arcacha Smith was arrested at Dallas on the charge and freed under \$1,500 bond pending an extradition hearing.

Probe--

Continued from Page 1

another witness wanted for questioning Tuesday before the Orleans Parish Grand Jury.

Arthur O'Leary, a deputy Douglas County attorney at Omaha, said his office has been unable to track down 22-year-old Sandra Moffett McMaignes, who has been ordered by Judge Bernard J. Bagert to appear here Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

Key Garrison witness Perry R. Russo of Baton Rouge has said Mrs. McMaignes was with him at a party in 1963 shortly before he heard Ferrie, Lee Harvey Oswald and retired businessman Clay L. Shaw, 54, plot President John F. Kennedy's murder. The woman has denied being there.