M E M O R A N D U M

Merle
Dulick
VP Personnel

June 19, 1967

TO: JIM GARRISON, District Attorney

FROM: ANDREW J. SCIAMBRA, Assistant District Attorney

RE: Conversations between PERRY RUSSO, RICHARD TOWNLEY of WDSU Television, WALTER SHERIDAN of NBC News, and JAMES PHELAN of the Saturday Evening Post

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Over the past few weeks, I have been in constant contact with RUSSO discussing NBC personnel and agents who have been coming to his residence to discuss with him the Garrison probe in general and the NBC Television White Paper Report on the probe in particular. In regard to this, RUSSO has informed me that during the past few weeks RICHARD TOWNLEY of WDSU Television has been to his house three times, WALTER SHERIDAN of NBC News has been to his house twice and JAMES PHELAN of the Saturday Evening Post has been to his house four times. Some of the highlights of those conversations are as follows:

RICHARD TOWNLEY of WDSU Television has told him that he has been working closely with the defense and a MR. WILSON of Southern Research and that they are swapping information about the case. He told RUSSO that he knew everything that the defense had on him regarding his background and past and that he was in bad shape. He said that DYMOND was going to tear him apart on the stand and that after the trial, he would be completely discredited in everyone's eyes.

PERRY said that TOWNLEY told him that he (TOWNLEY) could act as an intermediary between RUSSO and the defense and that he could get DYMOND to take it easy on him if he allows the defense to ask this question, "From your knowledge of hypnosis

MR. RUSSO, do you feel after reading the transcript that the questions that were asked to you by the District Attorney's office were neutral or leading questions which allowed you to fantasize." And RUSSO would say, "From my understanding of hypnosis, I would say that they were leading questions."

TOWNLEY also told RUSSO that he would contact him in a few days and let him know what moves DYMOND had in mind as they were working together. RUSSO also said that TOWNLEY told him that he and NBC had contacted all of the witnesses that they know about and that they would try to find out what else the District Attorney's office had but that it was getting harder to get information out of the District Attorney's office because now the District Attorney's office is insulating the leaks. He said that he would talk to him some more before he went on vacation.

RUSSO said that WALTER SHERIDAN of NBC News told him that the President of NBC contacted MR. GHERLOCK who is in charge of management at Equitable's home office in New York and GHERLOCK assured the President of NBC that if RUSSO did cooperate with NBC in trying to end the Garrison probe, that no retaliation would be taken by Equitable against RUSSO by the local office on instructions from the home office.

RUSSO said that he told SHERIDAN that he needed a rest as the news people have been bothering him day and night and that he would take a seven to ten day vacation in California after the baseball season was over. RUSSO said that SHERIDAN then asked him if he would like to live in California. SHERIDAN then told him that if he did side up with NBC and the defense and bust up the Garrison probe that he would have to run from Garrison and move from Louisiana. SHERIDAN said that they could set him up in California, protect his job, get him a lawyer and that he could

guarantee that Garrison could never get him extradited back to Louisiana. SHERIDAN then asked him if he would like to leave now and RUSSO told him no.

SHERIDAN then told him that NBC flew NOVEL to McLean, Virginia and gave him a lie detector test and that Garrison will never get NOVEL back in Louisiana. RUSSO said that SHERIDAN told him that what he wants RUSSO to do is to get on an NBC National television show and say, "I am sorry for what I said because I lied, some of what I said was true but I was doctored by the District Attorney's staff into testifying like I did."

PERRY then said that SHERIDAN said the prosecution's case was built on three keystones and that RUSSO was one of them and that if he would come over to the side of the defense, the other two keystones could not handle the weight and the State's case would fall and the case would never come to Court.

PERRY said that JAMES PHELAN of the Saturday Evening Post told him that he was working hand in hand with TOWNLEY and SHERIDAN and that they were in constant contact with each other and that they were going to destroy Garrison and the probe.

RUSSO said that PHELAN insisted that Garrison would leave him standing in the cold all alone and that he would be the only one that would get hurt as a result of the trial. RUSSO said that PHELAN repeated several times that he should talk to a lawyer in order to protect himself. RUSSO said that PHELAN told him that he could get him a $200,000 a year lawyer in New York and that "We would take care of the expense."

RUSSO said that PHELAN asked him how would he feel if they could prove to him that SHAW was innocent or that he made an honest mistake. He asked him, "How would you feel about sending an innocent man to the Penitentiary?"

PERRY said that PHELAN told him that the defense was going to state that he was doctored into testifying like he did and that he should not do anything to refute the defense's statements either on the stand on in public.

PERRY told me that PHELAN has called him several times from New York and has told him that before he left town, he went over to his house with a plane ticket for him to New York but that no one was home. PERRY said that he then told him that if he wanted to come up to New York to meet him, he would send him a plane ticket. PERRY refused.

ANDREW J. SCIAMBRA

PERRY RUSSO