MISUNDERSTOOD, GARRISON SAYS

'Rudely Interrupted by Jury' Cliche, Claim

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District Attorney Jim Garrison said Monday he was "misunderstood" in a speech before the Louisiana AFL-CIO convention here Thursday in which he was quoted as saying he was "rudely interrupted" by the jury in his quest for justice in the Clay L. Shaw conspiracy case.

"In the Times-Picayune on Friday, April 4, a news article described me as stating that I had been 'rudely interrupted' by the jury in my quest for justice," said Garrison in a statement.

"Perhaps I did not make myself clear or perhaps the reporter misunderstood my point. In either event, the fact is that I was not complaining about the jury verdict in any way. As a strong supporter of the jury system I simply do not complain about jury verdicts even when they happen to be against me.

"At the point in my talk to which the reporter alluded I was, in effect, joking about the fact that I had lost a case which I had felt we would win. I said: 'As I was saying, before I was so rudely interrupted by the jury's verdict,' . . . and I then went on to add that the government's official story about President Kennedy's assassination was untrue. As most people will recognize, I was employing a cliche which did not in any way reflect upon the jury but emphasized rather my surprise that we had lost.

"In my considered judgment the jury in the Shaw case was an honest, sincere jury which did what it considered to be its duty. Neither privately nor publicly have I ever indicated otherwise.

"In criminal prosecutions the defendant must be presumed innocent until found guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. If a jury concludes that reasonable doubt remains as to the defendant's guilt then it is simply doing its duty when it acquits him."