

'Probe Investigation'

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Says Garrison Oversteps, Congress Should Act

By RALPH DE TOLEDANO

When Jim Garrison, New Orleans' muscle-bound district attorney, announced an investigation of the Kennedy assassination, there was reason to believe that he was earnestly seeking to answer questions still perplexing Americans. It is probably true that in the early days of his probe, Mr. Garrison was sincerely interested in facts.

Since then, however, he has been captured by the extreme left. At his side has been Mark Lane, a darling of the far left. And this week, Mr. Garrison joined a press conference held by Ramparts, a slick-paper sensationalist monthly whose philosophy is shocking pink. The result has been scandalous enough to warrant an investigation of Jim Garrison by an appropriate committee of the Congress — or better still, by a commission of reputable jurists.

MR. GARRISON'S charges, accusations, and inferences go far beyond the realm of decency and probity. They sound, in fact, as if they were drawn from a dead-pan reading of that scabrous little play, "MacBird," which is giving so much joy to the beatniks of Greenwich Village and their Vietnik cousins. The play suggests that President Lyndon Johnson murdered President Kennedy. Mr. Garrison does not go that far. He simply says, with bland guile, that President Johnson "knows very well that Lee Oswald did not pull the trigger" and that "the federal government is protecting the assassins every day."

This, if true, would make President Johnson at the very least an accessory after the fact — and therefore legally chargeable with murder, as if he had been one of the 15 "plotters" that District Attorney Garrison claims assassinated Mr. Kennedy.

In Mr. Garrison's pantheon of villains, there are no distinctions. He once claimed that Lee Harvey Oswald was working for the Central Intelligence Agency. Now he argues that

the FBI, warning of the assassination attempt; of suppression by FBI director J. Edgar Hoover of this information in order, presumably, to help the plotters carry out the job; of witnesses who could produce the Oswald telegram from Western Union files but refuse to do so for fear of their lives. (Mr. Garrison apparently does not know that it would be illegal for Western Union to open its files



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to a local district attorney. If a telegram such as he describes exists, it could be pried loose by a federal court order.)

IN THIS manner, Mr. Garrison has been flapping his wings. After more than a year of loud talk, he has done no more than to bring indictments against two suspects, leaving him 13 "plotters" to go. One of his targets has fallen under suspicion for little more than the fact that he tried to organize a J. Edgar Hoover-for-President movement in 1964. Or so it would seem from what little Mr. Garrison has said on the subject.

The most charitable explanation for Jim Garrison's behavior is that he talked too big in the early days of his "investigation" and now must move to bigger and better headline-makers to extricate himself from past extravagances. But he is now questioning the integrity of the presidency and of the entire federal government.

If what he says is true, more is required than the efforts of a local district attorney. It becomes a matter that only the highest national authority must probe. If it is not true, then Mr. Garrison is trafficking in criminal libel. In either case, he should not be allowed to continue sowing the seeds of destruction.

Oswald was an FBI informant. That these two agencies do not share information or informants — or that CIA does not work operationally in the United States — does not seem to have reached Mr. Garrison's attention.

Donning his 007 cap, Mr. Garrison speaks mysteriously of telegrams sent by Oswald to