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Epstein Scores D.A. Probing Conspiracy

By BARTON REPPERT

Jim Garrison, New Orleans district attorney who is probing an alleged conspiracy to kill President Kennedy, was described Friday by a former Cornell graduate student as a "dangerous man," following methods that are a "travesty" of criminal investigation.

Edward L. Epstein, author of "Inquest; the Warren Commission and the Establishment of Truth," spoke out on the Garrison investigation before more than 169 persons in fees 121.

Interviewed after his talk, Epstein said the six foot six, silver-haired Garrison "shows all the qualities of a demagogue, of a Joe McCarthy, of a Huey Long."

The New Orleans D.A.'s flamboyant ways smack of political ambitions, Epstein added, and "we may have to deal with Mr. Garrison for a long time to come if he is successful."

Epstein was in New Orleans a month ago to size up Garrison's investigation. Now at Harvard, Epstein first wrote "Inquest" as his master's thesis in government here. He is presently working on a series of magazine articles in connection with the assassination conspiracy.

Garrison's office announced on March 2 it had evidence to link Lee Harvey Oswald with two New Orleans men in conspiring to kill the President.

Oswald, it was alleged, had met with David W. Ferrie and

Clay Shaw in September 1963 to plan the assassination. Ferrie was found dead on February 22, reportedly due to a brain hemorrhage. Shaw was arrested on March 1.

In his talk Friday, Epstein said Garrison is dangerous since "he is building a case against a man (Clay Shaw) who may well be innocent."

Following Shaw's arrest, Garrison was reported by The Associated Press to have claimed "I have no doubt about the case. . . The arrests will hold up. If you want to get against me, you will lose."

Epstein explained that this sort of assertion brings out Garrison's character as "a maverick looking for a suspect."

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Garrison, according to Epstein, is "a disciple of Ayn Rand," and likes to see himself as a "rugged individualist" fighting the corruptions of society.

Epstein said Garrison knows he has latched onto "the case of the century," but his strange means of investigation suggest he is "going after it as if it were a dream."

Summing up, Epstein saw Garrison as a "small town D.A. doing his best to build Jim Garrison into a folk-hero." Evidence or not, ethics or not, "most people want to believe Garrison has something."