

Enough Rope

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NEW ORLEANS District Attorney Jim Garrison now seems to have paid out enough rope to hang his hare-brained, Kennedy-assassination theory high enough for even the most credulous to see it for what it is — a wildly improbable effort, for some arcane reasons of his own, to refute the reasoned findings of the Warren Commission.

True, he may have rounded up a classic collection of local weirdos — no great feat in any city. And let them recite some fanciful night-time party "plots" allegedly involving Lee Harvey Oswald, the presidential assassin the Warren Commission presents as a kooky loner.

But recent developments in Garrison's probe

are the final tipoff to the insubstantiality of his "case." Having failed to reconstruct any logical link between his bizarre band of suspects and the President's death, Mr. Garrison is casting about wildly.

He has called in for grilling others who happened to be named "Oswald." He is saying he thinks Oswald really may have been a CIA agent (which CIA long since has denied). And now he is trying to investigate both the CIA and the FBI.

For whatever motives and for however long Mr. Garrison keeps his show going, he will henceforth be playing to a largely empty house. He has exhausted the patience, credulity and attention of all but the most dedicated screwballs.