

'Conspiracy' in New Orleans? LATIMES 2/22/67

The district attorney of New Orleans has stated flatly that he has information pointing to the existence of a conspiracy in the assassination of President Kennedy on Nov. 22, 1963.

The official, Jim Garrison, says that arrests will be made. But he also claims that publicity concerning his alleged investigation has interfered with his case, and that the early arrests he anticipated are now "many months" away.

There is some question whether Garrison was caught by surprise by the publicity he now condemns. A New Orleans paper, the States-Item, broke the story last week because it was concerned about \$8,000 in public funds reportedly spent by Garrison in the last three months on his supposed investigation. The paper's managing editor says Garrison was shown a copy of the questioned story before it was published, and that he raised no objections.

If this is indeed the case then Garrison is hardly in a position to blame publicity for harming his efforts. The district attorney, however, denies he saw the story before it was published.

Obviously there has been intense interest in these charges, and reporters have been converging on New Orleans from as far

away as Europe. Garrison, however, apparently has thus far revealed nothing that was not known to Warren Commission investigators.

Whether the district attorney has any new information of substantive value remains to be seen. Several points concerning this matter do, however, seem open to comment

The first is that if there indeed should be any solid evidence to support Garrison's allegations, it should long ago have been made available to federal authorities. A district attorney's authority and investigative resources are, after all, limited. Moreover, given the nature of the crime and the sensationalism of Garrison's charges, it is plain that any "conspirators," should they exist, aren't going to hang around New Orleans waiting to be arrested. In that case outside cooperation, which Garrison has refused to request, would be needed.

The second point quite simply is that it is irresponsible for an officer of the law to be carrying on publicly about a matter as serious and sensitive as the one the district attorney says he is investigating. If he has any new leads he should, of course, be pursuing them, but not by press conferences and headline-seeking allegations.