

Accolades from Garrison

Jury 'sense' praised

By LANNY THOMAS

Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison stood on the courthouse steps after his acquittal yesterday and said "common sense" set him free.

"It was a jury with a lot of common sense, and it recognized that the government was attempting to get retribution for political reasons — against an individual who criticized the government."

Thus, Garrison resumed his attack on the Justice Department for prosecuting him on a charge of conspiracy to obstruct law enforcement.

"As I was saying — before I was so rudely interrupted — the Department of Justice is absolutely corrupt. This time it got beat."

THE 52-YEAR OLD district attorney took his verdict quietly and with little emotion in the courtroom.

Standing in the rain before a cheering sidewalk audience, he expressed jubilation with criticism of the government.

"I don't think the federal government is finished with me for years, and conversely I am not finished with it for years," he said.

Asked what the "next chapter" would be in his battles with the government, the DA said: "I've never pretended to be a prophet."

Garrison said he would continue his criticism of the government but that it would not be for vindictive purposes.

HE SAID he does not plan to prose-

cute Pershing O. Gervais, the one-time friend who was largely responsible for the government's case.

"I don't believe in vindictiveness. I have no plans to try to hurt anyone for any particular reason. I'm not mad at anybody."

Of Gervais, he said, "I feel sorry for the things he has done, but I'm not mad at him."

The DA also said he thinks the government failed in its prosecution, because he didn't "play their game in their ball park."

He said government evidence demonstrates that the Justice Department is "corrupt." That evidence, he said, was "doctored tapes," "forged birth certificates" and witnesses he never met.

"GOD ONLY knows what other fraudulent evidence they had in reserve," he said.

Pinball executives Robert Nims and John Aruns Callery, who also were acquitted, said the verdict reinforced their faith in the jury system.

"I never doubted I would be acquitted," said the 45-year-old Nims. "I had faith in them that they would do what they did."

Callery, 63, said, "I'm very happy."