

Garrison, 2 Others Found Not Guilty Of Bribery Charge

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NEW ORLEANS, Sept. 27 (AP)—Controversial District Attorney Jim Garrison was acquitted today on charges of obstructing law enforcement by taking bribes to protect illegal gambling.

The U.S. District Court jury deliberated, more than three days before delivering its verdict, ending a trial of six weeks.

Two other men tried with Garrison—pinball machine company executives John A. Callery, 63, and Robert Nims, 45—also were acquitted.

The flamboyant Garrison, who took over as his own attorney and completed his case with a three-hour argument Monday, took a few deep breaths and smiled after the verdict was read.

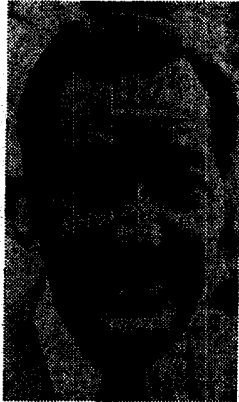
He was then joined by his regular team of defense lawyers, which had withdrawn at the start of the defense case after disagreeing on how the defense should be handled.

Garrison, who gained national attention with his unsuccessful attempts to prosecute a man for the assassination of President Kennedy, had said during the trial that he did not expect to be convicted. But, convicted or acquitted, he said he was bound to be re-elected to a fourth term in November.

The basis of the government's case was 52 tape recordings which prosecutors said were made secretly. Some were said to be recordings of actual bribery payoffs by informer Pershing Gervais, a onetime friend and assistant of Garrison's.

On one of the payoffs Gervais had marked money, which agents said was used by Garrison to pay a hotel bill.

As an offshoot of the case, Gervais appeared today before a federal grand jury investi-



JIM GARRISON

... deep breaths

gating other names brought up on the tapes. He said he would "tell all he knows about criminal activity in the New Orleans area," federal officials said.

Originally, 10 men were under indictment in the case. The list included two former police officers and five other pinball company executives. The others either entered guilty pleas or got separate trials.

Three of the original 10 defendants testified against Garrison, Mins and Callery.

One, former police Capt. Frederick A. Soule Sr., produced a pickle jar containing \$63,000. He said that was his share of the bribery money, which was allegedly spread around by the pinball industry to prevent raids on their gambling-type machines.

Dominant figure in the trial was Gervais, whose taped voice was the backbone of the prosecution's case. He eventually took the stand as the prosecution's last witness.

Gervais, an ex-policeman, told how he was wired for sound and sent into meetings with Garrison and others by federal agents hiding nearby. He told how federal agents searched him before and after his visit to Garrison's home the night he allegedly delivered the marked money.

Gervais reaffirmed what a voice expert had said—that the tapes were genuine recordings of actual conversations. He said he had lied to newsmen when he told them the government's case was a frameup.