

S.O. 2-24-67

Form Fund For DA to Push Probe

A group of New Orleans businessmen is giving Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison a "blank check" fund to continue his investigation of the death of President John F. Kennedy.

"It would amount to a blank check that would pay the cost of the investigation for months and even years," one of the sponsors said. "We are prepared to back Jim Garrison all the way . . . five years if necessary."

When the States-Item revealed the probe's existence last week, it cited city financial records showing that some \$8,000 had been spent by the DA's office, mostly on trips.

GARRISON, ANGRY at the paper's disclosure, said he would continue the probe with borrowed funds or contributions so the paper would be unable to check on his spending.

Two businessmen, both personal friends of Garrison, were named as leaders in the "conspiracy investigation fund" move. They are Joseph M. Rault Jr., president of a petroleum firm, and Willard E. Robertson, an automobile distributor.

Garrison, who contends that President Kennedy's death resulted from a plot hatched in New Orleans, has promised there will be arrests and convictions within a few months.

RAULT TODAY confirmed the existence of the fund to finance the continued probe, but declined to give any dollar amount.

Asked whether the fund could match the \$8,000 reported spent earlier, Rault said:

"Yes. If he needs \$8,000 for the next three months, he'll get it, and the three

months after that. There is no time limit to this.

"We'll provide whatever he needs—no questions asked."

Rault said Garrison would not be asked to give details of the nature of any specific investigative move. He said, however, that "this is not an open-end thing. We'll evaluate

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what is happening as we go along."

Rault declined to identify the other businessmen who have made pledges, but said, "They cross political lines. This is a community action."

MEANWHILE, U.S. Rep. Hale Boggs of New Orleans, a member of the Warren Commission, said here last

night he felt Garrison "is acting in the best interests of his country" in making the investigation.

Boggs, speaking at Loyola University, said, "I would say that if the district attorney turns up evidence in the case and helps pursue the truth, he had done his country a good service."

However, Boggs said he felt the Warren Report would stand. It holds that Lee Harvey Oswald, acting alone, killed the President and no conspiracy was involved.

In the investigation of the death of David William Ferrie, found dead Tuesday in his apartment at 3330 Louisiana ave. pkwy., coroner's office officials were still awaiting results of a toxicological report. There were indications that a partial report might be available later today, but complete results are still several days away.

FERRIE, CALLED "one of the most important individuals in history" by Garrison in connection with his probe, died of a brain hemorrhage, according to Orleans Parish Coroner Dr. Nicholas Chetia.

He said the autopsy showed death was caused by an aneurysm of a cerebral artery which caused blood to spill into the brain. Chetia ruled out murder as a possible cause of death.

He said the death would remain unclassified until the toxicological report is complete.

DR. RONALD A. WELSH,



WHERE THE MONEY IS reportedly coming from to back District Attorney Jim Garrison's probe of a plot to assassinate President Kennedy, is from **JOSEPH RAULT**, left, and **WILLARD ROBERTSON**. Rault, an oil company president, and Robertson, an automobile dealer, are among a group of New Orleans businessmen who have pledged to privately finance Garrison's investigation, "No questions asked."

who performed the autopsy and who is a professor of pathology at Louisiana State University School of Medicine, said the "anatomical findings are very clear cut."

He added that Ferrie had a history of high blood pressure ranging from a "moderate to moderately severe degree" and that he had been suffering with "hypertensive cardio-vascular disease."

Dr. Chetta said, "There is no evidence of any violence. There is no evidence of murder."

YESTERDAY, GARRISON said his office will make no further statements on the JFK probe in the near future.

"Just in case I have not made myself clear," he said, "let me say under no circumstances will I turn over any evidence we have gathered to any other agency, and this most specifically applies to agencies of the federal government which have withheld—and continue to with-

hold—material which should have been turned over to law enforcement agencies having proper legal jurisdiction."

He added that the "federal government has as much jurisdiction over a murder conspiracy in New Orleans as the SPCA (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.)"

FERRIE'S DEATH apparently scared other persons whose names have figured in the probe.

David Lewis, a bus station baggage clerk who claims he had knowledge of a possible conspiracy to kill Kennedy, went to Garrison's office yesterday, again expressing fear for his life.

Miguel Torres, a Cuban exile who lived a block from Oswald on Magazine st. in 1963, was transferred from a jail cell to the Parish Prison hospital. Reportedly, there was a telephone call threatening his life.

Torres was returned to New Orleans from the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola last month for questioning by Garrison's investigators.

WATCH THE YANKS
PARIS—French auto makers fear American competition.