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Special Guard By Jailed Probe

5-2 4/20/67

Rejected

Doubts Life In Peril Here Despite DA

A Parish Prison inmate linked to the current probe of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy today declined to be moved to a private cell despite assertions by Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison that the lives of some witnesses are in jeopardy.

Miguel Torres, in jail on a burglary count, was reportedly under questioning in the case. He lived near accused presidential assassin Lee Harvey Oswald on Magazine st. in 1963.

Criminal Sheriff Louis Heyd said Torres was kept in the same public tier as usual at his own request. He quoted Torres as saying he doesn't feel his life is in danger.

HEYD SAID HE will ask

Figure

Garrison for specific details of threats against witnesses. The sheriff said Torres has declined to speak to newsmen.

Garrison said earlier that publicity in the case has endangered the lives of some of the principals. He did not name anyone.

Garrison remained mum about further developments in his investigation, which he has promised will lead to arrests and convictions. He reportedly planned a news conference later in the day. Dozens of out-of-town newsmen were standing by.

A MIAMI Cuban exile who helped guard Kennedy and has been working with Garrison on the probe was reported planning to come to New Orleans today.

However, the exile, Bernardo Torres, 33, was contacted in Miami by the States-Item and said he "doesn't know yet" if or when he will come here.

Asked if he thought Garrison has a valid investigation, he replied, "I think so, but I am not allowed to give any

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information until Jim Garrison give me an OK."

RICHARD GERSTEIN, Florida state attorney for the Miami area (Dade County), confirmed he had conferred with Garrison at length last month on the investigation.

"I lent them an investigator to help the men they had here," he said. "I expedited their activities with several law enforcement agencies. Garrison is convinced he will be able to show that the Warren report is in error."

Gerstein said he would not comment on his personal opinion of the investigation, but said he had a high regard for Garrison.

Mayor Victor H. Schiro, asked if he felt the probe would hurt the city's image, said:

"I have never interfered with any investigation in the DA's office.

"I am sure Mr. Garrison must know what he is doing and we are willing to help in any way we can.

"If an investigation is needed to bring out important historical facts, I think it should be done whether it is in New Orleans, Dallas or Kalamazoo."

In Dallas, Assistant District Attorney Bill Alexander said today his office places little faith in Garrison's allegations.

Alexander, along with DA Henry Wade, helped prosecute at the 1964 murder trial of Jack Ruby, the man who killed Oswald. Ruby died Jan. 3 in a Dallas jail.

Phil Bureson of Dallas, one of Ruby's lawyers, said he doubts that Ruby and Oswald ever met in New Orleans.

MARVIN BELLI of San Francisco, who also defended Ruby at his murder trial, said Ruby and Oswald were in New Orleans at the same time but it was just a coincidence.

Wade was unavailable for comment.

In another development here today, it was learned that Garrison's personnel have changed the locks on the doors to the DA's office for security reasons connected with the probe.

Bernardo Torres, interviewed

yesterday in Miami, said, "another chapter will be added to the Warren report when (Garrison's) investigation is complete.

THE DA RELUCTANTLY admitted that the investigation was under way following disclosures Friday in a copyrighted story in the States-Item.

Torres said he was one of 10 Cubans who helped protect Kennedy in Miami, which has a large Cuban colony.

He said the Secret Service had asked trusted Cubans to spot suspicious Cubans.

TORRES SAID Garrison engaged him to look into the background of some Cubans reported to have been with Oswald, named as the assassin, shortly before Kennedy was shot Nov. 22, 1963, in Dallas.

Torres predicted that "the Warren Report and the FBI report (on the assassination) will crumble when the investigation is released."

The private detective said he has made several trips between Miami and New Orleans in connection with the Garrison probe.

HE WAS LISTED in the DA's records as receiving money for a "special investigation."

Torres said he had seen photographs of Oswald with some Cubans, although he was not acquainted with them. The photographs in question were reportedly taken in New Orleans shortly before the assassination.

Torres refused to discuss a report that Oswald had visited Miami to talk with Cubans. Nor would he talk about reports that some exiles—angry at Kennedy's failure to take action which might have saved the unsuccessful 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion—were talking about killing the President.

TORRES WAS a member of the invasion brigade. He now is military coordinator of its veterans' organization, called Brigade 2506.

Garrison lashed out at newspaper stories on the probe.

"We have not mentioned anyone's name," he said. "I

think that one of the most outrageous things, one of the most irresponsible things perpetrated by the newspapers in their sensational grab of an investigation, turning it into headlines, was to show

pictures of individuals and infer that they were subjects either on the verge of arrest or to be arrested down the line." (No such pictures were published in the States-Item.)

ASKED TO SUM up his investigation thus far, Garrison replied:

"Well, I can't sum it up in terms of individuals or what might turn out to be evidence. I can say that we have been investigating the role of the city of New Orleans in the assassination of President Kennedy, and we have made some progress—I think substantial progress. At least, we were making progress until the newspapers revealed a number of details."

The DA also replied to a statement by Rep. Gerald R. Ford, R-Mich., that he should forward his findings to the U.S. attorney general who could then convey them on to President Lyndon B. Johnson.

Said Garrison, "I am running this investigation, not the President, not the attorney general.

"WE ARE investigating a conspiracy which appeared to have occurred in New Orleans and they don't have a thing in the world to do with it. Now, if they want to help me, I'll welcome their help. But I'm not reporting to anybody."

He said involvement with federal officials would slow his probe.

Meanwhile, several Latins in New Orleans had something to say about the investigation.

Alberto Fowler, a Cuban refugee and director of international relations for the city, said of Garrison's probe into the assassination:

"If he's gone to all the trouble of an investigation he must have some pretty hot lead."

Manuel Gil, New Orleans delegate to the Miami-based

Movimiento Insurreccional de Recuperacion Revolucionaria, asserted that "the hand of Castro was directly behind the suspected plot."

Gil said there is a possibility of a conspiracy having been hatched in New Orleans and he expressed the belief that Oswald had other people working with him at the time of the assassination.

In Baton Rouge, Gov. John McKeithen said today he has kept in confidence since Christmas the knowledge that the New Orleans district attorney was probing a presidential assassination plot.

M'KEITHEN SAID Garrison, a personal and political friend, told him then he would be able to prove there was a plot leading to the assassination of President Kennedy.

"What he told me was of a confidential nature, and I left it that way," McKeithen said in an interview.

The governor said Garrison had said nothing to him about any extra fund from the state to conduct the investigation.

McKeithen was asked whether the state was cooperating with Garrison's office in the probe. He indicated if any cooperation should be needed it would be provided, and he referred further questions along this line to State Police Capt. Thomas Burbank.

THE STATE police superintendent gave a carefully worded statement on this matter.

"We have received no request from Mr. Garrison or his office, to my knowledge," Burbank said.

"If Mr. Garrison would request assistance we would be most happy to cooperate with him as we have done in the past."

Burbank was questioned further whether he knew of the probe, and he replied:

"I'll have to stick to my statement."

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