

# GARRISON STOPS D.A. BANQUET

J-P 3/17/68  
Dinner Canceled After  
Argument on Speech

By LANNY THOMAS  
District Attorney Jim Garrison Saturday afternoon cancelled a banquet at which he was to speak Saturday night at the Monteleone Hotel after the president of the National District Attorneys Association asked him to tone down some remarks that were critical of the federal government.

Garrison was to speak at the final session of the five-day mid-winter meeting of the association here.

In a statement issued afterwards, Garrison said he told the association president, District Attorney William J. Raggio of Reno, Nev., that he would not alter his comments "in any way."

Garrison said, Raggio told him in a meeting Saturday afternoon at the hotel that he did not want him to make any comments in his speech which constituted "strong criticism of the federal government."

## DINNER CANCELLED

Garrison then said he told Raggio he would cancel the banquet before "I responded to any efforts to censor my speech or to have the subject matter controlled in any way."

After the banquet was cancelled, Garrison made arrangements with the hotel to have the food given to charitable organizations. About 600 persons were expected to attend the banquet.

The bill for the banquet, \$3,300, was footed by members of the association in \$50 registration fees. The local chapter handled arrangements, thereby enabling Garrison to have the authority to call off the banquet.

At an interview Saturday night in his hotel suite, Raggio said he asked Garrison to come to the hotel about 2 p.m. Saturday to discuss his planned speech because of remarks he

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had made earlier in the week to association members.

## GIVES COMMENT

Raggio said some of the remarks made during a brunch Wednesday were considered "contemptuous." At that time, Raggio said, Garrison told members if they were worried about what he had said then, they should "wait until Saturday night."

At the meeting Saturday, Raggio said Garrison told him he was going to tell the association about the federal courts and "the President who ought to be hanged."

The association president said Garrison's remarks were punctuated with obscenity. Raggio said he then told the Orleans district attorney he had rather for him not to speak.

According to Raggio, Garrison turned to Charles R. Ward, his chief assistant, and ordered him to "cancel the banquet, bolt the doors and don't let anyone in."

Raggio quoted Garrison as saying, "I'm running this show." After those instructions, Garrison then stormed out of the hotel suite, Raggio said.

Earlier in the meeting, Raggio said, Garrison was informed that several members of the association were concerned about some remarks he was to make at the banquet. Garrison's response, Raggio said, was, "Six hundred people came to see me and there must not be too much objection."

"I got the impression he thought they all came here to see Jim Garrison," Raggio said. "His actions here were completely irrational."

Raggio said the mid-winter meeting in New Orleans was scheduled months before Garrison's probe of President Kennedy's assassination was publicized. However, about a year ago some members became concerned about the meeting being held here because of the investigation.

"It's an investigation that we felt we were not a part of," said Raggio. He said Ward later assured the association that the meeting would in no way be used by Garrison to air remarks in connection with his investigation.

Vice-President Hubert Humphrey originally was scheduled

to speak here, but cancelled several months ago, according to Raggio.

"As late as last week we were looking for another speaker," Raggio said. "When we got here, we found Garrison listed on the program. He put himself on the program. Again, we were assured it would have no effect," he added.

The board of directors of the National District Attorneys Association backed up Raggio's actions at an emergency meeting about 5 p.m. Saturday. A member of the board said it expects Garrison to provide a meal for members who expected one Saturday night or pay the association the cost of the banquet.

Regarding his conversation with Raggio, Garrison said in a statement: "I explained to Mr. Raggio that I most certainly intended to comment on this subject (federal government) and that—as a matter of fact—I had a good deal more to add about the illegal intrusion of federal courts into state affairs.

"I advised him further that I also intended to go into the activities of Lyndon Johnson in concealing vital evidence concerning the murder of John F. Kennedy.

"We regard to the matter of the assassination of President Kennedy, I will not submit to any censorship or any kind of limitations on my comments," Garrison said. "There are always good excuses to avoid facing the truth, to avoid confronting the illegitimate power which now has control of this country."

Food which was prepared for the 7 p.m. banquet was sent to St. Elizabeth's, St. Vincent and The Protestant Children's Home.

Raggio said the meeting here was one of the best the association had had, but "it's unfortunate we had to end on a sour note."

William Cahn of Mineola, N.Y., a vice-president of the association, was to receive the distinguished service award at the banquet. It was presented at an impromptu ceremony in his hotel room.

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