

BOND JUMPING HIT BY CONNICK

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Sees Link with Climbing
N.O. Crime Rate

Harry Connick, candidate for Orleans Parish district attorney in the Nov. 8 Democratic primary, asserted Monday that there is a direct relationship between bail bond jumping by criminal suspects and the increasing crime rate in New Orleans.

Speaking at the Press Club of New Orleans' newsmaker luncheon, Connick leveled charges at DA Jim Garrison, especially with the allegation that Garrison and his office have allowed more than 1,000 criminal defendants to jump bond in the past four years.

"It would be improper for me, without proof, to attribute this travesty on the administration of our criminal process to pay-offs," said Connick. "Many questions remain unanswered. The situation is at least the result of gross neglect and mismanagement on the part of the DA and those in his office."

The speaker said the public is the victim because citizens have been deprived of money (more than \$1 million he said has not been collected by the DA's office from bonding companies). Some 1,000 wrongdoers have gone unprosecuted and unpunished, and citizens have been the victims of repeated serious crimes by the same criminals, he charged.

Connick added that Garrison "has facetiously said that the crime rate is rising even in those cities where he is not district attorney."

The candidate charged that crimes have been committed in at least three other cities because of Garrison's failure to prosecute one suspect, Gerald Norris, who is charged in Fayette County, Ga., and Eastchester, N. Y., for armed robbery, and has been convicted and is serving time in North Carolina for burglary.

"But we know about Norris,"

said Connick. "Are there others in that army of 1,000 that the DA has let loose who have also added to the crime rise?"

He gave another example, that of George McCormick, who was arrested here in 1966 for attempted murder and aggravated battery. The DA's office refused the charge, he continued, and McCormick was booked with a burglary here the following year, posted \$1,000 bond but failed to appear for his April 30, 1968, trial. The bond was forfeited and has not been collected by the DA's office, said Connick.

An Aug. 20, 1969, while McCormick was being arrested in Pontiac, Mich., for an armed robbery, he shot a police officer in the head, hand and arm, and then escaped in a police car, the candidate added.

He said that McCormick was again arrested here in early September on a robbery charge,

and is presently in Parish Prison under a \$50,000 bond.

The conclusions that must be drawn from these two cases, Connick stated, are:

—That bail bond cases are not being handled properly by the DA.

—That there is a direct relationship between bail bond jumping and the increasing crime rate in New Orleans as well as in other cities.

—That many crimes are committed by dope addicts who must steal, rob and sell narcotics in order to maintain their habits.

—That the police force arrests some criminals many times, whereas if a realistic bond and swift prosecution had been accomplished, the subsequent arrests would have been unnecessary.