

TRAPOLIN RAPS DA, MAYOR OVER CRIME

T-P 6-14-69
Claims Officials Lax on
Fighting Underworld

The chairman of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Crime and Delinquency has criticized Mayor Victor H. Schiro and District Attorney Jim Garrison for failing to come to grips with organized crime.

Ivor A. Trapolin, whose committee issued a "Report on Organized Crime" last April 17, said that support for the conclusions of that report has come from the federal and state levels of government, but Mayor Schiro says there is no organized crime in New Orleans.

Calling for citizens to demand action, Trapolin issued a call for a public investigation by the City Council into the problem.

In a lengthy statement to Schiro, the Orleans Parish Grand Jury, and to members of the advisory committee, Trapolin said:

'GREAT SIGNIFICANCE'

"It should be of great significance to each member of our committee that . . . not one person has pointed to one specific word, line or paragraph in our report with which they disagree. Meanwhile, as far as I know, not one of our recommendations . . . has been put into effect."

The report acknowledged the existence of organized crime in New Orleans and asserted it was making inroads into the tourist business in New Orleans.

He said that following his appearance before the grand jury James Alcock, head of

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Garrison's organized crime unit ("especially assigned after the release of our report"), stated that "he doubted that the investigation would reach the proportions of the 1967 organized crime probe. In other words, he expected little action to be taken either by his office or by the Orleans Parish Grand Jury."

Trapolin said that because of Alcock's comments and those of the mayor, "I feel an obligation to convey to you the information that I gave to the District Attorney's office and the New Orleans police department . . ."

He said that evidence was given to the DA "as to how the pinball payoff business operates. An agent from a pinball concern removes the money periodically from the machine, the tavern or bar operator is repaid when he has paid off and the proceeds are then divided between the tavern or bar operator and the pinball company. Profits on these gambling machines are so great that many bar and tavern owners make more money on their pinball machines than in the entire bar or restaurant operation."

ADDITIONAL LAWS

Trapolin asserted: "These machines are in effect the same as slot machines which have been outlawed in this state. If there is some technicality with the laws that permit certain companies to circumvent the gambling laws of this city and state, this loophole should be corrected with additional legislation."

He said he presented to the DA and the New Orleans police "evidence as to the areas of legal and illegal activity of the Cosa Nostra . . . areas where legal action is necessary, where it has been lacking."

In the area of loan sharking, Trapolin said:

"The DA's office has been informed of the volumes upon volumes of information available to them on the LL&T (Louisiana Loan & Thrift Corp.), Orleans Parish operation. These details are in the

possession of the Louisiana Legislative Committee. It was reported by an assistant U.S. attorney on April 9, 1969, that Louisiana laws were violated in many of the LL&T local transactions, but no legal action has been taken except by the U.S. attorney's office. Many local pinball operators were involved in the LL&T case.

"The DA's office was informed that there is 'prosecutable evidence' in the LL&T case. As of this date it appears that no action has been taken by the DA's office."

Supporting criticism leveled Thursday by Aaron M. Kohn of the Metropolitan Crime Commission about the present way in which the grand jury probes organized crime, Trapolin said:

"The grand jury has as its legal advisors the same individuals who have contended for years that organized crime doesn't exist in New Orleans. It has already been stated by Mr. Alcock that nothing much could be expected from our present grand jury. This is probably true unless different legal advisors are obtained by the Orleans Parish Grand Jury."

He then suggested that the City Council conduct an investigation into organized crime.

PUBLIC PROBES

He said the council has the authority ". . . to conduct public investigations with the right to subpoena, the right to administer oaths and take testimony."

He said that such a hearing "Possibly . . . should be conducted for the public to know why the U.S. Justice Department considers our city as a priority area for a strike force to be used against organized crime. But more important, such a hearing would expose those who have cooperated with La Cosa Nostra in the past and have present connections with the organized crime syndicate. The purpose of such a hearing would be to determine if additional city laws are needed to oppose this crime syndicate.

"There are violations of many city laws in connection with organized crime operations here in the city. The city attorney can prosecute in Municipal Court such violators, even if state prosecutors fail to do so."