

T-P 6-13-69

Kohn Declines Grand Jury Bid

Cites Garrison 'Abuse' of Parish Body

Aaron M. Kohn declined an invitation to appear before the Orleans Parish Grand Jury Thursday in connection with its current probe of organized crime.

Kohn, managing director of the Metropolitan Crime Commission of New Orleans Inc., explained his reason for not appearing as a witness in a letter to jury foreman Fernand Lapeyre. He wrote:

"Regretfully, the sustained activity of the district attorney and his assistants as legal advisors to grand juries, in their attempts to intimidate me and the crime commission during the past three years, make my

appearance impossible at this time."

Kohn said that the actions of DA Jim Garrison "to silence me and our organization . . . have been fully documented. This history of Mr. Garrison's abuse of the grand jury and legal processes is the subject of open and pending litigation initiated by our crime commission on Jan. 15, 1968" in federal court.

FOUR CONDITIONS

In declining the invitation to testify, Kohn did list four conditions which he said must be brought about before the commission "can be of help to you."

They are:

—That a competent and trustworthy special assistant district attorney, not presently on the DA's staff, be appointed

to serve as legal advisor to the grand jury in connection with the organized crime probe.

—That a committee of three knowledgeable leaders of the lawyer community be requested to select the man to be appointed as special assistant prosecutor for the grand jury.

—That special office facilities for the special prosecutor be provided remote from the present offices of the DA, "so that witnesses may be questioned and physical evidence gathered secure from observation or interference by the existing staff."

TRAINED OFFICERS

—That the assistance of Police Supt. Joseph I. Giarrusso and Jefferson Parish Sheriff Alwynn J. Cronvich be enlisted by requesting assignment of specially trained officers from the intelligence units to help the grand jury and special prosecutor.

Kohn said that when such a special prosecutor is appointed, and police personnel assigned, the MCC will "assign a qualified, fulltime investigator to work with them to channel into their hands, in an orderly way, extensive information we have accumulated as investigative leads."

In the letter, Kohn also said that any hope "that the Orleans Parish district attorney's office had changed its tactics about organized crime was abandoned when the testimony of Ivor Trapolin . . . was publicly and snidely dismissed as producing no evidence." Trapolin was chairman of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Crime and Delinquency.