

# Life Reporter to Be Heard--DA

## Denies Chandler Offered to Talk Previously

District Attorney Jim Garrison Thursday said that he accepts an offer by David Chandler, a reporter for Life Magazine, to meet in his office and discuss any information Chandler may have concerning organized crime in New Orleans.

In a statement to news media, Garrison added that a claim made Wednesday by Chandler's attorney, Cicero Sessions, that he had previously volunteered to appear with Chandler in Garrison's office, was untrue.

The DA said Thursday, however, that if the two are sincere in the offer, he is willing to meet with them "at any time at their convenience. The sooner the better."

Chandler had testified Wednesday that he had wanted to ask first assistant DA Charles R. Ward why Garrison had never prosecuted Carlos Marcello for offering him (Garrison) a \$52,000 bribe. The reporter's testimony came during a hearing in the U.S. District Court to determine whether he would have to appear before the Orleans Parish Grand Jury to discuss his alleged knowledge of local organized crime influences.

### DENIES BRIBE CLAIM

Garrison strongly denied Thursday that his office had ever been offered any such bribe by Jefferson Parish rackets figure Marcello.

Chandler has said that he could have testified "from personal knowledge" that such a bribe offer was made, had he been taken before the grand jury.

"By now," stated Garrison, "everyone knows my office and knows that the idea of anybody offering a bribe to my office is too ridiculous even to consider."

He added, however, that if Chandler did have such information, he should be willing to tell of it before the grand jury.

"This is the kind of thing the grand jury should hear," the DA added. "It's just all the more reason Chandler should come before the grand jury."

Chandler has been fighting a

subpena to testify because of alleged harassment by Garrison and his staff.

In what both termed a primarily social gathering, Garrison met Thursday with Gov. John J. McKeithen before the governor and his wife departed on a trip to New York. Neither official would discuss details of the morning meeting.

### 'GENERAL WAY'

Garrison had also met with his group of supporters who call themselves Truth and Consequences of New Orleans Inc. This meeting, said Garrison, was mainly to talk with members "in a general sort of way" about his continuing probe into

the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

Following is the text of Garrison's statement to the press concerning Chandler:

"Yesterday (Wednesday) in the United States District Court in New Orleans David Chandler's attorney, Cicero Sessions, indicated that he had volunteered to appear with David Chandler in the district attorney's office and testify under oath before the district attorney about his information about organized crime in New Orleans.

"Neither Mr. Sessions nor David Chandler has ever volunteered to appear in the district attorney's office to testify about organized crime.

"However, if they are sincere in such an offer, I accept the offer and ask Mr. Sessions and Mr. Chandler to appear in the district attorney's office immediately or at any time at their convenience. The sooner the better. Mr. Sessions may be present and sit in on the interrogation if he so desires.

### SEEKS TRUTH--DA

"This can be accomplished while the United States District Court considers the question of whether or not Mr. Chandler may be compelled to testify before the grand jury.

"I want to make it crystal clear that it had never been my intention to gag the press or any member of the news media either by threatening them with prosecution or asking them to reveal the source of their information. I do not intend to infringe upon the

privilege of a newsman to keep secret his informers, which I respect.

"It is my intention to get at the root of this matter, to determine the truth about the alleged existence of organized crime in New Orleans, and to obtain any evidence or information that David Chandler may have about organized crime.

"If he has evidence, or any information that will lead to evidence that organized crime exists, or about the commission of any crime, we will act upon that evidence and make arrests and prosecute. If he does not have either evidence or information, I think that the district attorney's office and the people of New Orleans are entitled to know that he does not.

"It is inconceivable that Mr. Chandler would refuse to give details which he may have in his possession about organized crime. The grand jury has received my sworn testimony, the sworn testimony of Gov. McKeithen and the sworn testimony of the superintendent of state police and the sworn testimony of the superintendent of the New Orleans Police Department.

"I do not believe that a man who claims to be a special officer of the state police under the supervision of Gov. McKeithen and Col. (Thomas) Burbank should refuse to testify."