

T.P. 7/28/67

★★

ALL SHERIDAN PLEAS DENIED

Newsman Is Ordered to Give Testimony

A legal attempt by television newsman Walter Sheridan to avoid appearing before the Orleans Parish Grand Jury was overruled Thursday by Criminal District Court Judge Bernard J. Bagert.

The ruling was made amid charges by District Attorney Jim Garrison's office that Sheridan and his lawyers were launching a smear campaign to mar Garrison's investigation into President Kennedy's assassination.

In denying all motions filed by Sheridan's lawyers to quash the newsman's subpoena to appear before the Grand Jury, Bagert also threw out a move to recuse Garrison as legal adviser to the jury.

A request to have Sheridan's attorney present at the Grand Jury proceedings also was turned down by the judge.

Bagert did agree to stay Sheridan's subpoena until noon Friday to allow an opportunity for appeal to the Louisiana Supreme Court.

PLEADS INNOCENT

Earlier Thursday, Sheridan was arraigned before Judge Thomas M. Brahney on charges that he attempted to bribe Perry R. Russo, a key witness in Garrison's probe. Sheridan pleaded innocent.

Later at the Bagert hearing, Sheridan's lawyers and state's attorneys argued whether or not Sheridan, a National Broadcasting Co. newsman, should testify before the Grand Jury.

Two district attorney's assistants — James L. Alcock and Richard V. Burnes — leveled smear charges at the Sheridan group. They asserted that allegations made against Garrison were designed to "destroy the well-earned reputation of Jim Garrison as district attorney."

Terming such charges "ma-



—Photo by The Associated Press.
WALTER SHERIDAN (left), television network newsman, arrives at the Criminal Courts building Thursday with one of his lawyers, Ed Baldwin. Judge Bernard J. Bagert overruled Sheridan's legal move to avoid testifying before the Orleans Parish Grand Jury. Sheridan has been charged with attempting to bribe a witness in District Attorney Jim Garrison's probe of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

licious" in nature, Alcock and Burnes said that Sheridan has many protections available to avoid any so-called harassment by the district attorney.

Milton Brener, Sheridan's attorney, argued at the hearing that Garrison put his personal reputation on the line in the Kennedy death probe, "something he should not have done."

Brener contended that Garrison is using the power of his office to further his own stake in the probe. "In his official capacity," he said, "he must avoid even the appearance of personal gain." He added that the district attorney has a personal interest in the case which is contrary to justice.

RECUSAL ASKED

In pleadings filed Wednesday, Sheridan's lawyers charged that conflicting political and financial interests should cause the district attorney to be recused. A

supplemental motion filed the same day accused Garrison of suppressing evidence, refusing to investigate allegations of wrongdoing by his staff and using the Grand Jury to punish and harass persons who will not cooperate with him.

Charges against Sheridan arose from an hour-long documentary program televised nationally by NBC. The program was critical of Garrison's methods in conducting the investigation.

Garrison later charged that Sheridan offered Russo financial help and legal protection if he would appear on the program and refute his previous testimony. Russo, of Baton Rouge, testified earlier this year that he overheard President Kennedy's death being plotted by the late Lee Harvey Oswald, the late David W. Ferrie and New Orleans businessman Clay L. Shaw.

Shaw is awaiting trial on the plot charges.

At the arraignment Thursday, Judge Brahney gave Sheridan's lawyers 30 days in which to file special pleadings.

Shortly before the hearing, Sheridan was given a subpoena to appear Monday before U.S. District Judge Richard R. Austin in Chicago. The subpoena involves the government's bribery case against Teamster Union president James R. Hoffa.

Sheridan was one of the chief Justice Department investigators working to jail Hoffa for misuse of funds and jury tampering.

After the hearing, Grand Jury foreman Albert V. LaBiche said he ordered the Grand Jury to meet at 2 p.m. Friday to hear

testimony from Sheridan, whose appearance will depend on the outcome of an appeal to the State Supreme Court.