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Garrison Probe Figure's Old Lodging Ransacked

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—The apartment where a letter was found purportedly linking Gordon Novel to the CIA has been ransacked and burglarized, its occupants told the district attorney's office yesterday.

Two young women who rented the French Quarter apartment, where Novel lived before leaving New Orleans, said they

found the lock ripped from the door Thursday evening.

That was the day before publication of a letter found in the apartment. The letter, apparently written by Novel, asks a "Mr. Weiss" to get him "out of this mess."

The letter was found under a plastic drainboard on the sink while the two women were cleaning.

Novel has been staying at Columbus, Ohio, and fighting extradition back to New Orleans, where Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison wants him as a material witness in the investigation of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

The young women, who asked that their names be withheld, said an intruder methodically searched through cabinets, dresser, drawers, personal papers and clothes.

A television set and a radio were stolen, but Asst. Dist. Atty. Andrew Sciambra said he believed the theft was "no more than a cover."

Although reports of the letter finding had not been published by the New Orleans States-Item when the apartment was entered, the newspaper said a number of persons knew it had been discovered in Novel's former lodgings.

The finding of the letter prompted Steve Plotkin, Novel's attorney, to confirm newspaper reports that his client had worked for the Central Intelligence Agency here during 1961.

The letter draft was handwritten in pencil on pages from a yellow legal pad. It asked "Mr. Weiss" to help him get away before he was forced to testify about possible "top secret" matters related to an operation named "Double-Check Corporation of Miami."