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BUSINESSMEN AID INQUIRY ON 'PLOT'

50 in New Orleans Pledge
\$100 a Month to Garrison

By GENE ROBERTS

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NEW ORLEANS, Feb. 24—A group of at least 50 New Orleans businessmen each pledged \$100 a month today to District Attorney Jim Garrison's investigation into an alleged plot that culminated in the assassination of President Kennedy.

The pledges came after Mr. Garrison declared that his staff "solved" the assassination weeks ago, but might need months or years to "work on details of evidence" necessary for arrest and conviction.

Mr. Garrison sought the private financial support, he said, to prevent public disclosure of the trips his staff is making during the investigation.

Under Louisiana law, the District Attorney's investigations are financed by fines and fees collected by judges, and he must file public vouchers for each expenditure he makes. By using private money, Mr. Garrison can avoid having to file vouchers.

Mr. Garrison contended today that "there were several plots and a change of direction in them did occur."

Although Mr. Garrison declined to elaborate except to say that "the names of the individuals and groups are known," a source within his office said several days ago that Mr. Garrison had a theory that an anti-Castro group, principally Cuban exiles, was plotting first to kill Premier Fidel Castro of Cuba and then later decided to assassinate President Kennedy.

According to the source, another part of the theory is that Lee Harvey Oswald, whom the Warren Commission named as the lone assassin of the president, was to have been the "trigger man" in a "plot" to kill Premier Castro. But this "plan" fell through when the Cuban Government refused to admit Oswald to the country, the theory goes, and another "plot" was hatched, this time to kill President Kennedy.

On his way into a meeting of his backers, who have formed an organization they call "Truth and Consequences," Mr. Garrison told newsmen today he had "solved" the investigation.

The statement, reported by United Press International, left the impression with other newsmen that arrests were imminent, and they swarmed into the New Orleans Petroleum Club where the meeting was taking place.

The pattern has become familiar here this week. Each day, Mr. Garrison has told reporters

that he is making his last public comment on the investigation until arrests are made, and on the next day he has issued a press release or made an off-the-cuff remark that has reawakened reporters' interest.

After the United Press International dispatch was transmitted, Mr. Garrison said he had told the news agency nothing he has not said in the past, except for use of the word "solved."

"I thought I had made that explicit before," he continued. "We know the names of the groups involved. We are going to be able to arrest every human involved—that is, every human man involved who is still alive."

Arrests 'Not Imminent'

"What I've been trying to emphasize is that arrests are not imminent," he said. "For them to say that the arrests will take place any day is ridiculous. They (United Press International) asked me if it might be in the next few days, and I said it might be months—that it might be 30 years."

Then he added that his best estimate was that the arrests would come in "months." He made the same estimate Monday.

Last weekend, he said he might make the arrests within "weeks."

"They," he said after the Petroleum Club meeting, referring to people in general, "have my word of honor [that there will be arrests], but it won't be tomorrow."

He also declared that the solution he has reached is "like through the looking glass—black is white and white is black."

"I don't mean to be cryptic," he went on, "but that is the way it is."

Later this afternoon, Joseph M. Rault Jr., president of the Rault Petroleum Corporation, said he and other New Orleans businessmen had pledged financial support to Mr. Garrison's investigation "to express our confidence in our District Attorney and to state that we have full confidence in his ability, his integrity and the integrity of his office."

He said that at least 50 businessmen had already indicated they would pledge \$100 a month—for a total of \$5,000 monthly—and that it was "possible" that as many as 500 donors might join, raising the monthly total to \$50,000.

The "Truth and Consequences" fund, he said, is open to anyone who wants to contribute.

In another development today, Dr. Nicholas Chetta the Orleans Parish coroner, said David W. Ferrie, whom Mr. Garrison has accused of being involved in the assassination, had talked of suing Mr. Garrison before his death this week.

Dr. Chetta said Mr. Ferrie's physician, whom he declined to name, had told him that Mr. Ferrie grew increasingly depressed in recent weeks and "talked of suicide and rambled on about suing Mr. Garrison."

Mr. Ferrie was found dead in bed in his second-floor New Or-

leans apartment this week, and what appeared to be a suicide note was nearby.

But Dr. Chetta said that an autopsy and toxicological test indicated that Mr. Ferrie had died of natural causes.

He said that the tests showed that Mr. Ferrie had probably died of a brain hemorrhage and that no traces of cyanide, heavy metals, alcohol, barbiturates or organic compounds such as lye had been found in the body. A final report on the cause of Mr. Ferrie's death is to be made next Tuesday, according to Dr. Chetta.

After the death, Mr. Garrison announced that Mr. Ferrie was to have been arrested for involvement in the assassination.

However, members of the Warren Commission staff have said that Mr. Ferrie was investigated at length by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and that the commission concluded

that he was not involved in the Kennedy murder.

In its report made public in late 1964, the Warren Commission said Lee Harvey Oswald killed President Kennedy alone and unaided and without being a part of any conspiracy.

Connally Has Doubts

AUSTIN, Tex., Feb. 24 (AP)—Gov. John Connally said today he had personal doubts that Mr. Garrison's investigation would produce "anything new or revealing."

The Governor, who was wounded while riding with Mr. Kennedy in Dallas, said he did not "want to pass judgment" on Mr. Garrison's investigation "since I am not appraised of the facts" and said he was sure Mr. Garrison was a "responsible public official."