

Judge in New Orleans Orders Arrest of Plot Inquiry Witness

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NEW ORLEANS, March 23 — A New Orleans judge ordered today the arrest of Gordon Novel, a 29-year-old former bar owner in New Orleans French Quarter, as a material witness in the investigation by District Attorney Jim Garrison into the assassination of President Kennedy.

In an affidavit filed with the judge, Mr. Garrison said he had "good reason to believe" that Mr. Novel was a "most important" witness who was material to the grand jury's investigation.

Criminal Court Judge Matthew S. Braniff issued a warrant for Mr. Novel's arrest and set bail at \$50,000.

Mr. Novel, who told reporters in New Orleans last week that the District Attorney wanted to question him about a Cuban refugee organization that operated in New Orleans in 1963, was scheduled to appear before the grand jury yesterday, but he did not show up.

His lawyer said Mr. Novel was in Washington, D. C. The Associated Press reported that a man identified as Mr. Novel was in Columbus, Ohio, last night but departed today, leaving a note at his motel saying that he had gone to Chicago.

A member of Mr. Garrison's staff said that if Mr. Novel was arrested in another state, the District Attorney was prepared to file a request for extradition to Louisiana.

Mr. Novel testified before the grand jury last week and was to have returned for further questioning. He has been questioned on several occasions by assistants to Mr. Garrison.

The District Attorney's office would not answer questions about Mr. Novel. In an affidavit filed with the judge, Mr. Garrison said Mr. Novel had fled the parish (county) while under a grand jury subpoena and had said publicly that he did not plan to return.

In another development today, Mr. Garrison subpoenaed a former roommate of David D. Ferrie to appear before the grand jury next Wednesday.

He is Layton Martens, 28 years old, who was identified by the District Attorney's office as Patrick L. Martens, who accompanied Mr. Ferrie and another man to Texas on the afternoon that President Kennedy was murdered in Dallas.

Mr. Ferrie, a former airline pilot, died Feb. 22. He has since been named by the New Orleans grand jury as a "conspirator" in a plot to assassinate Mr. Kennedy.

Before testifying before the grand jury last Thursday, Mr. Novel told a reporter for The New Orleans States-Item that he had known Mr. Ferrie "indirectly," but he said he thought Mr. Garrison was more interested in a Cuban refugee leader.