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New Orleans Probe

DA's Backer Now Suspect in 'Plot'

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WASHINGTON — District Attorney Jim Garrison's chief financial backer says Garrison told him even he — the backer — is not immune from indictment in the bizarre New Orleans "conspiracy" case.

Auto distributor Willard E. Robertson acknowledged Garrison asked him, "How would you like to be indicted?"

But Robertson denied it was a threat. He called it a "mere statement of fact."

Garrison could not be reached.

What makes Garrison's alleged statement to Robertson peculiar — in a case already fully loaded with peculiarities — is that there has been no indication Robertson was involved in any facet of the Kennedy assassination "conspiracy."

MONEY RAISER

On the contrary, it was Robertson, as chairman of "Truth and Consequences Inc." — a group of businessmen backing the probe — who kicked in \$2500 of his own money to keep the probe going.

Since then, he has helped raise \$7000 more for Garrison's efforts.

The reminder that even his chief "angel" could be called

before the Grand Jury came when Robertson spoke to Garrison about an acquaintance of Robertson's, Gordon Novel, 29, now dodging an arrest order a a material witness.

As Robertson told it, Novel called from his hideaway to Robertson in New Orleans a week ago to find out what Garrison was up to.

'CALLING SHOTS'

The auto man gently suggested to Garrison that Novel thought the subpoena against him was "uncalled for" and Garrison said "Well, I'm calling the shots," as Robertson told it.

Robertson then said:

"He (Garrison) also told me . . . 'I even get a notice in the mail today that I should investigate you.' He said, 'How would you like to go before the Grand Jury,' and I said it wouldn't bother me a . . . bit, not one . . . bit."

Robertson denied any rift with Garrison, however, and said he and Garrison were "as friendly as can be."

He praised Garrison for his efforts to continue the probe despite opposition.

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