

26 May 1967

DA Seeking Copies of 'CIA' Letter by Novel

Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison today asked for copies of a letter purportedly directed to the Central Intelligence Agency by fugitive witness Gordon Novel.

The letter, which Novel's lawyer said was written by his client, came into the possession of the States-Item. It was reported to have been found in Novel's former apartment in the French Quarter. It apparently was written before Novel's departure from New Orleans after he was subpoenaed to testify in Garrison's Kennedy death plot investigation.

NOVEL, WANTED both as a material witness and on charges of conspiracy to burglarize a munitions dump at Houma, is free on \$10,000 bond at Columbus, Ohio, awaiting an extradition hearing.

A copy and transcript of the penciled draft were given to Steven Plotkin, Novel's New Orleans attorney, early this week. Yesterday, Plotkin said his client worked for the Central Intelligence Agency here during 1961.

Plotkin said Novel wrote the draft, and added "everything . . . as far as Novel is concerned, is actually the truth."

But Novel appeared to contradict his lawyer late yesterday when he said the letter was a "final trap" for Garrison.

"Mr. Garrison has finally fallen into the last trap. I thought his fine Cajun gumshoes were going to miss it. Under the rug, ha, ha!"

ACTUALLY, THE letter was delivered to the States-Item by a college professor who is a friend of a reporter on the staff. A student gave it to him, and the student received the letter from a girl friend who is renting Novel's former apartment. It was found under linoleum on the kitchen sink drainboard.

Noting a story about the letter in yesterday's final edition, Garrison asked the States-Item to give his office copies. He would not comment further.

The statement by his attorney that Novel worked for the CIA here confirmed a report of the witnesses' government activities published first in the States-Item on April 25.

Garrison has charged the CIA with engaging in a "monstrous coverup" following the Kennedy assassination and of duping the Warren Commission into inaccurate conclusions.

The Warren Commission concluded that Kennedy was slain by a Communist-oriented, distraught youth, Lee Harvey Oswald. It said it could find no evidence that Oswald was aided by anyone.

GARRISON HAS said that "Latin adventurers" employed in CIA-sponsored anti-Castro operations killed Kennedy out of anger over an abrupt end to their support by the U.S. government.

Plotkin said Novel worked with the CIA as an "intermediary" with anti-Castro Cubans. But he said his client's CIA activities "had little or nothing to do with the Bay of Pigs invasion and certainly had nothing to do with the assassination of President Kennedy."

Sunday, Novel told police he was fired upon several times by a hidden sniper in Nashville, Tenn. He said he was wounded by flying glass. A Nashville radio-TV newsman who was with him told the same story.

In the letter draft which Plotkin said Novel wrote, the 29-year-old former bar owner asks "Mr. Weiss" to get him out of "this mess" by an unspecified date in March.

The letter says the writer had received one subpoena to testify in the Garrison probe, but has been able to avoid it. It adds that attorneys have informed him other subpoenas would be issued.

The letter asks Weiss to help him so that he will not have to reveal "top secret" activities of an organization he refers to as Double-Chek Corp. of Miami.