

"MCKEITHEN AGENT," CHANDLER TELLS JUDGES

Seeks to Avoid Testifying

A Life Magazine reporter fighting to avoid a subpoena to appear before the Orleans Parish Grand Jury testified in federal court here today he has been a special investigator on the staff of Gov. John J. McKeithen for more than a month.

David L. Chandler told a three-judge federal tribunal he received the commission from McKeithen on Sept. 28 after the governor returned from a summit conference with Life executives in New York.

The disclosure opened a hearing into Chandler's battle to stay out of the secret chambers of the grand jury which wants to question him about Life's charges that organized crime is rampant in New Orleans.

CHANDLER contends the subpoena is a harassing measure by Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison. The newsman said he is afraid he may be entrapped by the DA and indicted for perjury.

In other highlights of his hour-long testimony which began shortly before noon, Chandler:

1. Disclosed he had asked the DA's office if it were possible that a \$3,000 bribe had been paid to free the late David W. Ferrie when he was arrested by Garrison's office in connection with the Kennedy assassination in 1963.

2. Charged that a transcript of testimony he gave Chief Asst. DA Charles Ray Ward in January had been altered and was incorrect.

3. Told the court he was puzzled by what he termed Garrison's "blind or ignorant attitude toward the possible involvement of organized crime in the assassination investigation."

4. Was stopped when he tried to recount a telephone conversation which he said took place between McKeithen and Garrison during late September.

Explaining his position as an "officer of the state police," Chandler told newsmen he was serving in that capacity without pay.

THE GRAND jury subpoenaed

Chandler to appear after Life Magazine published a series of three articles detailing activities of organized crime in Louisiana and the New Orleans area.

Chandler testified before the East Baton Rouge Grand Jury in the wake of the published articles and a flying trip to New York by McKeithen who said he had been astounded by information he received at Life's offices.

Garrison, who contends there is no organized crime in Or-

leans Parish, has said he wants the magazine reporter to tell the grand jury what he knows about syndicate operations here.

CHANDLER responded by filing a petition with the federal courts seeking a restraining order which would prevent his grand jury appearance. He charged he has been threatened and intimidated by members of the DA's staff.

Today, Chandler said that both the preamble to, and

transcript of, an interview he had with Chief Asst. DA Ward on Jan. 26 contained false statements.

The newsman explained that he had been subpoenaed before the Orleans grand jury on that date after he had asked the DA's chief investigator, Louis Ivon, and a former investigator, Max Gonzales, if a \$3,000 bribe had been paid in 1963 to free Ferrie.

FERRIE, who died five days

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after Garrison's celebrated Kennedy death plot investigation became public early this year, was first arrested in 1963 and held for investigation three days after Kennedy was killed.

Instead of being taken to the grand jury room, Chandler said, he was told by Asst. DA Alvin Oser to see Ward in the chief assistant's office.

The reporter said that Ward threatened him with prosecution for perjury and added that no mention of the threat appears in the transcript of his conversation with the assistant DA.

He said a stenographer was called in after the threat was made and Ward began questioning him under oath. He said he was not cautioned about his civil rights, as the preamble to his recorded testimony says.

"I WAS very puzzled," Chandler added, "because he started asking me questions about a 1962 incident and did not go into the question I had asked Gonzales and Ivon."

In answer to a question by his attorney, Cicero C. Sessions, the newsman said Ward appeared "hostile" during the January session.

He said the DA's office has seemed "particularly sensitive" to the question of whether a bribe had been paid to get Ferrie out of jail.

WHEN Chandler questioned the DA's "ignorant attitude" toward the possible involvement of syndicated crime in the Kennedy death plot investigation, he was met by an immediate objection from Asst. DA James L. Alcock.

"He knows as well as I know," Chandler said, "that David Ferrie's primary employer was Carlos Marcello."

Alcock jumped up with his objection and was sustained.

Ferrie, a onetime airline pilot who lost his job with Eastern Airlines after arrests on homosexual charges, worked as a private investigator for Marcello's attorney, G. Wray Gill.

Ferrie and other local investigators were employed during Marcello's fight against federal attempts to deport him to Guatemala.

Chandler was stopped again when he sought to answer a question by Sessions regarding a telephone conversation between Garrison and the governor in late September. The presiding judge ruled it would be hearsay.

Dist. Judges James E. Comiskey and Edward J. Boyle and Judge Robert A. Ainsworth of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals are hearing the Chandler motions, which include a direct attack on the constitutionality of Louisiana's grand jury secrecy statute.

Garrison, Ward, Ivon and the DA's pretty blond secretary, Lorraine Schuler, are expected to take the stand before the hearing ends.

IVON was present during the Chandler question and answer meeting with Ward, and Miss Schuler recorded and transcribed his testimony.

Since the Chandler motions involve a direct attack on state law, special permission was required from the governor and Atty. Gen. Jack P. F. Gremillion, to hold the hearing this morning.

Asst. DA Alcock said permission had been obtained by telephone from Gremillion.

4 More Testify In Crime Probe

Four more persons appeared before the Jefferson Parish Grand Jury as it continued to investigate allegations of organized crime in the parish.

Appearing before the jury yesterday were finance director Edward P. La Bruyere, roads and bridges director Ross Ketchum, Grand Isle Mayor Michael A. Harris, and Harvey Loumiet, a representative of a shell supplying firm.

La Bruyere appeared for the second time. Ketchum said he testified voluntarily.

Dist. Atty. Frank H. Langridge initiated the probe two weeks after announcing his office would investigate the accusations made by Life magazine that organized crime was operating in the parish.