

Garrison Loses Battle To TV Men

(States-Item Bureau)

WASHINGTON — The United States Supreme Court today refused to consider the appeal of New Orleans Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison in a case involving his attempted prosecution of television reporters. Walter Sheridan and Richard Townley.

The Supreme Court's action clears the way for a district court hearing on the reporters' assertion that Garrison acted vindictively and without foundation when he charged them with bribing individuals connected with Garrison's investigation of an alleged conspiracy to assassinate President John F. Kennedy.

Sheridan, working for the National Broadcasting Co., and Townley, WDSU-TV, assembled a one-hour documentary sharply critical of Garrison's investigation which was broadcast June 19, 1967.

ON JULY 7 Garrison filed a bill of information charging Sheridan with bribing Perry R. Russo, a witness who later appeared in the prosecution of Clay Shaw.

Four days later he charged Townley with bribing Russo and what he said were two other potential witnesses. After some legal skirmishing and an attempt to bring Sheridan before a grand jury, Sheridan and Townley sought a federal district court injunction to quash the charges. The reporters asserted that Garrison's prosecution was an attempt to prevent factual reporting of the assassination probe.

They contended Garrison had shown "personal animosity and rancor" against them and other reporters and in one affidavit they asserted

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Garrison had directed they be physically beaten upon arrest.

ANOTHER AFFIDAVIT charged Garrison with selective enforcement of the Louisiana antibribery laws and that members of his staff had attempted to buy false testimony against Shaw.

The district court sided with Sheridan and Townley to the extent of providing injunctive release as to future harassment but would not order a hearing on the section of the reporters' complaint asking dismissal of the criminal charges.

The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal, in a lengthy review of the circumstances of the case, ruled last summer that such a hearing should be held.

A brief filed for Garrison by Chief Asst. Dist. Atty. James L. Alcock asserted that there was no adequate precedent for a hearing that could lead to federal quashing of a state criminal prosecution.

Chief Justice Warren Burger did not participate in today's ruling.

— Mask For Mardi Gras —