

Alford Is Heard By Grand Jury

Former Executive Assistant District Attorney William R. Alford Jr., who left the office two weeks ago with a blast at DA Jim Garrison, testified today for two hours before the Orleans Parish Grand Jury.

During Alford's appearance, the two assistant DAs who act as advisors to the jury and usually are present were not in the chambers.

Alford told newsmen his appearance today was not a response to the arrest of Garrison yesterday by federal authorities on charges of illegal gambling and use of pinball bribery. Alford said he was scheduled to appear before the grand jury last Thursday but a doctor's appointment prevented his attendance then. He said his appearance today was scheduled last week.

WHAT ALFORD told the grand jury, of course, is private. He did, however, speak to reporters after he came out of the jury's chambers at about 11 a.m.

Alford said he has not spoken to federal agents.

"I have a feeling of pity for Jim Garrison," said Alford. "It is hard to gloat over a man like Garrison being destroyed. I pity Jim Garrison as a man who has a lot of potential, potential that is being wasted.

"It is men like Jim Garrison that will destroy our country if the people don't stand up and fight back."

ALFORD SAID he was never in charge of vice prosecutions and did not see favoritism toward pinball cases.



—States-Item photo.
William R. Alford Jr.
Grand Jury witness.

As a former advisor to grand juries, Alford said he was never asked by Garrison to lay off pinball or any other cases.

Alford said Garrison had a good staff. Garrison, not his staff, said Alford, is the problem with the DA's office.

Although he emphasized he was not defending the federal government, Alford said Garrison's view that the CIA interfered with his probe of the John F. Kennedy assassination just will not wash.

Alford added, "I must say that Garrison must be presumed innocent until proved guilty, and he will have his day in court."