

F. Lee Bailey To Defend DA?

By ALLAN KATZ

Famous defense attorney F. Lee Bailey said today he's in New Orleans simply "to discuss the weather" but reports were rampant he will represent District Attorney Jim Garrison who faces federal charges of accepting bribes to protect illegal pinball machine gambling operations.

Bailey, who rose to national prominence with his successful efforts to free the late Dr. Sam Sheppard of a life sentence for the murder of his wife, had lunch today at a downtown restaurant with New Orleans attorneys Louis Merhige, Milton P. Massinger and Pat Hand.

Merhige represented Garrison when the DA and nine others were arrested on a variety of federal charges stemming from pinball machine operations in the New Orleans area.

GARRISON AND eight others waived preliminary hearings on the federal charges and their cases are awaiting action by a federal grand jury. The

other defendant was bound over to the grand jury.

Bailey refused to answer any specific questions about the purpose of his New Orleans visit and was visibly annoyed at being questioned.

"I'm only here to discuss the weather," he said.

BAILEY, of Boston, has been a defense attorney in a number of prominent criminal cases.

He successfully defended Dr. Carl Coppolino, a New Jersey physician accused of murdering his wife, and represented the professional air traffic controllers in their dispute with the Federal Aviation Administration over air safety operations.

Bailey also represents Capt. Ernest L. Medina, a key figure in the alleged massacre of South Vietnam civilians in the tiny village of My Lai.