

WEDNESDAY, MAY 24, 1972

Gervais Says He Met DA Before Renouncing Role

Pershing Gervais was quoted last night as saying that he met his old boss, Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison, in New Orleans shortly before claiming that he had been forced by the Justice Department into framing Garrison.

Garrison, meanwhile, repeated his earlier statements that the whole thing was a Justice Department plot to silence him because of his outspoken criticism of the government.

Garrison, two former police officers and six pinball opera-

tors are charged by the government with a scheme in which the operators allegedly paid Garrison to insure he would not prosecute them for allowing gambling on their premises.

GERVAIS, a onetime investigator for Garrison, was quoted Monday night in an interview filmed in Canada with Rosemary James of television station WWL as saying that the federal government had harassed him into trapping Garrison.

The interview was filmed

last week after Gervais was here May 12-13. He said in another interview yesterday that he saw Garrison but that neither Garrison or anyone else offered him anything to change his story.

The station also said that Gervais and his family, which had become unhappy in Canada, left Vancouver Tuesday to drive back to their home in New Orleans.

According to WDSU-TV, Tom Kennelly, former assistant chief of the Justice Department's organized crime and racketeering strike force headquartered here, denied Gervais had been harassed into trapping Garrison. Kennelly, who now has a private law practice in Washington, D.C., also said the government did not need Gervais as a prosecution witness.

KENNELLY said that while Gervais' tax returns were being audited without the Internal Revenue Service being able to make a case, Gervais said, "You've had your best shot at me. Now I'm going to tell you what's really going on in this city."

Kennelly said Gervais described a system of pinball payoffs and, because of grief over a son missing in action in Vietnam, said he wanted to

make amends to his son so he became an informer with no strings attached.

Gervais later said he feared for his life and the government helped find him a \$22,000-a-year job in Canada. The job fell through but he found another one paying \$18,000 with General Motors of Canada.

Station WDSU-TV said Gervais began demanding more money and at that time apparently sought the cooperation of a newsman to make his views known.

HE SAID IN the interview that he was sent to Canada to spy on the Canadian government for the oil company.

"My job was to, in effect, investigate or to spy on or to determine why it was that this oil company was not accorded the privileges in Canada by the Canadian government that other oil companies..."

Like drilling privileges?" Mrs. James asked.

"Drilling privileges, precisely, was one of them."

Gervais said the spying was done "with the connivance of the Justice Department" and added: "They will deny this, you can bet, but they won't get on a polygraph and deny it."

He said it developed that he didn't have a job with the oil company after all.