

Justice in New Orleans

One of the most disgraceful chapters in the history of American jurisprudence ended happily early yesterday morning when the New Orleans jury declared Clay L. Shaw innocent of conspiring to murder President Kennedy. The fact that the jury reached its verdict unanimously, on the first ballot, and after less than an hour of deliberation provided a fitting judgment on the flimsy case offered by the prosecution. But even after this victory for justice, the question remains of how an innocent man could be jailed and tried for a capital crime on such bizarre "evidence."

District Attorney Jim Garrison has much to answer for in this persecution of an innocent man. As his emotional final appeal to the jury showed once again, Mr. Garrison's real purpose in holding the trial was to prove his obsessional conviction about the fraudulent character of the Warren Commission report on the Kennedy assassination. This fantasy produced the victimization of Mr. Shaw.

Mr. Garrison's shocking conduct of the whole matter proved his unfitness for public office, particularly for such a sensitive post as that of district attorney. Fortunately, the voters of New Orleans have an opportunity later this year to demonstrate the same common sense toward Mr. Garrison's continuance in office that the jury exhibited toward his wild charges against Mr. Shaw.