

Gervais 'Forced To Entrap DA'

Pershing Gervais was quoted Monday as saying the U.S. Justice Department had forced him to entrap his former boss, New Orleans Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison, who was charged in a federal gambling case.

WWL-TV showed a filmed interview from British Columbia where Gervais is living under the name of Paul Mason with his wife and two children. Gervais, who once was Garrison's chief investigator, said in the report that although he had an \$18,000 a year job the government got for him with General Motors of Canada, he was unhappy with his role in Garrison's arrest.

U.S. Atty. Gerald Gallinghouse, when asked about the television report, said he was aware of it but that "the law and court rule do not allow us to comment on pending cases."

GARRISON was unavailable for comment but in a letter to The Times-Picayune today he said that the Justice Department "is corrupt beyond any possible description."

He has said repeatedly that he was framed.

Garrison, two police officers and six persons involved in the pinball industry were charged by the government last June in connection with the alleged coverup of illegal gambling in Louisiana. An affidavit quoted transcribed conversations among Gervais and persons allegedly involved in the payoffs. The affidavit said Gervais was the bag man who gave Garrison \$1,000 in marked bills.

Rosemary James, a reporter for the television station, said Gervais was living in Vancouver, B.C., with his wife and two children.

"I'M HERE at the convenience of the government," Gervais said in the interview. "It started off, their attitude was

that it was to protect me and my family...from bodily harm. What they really mean is to protect me from the Justice Department.

"My mind's a little muddled about it, but it started with constant, calculated harassment."

When asked what he meant, Gervais said, "I would rather say that I was forced to work for them...but more than that, I was forced to lie for them, that's a better description.

"From the beginning of that harassment until the time I was, for want of a better description, was seduced by the Justice Department—if I could be seduced—somewhere in there it became clear that they were really interested in the one man, Jim Garrison, and in their minds they knew I was the guy who could get him."

"NOW WHEN you says that when you went to work for the government, what sort of work did you do?" Mrs. James asked.

"Well, it was, you see, it's, uh, entrapping people."

"What people?"

"The pinball operators."

"And who else?"

"And Jim Garrison."

"Are you saying you participated in a deliberate frameup of Jim Garrison and a whole bunch of pinball executives at the direction of the federal government?"

WITHOUT A DOUBT, I'm saying that unequivocally. Now, I have no chance to really prove that, because I don't have to tell you that my reputation, my background, is opposed to these austere, very proper, 'well-reputationed' gentlemen of the government.

"You see, they are Justice Department. But I have one out. I insist that I take a polygraph . . . and I insist that . . . in Washington they take a polygraph that they were part and parcel to the whole farce."

Garrison faces trial on an

indictment that he conspired to obstruct state and local law enforcement by accepting bribes to protect illegal gambling-type pinball machines. He has claimed that the arrest was part of a government plot resulting from his investigation into the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

Garrison's letter in The Times-Picayune said that he had been misquoted last Saturday in a reference to the federal judiciary. He wrote that the quality and integrity of the federal judiciary "is of the highest level and above reproach" but that "the Justice Department is a horse of another color."

"The Justice Department, at its very best, is politically oriented," the letter said. "Measured at its highest level, it is corrupt beyond any possible description. There are few political crimes which it has not committed. There is no offense which it will not commit, no individual right which it will not violate, if a political gain can be accomplished. The business of the Justice Department is injustice."

Mrs. James asked Gervais if the government had offered or promised him anything.

"Do you think that I would do everything that I did for nothing, for absolutely nothing?" he replied. "I never did anything for nothing in my life."

"Well, John Wall, head of the strike force, got up in open court and said under oath that the federal government had offered you nothing, promised you nothing, given you nothing. Are you saying . . ."

"How in the hell did I get to Canada?"

"I don't know. Tell me how you got here."

"They paid every goddam nickel of it. That's how I got here. Do you think I would have paid for it? I've got the most ridiculous, the softest job in America."

Gervais said the Justice Department got him an \$18,000-a-year job with General Motors of Canada and the government added \$4,000 a year.

"But that's not so good," he continued. "Before I left New Orleans they guaranteed me unequivocally \$22,000 a year tax free. Now I gotta pay money, look, like, everything about the Justice Department it was a lie.

"You see, I pay more tax here on \$18,000 than I would pay on \$22,000 Stateside. But everything, there is not a single thing that the Justice Department said to me, not one, that was true. Now, again, I can't win against the Justice Department and the courts. My family knows it. I know it.

"LET ME SAY something. This morning my family was —I've never seen them so happy."

"Why?"

"Because what I'm doing. No tt only hat. corny as it might be, I've never seen my daughter look at me with the kind of pride that she did this morning. It's corny, it's not in my character, but I saw it. Because she knows about the lies. Listen, they brought a lady from Washington to lie to my daughter."

"What did they promise your daughter and your wife?"

"Aww, they promised them Utopia."