

NEW ORLEANS STATES - ITEM

VOL. 91—NO. 26

TUESDAY, JULY 11, 1967

PRICE 10c

DA Charges Second TV Newscaster

Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison's office today charged a second television newscaster with public bribery and intimidation of state witnesses in connection with the Kennedy assassination probe.

Bills of information were filed with the clerk of Criminal District Court charging WDSU-TV newscaster Richard Townley with attempting to bribe and intimidate one witness and attempted intimidation of a second.

Orleans Criminal Sheriff Louis A. Heyd Jr. said attorney Steven Lemann called him shortly after a warrant was issued for Townley and said he and the newscaster would appear to post \$7,500 bond this afternoon.

"The bills of information today deal only with the criminal conduct of Richard Townley," an accompanying statement by Asst. DA Richard V. Burnes declared.

FRIDAY, Garrison's office filed bribery charges against National Broadcasting Co. newscaster Walter Sheridan.

The charges against both Sheridan and Townley grew out of their activities prior to the airing June 19 of a nationally televised program which was highly critical of the DA's inquiry.

Sheridan was charged with attempting to bribe key state witness Perry R. Russo of Baton Rouge in an effort to influence his testimony.

Townley was charged with attempting to bribe Russo by offering him:

"1. Lodging in a residence

in the state of California.

"2. Guarantee by National Broadcasting Co. of employment or job security in the state of Louisiana or the state of California.

"3. Payment of the fee for the legal services of an attorney for extradition proceedings or in any other proceedings.

"4. Protection and im-

(Turn to Page 18, Column 1)

Continued from Front Page

munity from the state of Louisiana and the office of the District Attorney for the Parish of Orleans.

"5. Serving as an intermediary to influence cross examining trial attorneys not to damage the character and reputation of Perry Raymond Russo."

Russo held a news conference in the DA's office June 20, the day after the critical NBC program appeared. He charged that Sheridan had offered to "set me up in California" if he recanted his testimony against Clay L. Shaw and joined the defense.

The bill of information against Townley said:

"Richard Townley did willfully and unlawfully use violence, force and threats upon one Perry Raymond Russo . . . with intent to influence his conduct in relation to his duty as a witness."

Russo, a 25-year-old insurance salesman, testified at a preliminary hearing he overheard Shaw, the late David W. Ferrie and Lee Harvey Oswald plot the murder of the late President.

SHAW, A retired managing director of the International Trade Mart, is free on \$10,000 bond awaiting trial. Ferrie died five days after Garrison's investigation became public. Oswald, the man the Warren Commission named as Kennedy's lone slayer, was

shot to death by Jack Ruby in the Dallas police station.

The third charge leveled at Townley today by the DA's office involves Marlene Mancuso, a onetime beauty queen and former wife of fugitive witness Gordon Novel.

Garrison charged June 21 that the NBC news team had attempted to interfere with her testimony as a witness in a burglary conspiracy case against Novel.

He released a sworn state-

ment from Miss Mancuso in which she was quoted as saying Townley told her Garrison would be "destroyed."

"HE SAID they were not merely going to discredit the probe," Miss Mancuso's affidavit stated. "He said Garrison would get a jail sentence."

Miss Mancuso said Townley attempted to induce her to appear on the NBC program by telling her a "prior interview" would put her in "good light" when she was finally subpoenaed.

The DA's office charged today that Townley used "violence, force and threats upon one Marlene Mancuso . . . with intent to influence her conduct in relation to her duty as a witness."

Assistant DA Richard V. Burnes said Townley was being charged with public bribery because "from the evidence presented to our office it is clear that he has violated Louisiana public bribery and intimidation of witnesses statutes."