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CASE STILL OPEN IN PLOT ON NIXON

Arrests Are Held Possible in Alleged Conspiracy

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NEW ORLEANS, Aug. 28—

An investigation of a possible conspiracy to kill President Nixon is still alive, a Secret Service source in Washington said today.

The source held out the possibility that arrests might yet be made. "We just don't want to speculate," he said.

Federal and local police sources have become more and more close-mouthed about the investigation since the Secret Service announced that Mr. Nixon's motorcade route here Aug. 20 was changed because of an assassination plot.

Federal sources have confirmed the essential accuracy of the following account that was published widely last weekend.

This was that a police informer here had reported to the New Orleans police several days before Mr. Nixon's visit that six black militants had met to discuss killing the President. The informant later told the police that one person had given a rifle to another. The police put the six under surveillance, but refused a Secret Service request to arrest them because they thought that the evidence was not sufficient for conviction.

The New Orleans police are said to be still skeptical of the chances of getting enough evidence to make arrests.

Taken as Real Threat

Immediately after the President's visit to New Orleans, where he addressed a Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Federal sources termed the alleged plot a "very serious, very large conspiracy." They also labeled the suspected plot-

ters "nonmentals," to distinguish them from the cranks and mentally ill persons who regularly make such threats.

Jim Garrison, the New Orleans District Attorney, who conducted a widely publicized investigation of the assassination of President Kennedy, suggested here last week that the alleged plot against Mr. Nixon was an attempt by the President to "gain sympathy" in the aftermath of the Watergate scandal.

A remark that Mr. Garrison made to newsmen at that time has drawn some criticism. He was quoted as saying: "It's doubtful whether it would be an assassination to shoot Richard Nixon." Some took the remark as an attempt to jest.

Garrison Sees U.S. Motive

ly hostile to the Nixon Administration. He is being tried in Federal Court here this month on charges brought by the Justice Department that he took payoffs from pinball machine owners over several years. He has characterized the trial as an attempt by the Federal Government to put an end to his long investigation of Mr. Kennedy's murder.

In Taos, New Mexico, yesterday, Edwin M. Gaudet, a former New Orleans policeman, was arraigned in a state court and ordered to stand trial on a charge of firing a gun at one New Mexico officer in a manhunt for Mr. Gaudet last week. The state dropped charges that he fired at two other officers and reduced his bond from \$300,000 to \$25,000.

Mr. Gaudet was hunted after a New Orleans woman told the Secret Service that she had overheard him threaten the President's life in a conversation in a New Orleans drug store on Aug. 15. Later, a Federal charge against him of threatening the President was dropped when the woman said that she could no longer be sure that he was the man she heard.

Several acquaintances of Mr. Gaudet have said that they had seen him in New Mexico on Aug. 15. He surrendered after two days in the New Mexico hills.