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ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional)

Gordon Novel

FROM:

New Orleans Resident Office

EXTENSION

NO.

NO-113-76

DATE

13 July 1976

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

OFFICER'S
INITIALS

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

1. Ed Watts, DCD Deputy
Chief of Operations

RECEIVED

FORWARDED

7/19

16

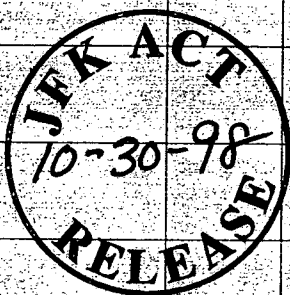
John,

2. Office of General Counsel
(John Greaney)
7 D 07 Hqs.

Here's more on Novel.
There's still no sign that I will
be subpoenaed as a witness in his
trial, but I'll continue to send
you copies of press items for
your information until the trial
is over.

Best wishes,

Peter Houck



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Judge Won't Recuse Self from Novel Trial

By J. DOUGLAS MURPHY

Criminal District Court Judge Matthew S. Braniff Friday refused to recuse himself from the trial of Gordon Novel, the former Jim Garrison-Kennedy assassination probe figure who was charged May 27 with conspiring to set a fire on Mardi Gras in New Orleans' Central Business District.

Later, Judge Bernard J. Bagert also denied the motion to have Braniff put off the case, giving defense attorney John Francis Meyer until Monday to take writs to the state Supreme Court.

Novel was arrested by federal authorities in February on charges of possessing a "destructive device" in connection with an alleged plot to firebomb several buildings in the CBD during Mardi Gras. At the time, the defendant was developing plans for a high-rise complex for real estate man John A. Langford, allegedly to be built on the site of one of the fire-bombing targets.

Novel and Langford, 420 Bellaire Drive, have been charged in state court with conspiring to firebomb the Federation of Churches building, 330 St. Charles Ave., on Mardi Gras.

The case, allotted to Braniff's court, has been colored with political and spy-story overtones. Novel has claimed to have ties to the CIA, maintaining that enemies of the intelligence agency have made the case against him; his attorney, in the motion for recusal, Friday brought the Garrison investigation up again.

Meyer, in the written motion, asked that Judge Braniff recuse himself because the judge set a \$50,000 bond for Novel during the Garrison probe, and, according to Meyer, stated from the bench that Novel "fled the jurisdiction (of the court) at the time of the... probe."

Meyer said it is a "well-known fact" that Novel was residing in Ohio at the time he was wanted to testify during the Garrison investigation, and further stated his client had been advised by a former chief aide to then-U.S. Atty. Gen. Robert Kennedy not to return to Louisiana because the Justice Department "could not protect his civil rights" here.

Meyer also claimed Novel has been working for a number of years to furnish information "which caused the reopening of the Kennedy assassination probe;" that Novel's information is in direct conflict with the theories of Garrison (for whom Novel worked as chief of security) and that Novel had accused Garrison and the judges involved in the probe — including Braniff — of "political and criminal fraud."

The motion also maintained that a U.S. Senate select subcommittee, headed by Sen. Richard Schweiker of Pennsylvania, is awaiting the release of Novel to testify concerning KGB (Soviet intelligence) and Cuban agents "who furnished funds and misinformation" to Garrison, "and that the Hon. Matthew S. Braniff, as one of the judges involved in the former probe of the assassination of President Kennedy, may well be called upon to testify in said hearings and may be prejudiced against the defendant herein for that reason."

Schweiker's office, contacted late Friday, said the work of the subcommittee that looked into Kennedy's death has been over for some time, and its report released. There are no apparent plans to call either Novel or Braniff to testify about anything, a woman at the senator's office said.

Novel, of 1718 Lakeshore Drive, remains in Parish Prison awaiting trial.

10 July 1976

New Orleans Times-Picayune