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## **“New Orleans never was tighter”: Jim Garrison’s Gendered Vice Campaign in New Orleans, 1962-1966**

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“New Orleans never was tighter”: Jim Garrison’s Gendered Vice Campaign in New Orleans,  
1962-1966

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
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by

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## Abstract

Most historical writing and research on Jim Garrison's political career focus on his investigation of President John F. Kennedy's assassination and Garrison's prosecution of Clay Shaw. Few scholars examine the years prior to the investigation when Garrison served as District Attorney of New Orleans. In 1962, Garrison won the election for District Attorney in part for his pledge to clean up the French Quarter of its lurid reputation. Garrison's vice crusade targeted mostly women who symbolized the city's colorful reputation. Aided by his office and the vice squad, he raided the French Quarter to arrest prostitutes, strippers, and anyone associated with these women's work. This thesis argues that Jim Garrison utilized his political power in a gendered anti-vice campaign to target and unjustly arrest some of the women in the vice industry to gain publicity and fame. While Garrison publicly fought against women in the vice world, his vice crusade masked his own misconduct as a District Attorney.

Keywords: New Orleans, Bourbon Street, French Quarter, clubs, bars, politics, vice, sex, prostitution, women.

## Introduction

Jim Garrison's time in the limelight began, not with his investigation of President John F. Kennedy's assassination, but with his crusade to clean New Orleans of its lurid reputation by arresting the people and padlocking the establishments that represented sex in the city. Within the first three months of Jim Garrison's tenure as District Attorney, his war on vice arrested 326 individuals on Bourbon Street and in the French Quarter, each arrest attributed to or associated with immoral behaviors.<sup>1</sup> The arrest impacted these individuals' work and livelihood as well as New Orleans' exceptional reputation for vice. However, a look at Garrison's vice campaign raises questions concerning the motivation and intentions surrounding his obsession to rid the city of its flashy image. The iridescent lights, the smell of alcohol on the streets, the live jazz bands, and the seductive women that lingered at bar's doors--enticed tourists from afar to Bourbon Street and the city.

Although vice included gambling and narcotics, Garrison focused his campaign on women's work in the vice industry, which concerned B-drinking, obscenity, prostitution, lewd dancing, and crime against nature acts.<sup>2</sup> Gambling and narcotics faded to the background as Garrison turned the spotlight on women. The women Garrison targeted in his crusade failed to fit his gender standards, and so he focused on the attributes associated with their occupation to appeal to the public and media. During his campaign, police also arrested gay men and lesbian women for vice charges, but Garrison's statements on vice operations does not explicitly point to

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<sup>1</sup>"Won't get in D.A. Dispute," *Times-Picayune*, August 30, 1962.

<sup>2</sup>B-drinking is best defined as the solicitation of a dancer or employee of a club, who would solicit the customer for an overpriced cocktail or drink. At the end of the night, the club and dancer would receive a cut from the overpriced drink. The dancer or cocktail waitress carrying out the act is called a "B-girl."

sexual orientation.<sup>3</sup> This thesis examines Garrison's District Attorney papers, local and national newspapers, oral histories, Louisiana Supreme Court records, and arrest records to argue that Jim Garrison utilized his gendered anti-vice campaign to target and unjustly arrest some of the women in the vice industry for publicity and media attention. While Garrison portrayed the image of a crusader, he hid his affiliation with the New Orleans vice world as well as his inappropriate relationships with questionable women in the community.

In the 1950s and early 60s, the United States held mass hearings and investigations into vice operations primarily on organized crime. Senator Carey Estes Kefauver formed a committee that conducted the hearings in different cities with the first televised hearing in New Orleans. The hearings increased law enforcement across the states to crackdown on mafias. The nationwide hearings are almost a direct descendant of Senator Joseph McCarthy's communist witch-hunts that targeted American communist and communist sympathizers. McCarthy's witch-hunts closely relate to Garrison's vice crusade, which targeted women in the vice industry. The vice industry gave women agency to earn money and to celebrate their sexuality, which Garrison used to his advantage. To Garrison and McCarthy, both the women and communist threatened the social order and established both men's fame.

During Garrison's campaign for District Attorney, he took advantage of the previous District Attorney Richard Dowling's disregard for corruption to set up one of his main promises-- to clean up vice. He also pledged to be the first full-time District Attorney. Garrison's charisma, background, and pledges proved to be effective across the media and public. On March 4, 1962, Garrison won the election against Dowling.

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<sup>3</sup>For more information read: Frank Perez, Jeffery Palmquist, *In Exile: The History and Lore Surrounding New Orleans Gay Culture and It's Oldest Gay Bar* (Scotland, UK: LL-Publication, 2012); Caroline Olsson, "Not All That Easy: Survival Strategies in Lesbian Bar Life in New Orleans 1950-1970," Master's thesis, University of New Orleans, 1996.

Garrison immediately introduced an aggressive agenda to eliminate vice in the French Quarter by working closely with New Orleans Police Department's vice squad. Garrison saw the women in the vice industry as an easy target to stay in power and to continue to publicize his name. He raided the streets with his investigators and the vice squad to collect the sinners of New Orleans.<sup>4</sup>

During one of the raids, the vice squad arrested New Orleans legend Norma Wallace, a famous madam and former prostitute who previously provided services to Garrison himself.<sup>5</sup> If a woman rejected his initiatives for sexual pleasures, Garrison would use his political power against her. In one case, he used the vice squad to arrest Suzanne Robbins. In Garrison's first months as District Attorney, eight criminal court judges accused him of abusing his power and overspending funds for his vice investigation. In response to the accusations, Garrison publicly lashed out and blamed the judges for the overcrowded prisons because of their lack of attendance in the courtroom. Jim Garrison's feud led to a defamation case with the eight criminal court judges as plaintiffs. Meanwhile, he felt his raids and arrests were not enough to clean the streets and he introduced petitions to padlock nightclubs which were charged with B-drinking, obscenity, pandering with prostitution, and other vice crimes.

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<sup>4</sup>In the 1960s, Bourbon Street and the French Quarter hired African American men as dishwashers or musicians but never African American women. This can possibly explain why the majority of women involved in Garrison's clean up were white women. The first African American Cocktail waitress on Bourbon Street, Topsy Chapman worked at the Horse Stable in the late 1960s. Chapman happened to receive employment at the Horse Stable because the owner was a German immigrant and unaffiliated with New Orleans race issues. Chapman recalled a memory from the time, "I remember seeing the ladies of the night in beautiful dresses and after they got off work, they walked to Perky's Pancake Parlor to have pancakes." Topsy Chapman, phone conversation by author, New Orleans, LA, October 21, 2019.

<sup>5</sup>Christine Wiltz's *The Last Madam* provides an overview of Norma Wallace's life and social history of New Orleans surrounding Wallace's existence. Wallace's encounter with Jim Garrison provides insight into how Garrison worked on both sides of the New Orleans underworld. Chris Wiltz, *The Last Madam: A Life in the New Orleans Underworld* (New York: Hachette Books, 2001), 142.

During the arrest and raids, Garrison's office arrested former Bourbon Street dancer Linda Brigitte, whom he defined as an exception. Garrison described Brigitte's case as an injustice to a mother of small children, and soon after, Garrison influenced Brigitte's pardon. After the pardon, news got out on Garrison's recommendations to Brigitte's dance performance, which he explained as innocent and in no relation to her case. Garrison's relationship with Brigitte helps define his perception of women and illustrates the corruption in vice.

Garrison's crusade continued, his behavior influenced the vice squad, which trapped former prostitutes Dawn DeBlanc, Mary Young, and Betty Hale in a prostitution bust. The officers excessively charged the women. Once Young and DeBlanc's case went to the Louisiana Supreme Court, it was evident the women would never receive a fair trial. The judge denied the defense attorney's request for a police report and stated the credibility of the officer's testimony did not matter. This case reveals the excessiveness and injustice in Garrison's vice campaign.

This thesis uses these cases to argue that Garrison utilized his gendered vice campaign to excessively target women in the New Orleans vice world and unjustly arrest some of the women for fame and empowerment. During Garrison's gendered vice crusade, he also exhibited misconduct for a district attorney because of his relationships with Norma Wallace and Linda Brigitte.

## Literature Review

The historiography on Jim Garrison focuses primarily on his conspiracy investigation into the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and the trial of Clay Shaw. Clay Shaw worked as a businessman in the French Quarter of New Orleans until the time Garrison accused and prosecuted him of conspiring to assassinate President John F. Kennedy. Joan Mellon, James Kirkwood, Alecia P. Long, and other authors examine Garrison's life and his abuse of power in President JFK's investigation. Although there has been little written on Garrison in other cases, historical scholarship on New Orleans prostitution, the French Quarter, and Bourbon Street help illustrate the vice world in 1960s New Orleans.

One noted work on prostitution in New Orleans includes Christine Wiltz's book, *The Last Madam: A Life in New Orleans Underworld*, which relates the life of one of New Orleans' most famous madams, Norma Wallace.<sup>6</sup> Wiltz captures the life of Wallace and the social history of New Orleans around Wallace's life. She presents interactions between madams, prostitutes, locals, and local officials, which provide insight into New Orleans prostitution. Wiltz also mentions Jim Garrison's interactions with Norma Wallace and his personal involvement with prostitution as well as his cleanup of Bourbon Street. Wiltz's account of Norma Wallace's life helps explain the relationships between New Orleans prostitution and local officials, and shares Norma's perspective working in prostitution.

Frenchy Brouillette and Matthew Randazzo V. 's *Mr. New Orleans: The Life of a Big Easy Underworld Legend*, further illustrates the mobs in the New Orleans underworld.<sup>7</sup> Matthew Randazzo V. tells the story of New Orleans gangster Frenchy Brouillette, in Brouillette's own

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<sup>6</sup>Wiltz.

<sup>7</sup>Frenchy Brouillette, Matthew Randazzo V., *Mr. New Orleans: The Life of a Big Easy Underworld Legend* (=: MRV Entertainment LLC, 2014).

voice.<sup>8</sup> Randazzo's book also mentions the New Orleans underworld connection and interaction with Jim Garrison. He discusses the mob's reaction to Garrison's win as District Attorney. At first, the mobs were excited, but then Garrison's campaign began to affect their businesses.

Another noteworthy book on vice includes Alecia P. Long's book, *The Great Southern Babylon: Sex, Race, and Respectability in New Orleans 1865-1920*.<sup>9</sup> Long uses five Louisiana Supreme Court cases to represent New Orleans' sinful reputation and the city's relationship with sex across the color line. In the Reconstruction period, New Orleanians grew less tolerant of sex across the color line because of white supremacist ideas related to gender and erotic racial stereotypes on women of color. Sex across the color line still existed, but in different spaces socially and sexually. In 1897, Sidney Story and the city created Storyville, a segregated vice district to control prostitution. Storyville gave women an opportunity to make their own wealth, to control their sense of respectability, and ultimately gave women agency. Long argues that prior to Storyville, social and economic issues shaped the creation of Storyville and the city's commercialized sexuality. Long's book helps in understanding how New Orleans erotic sex culture and sinful reputation came to be.

In Emily Landau's book, *Spectacular Wickedness: Sex, Race, and Memory in Storyville, New Orleans*, she expands on the scholarship of New Orleans prostitution by examining the cultural and social life around Storyville. She further argues, "Storyville offered a stage for acting out cultural fantasies of white supremacy, patriarchal power, and a renewed version of American manhood."<sup>10</sup> Landau's book examines the memory and legacy of Storyville and

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<sup>8</sup>Brouillette's own cousin happens to be four-time Louisiana Governor Edwin Edwards. Brouillette expressed that "Life is easy as a paid date when your own family runs the state." 14.

<sup>9</sup>Alecia P. Long, *The Great Southern Babylon: Sex, Race, and Respectability in New Orleans, 1865-1920* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004).

<sup>10</sup>Emily E. Landau, *Spectacular Wickedness: Sex, Race, and Memory in Storyville, New Orleans* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2013), 1.

presents the issues within the district crossing the lines between sex and race. Landau's book helps explain prostitution in a cultural and social history setting in New Orleans. The history of New Orleans prostitution in Storyville helps in understanding where 1960s New Orleans prostitution derived from and how prostitution was used to lure tourist into the city.

In addition to scholarship on prostitution and gangsters, historians studying the French Quarter can cast light into other aspects of the city's history. In Scott S. Ellis's book, *Madame Vieux Carre: The French Quarter in the Twentieth Century*, Ellis traces the evolution of the French Quarter from the early twentieth century to the twenty-first and details both the social and political history of the French Quarter. The French Quarter's history has a deep connection to prostitution. Ellis even describes the French Quarter's attraction to prostitution as "its cultural centerpiece."<sup>11</sup>

In Ellis' chapter "1961-1971: Culture and Counterculture," he discusses Jim Garrison's campaign to clean up Bourbon Street and Garrison's investigation of the assassination of President Kennedy. Garrison accused Clay Shaw in a conspiracy to assassinate President Kennedy, and Garrison described Shaw's involvement as an "homosexual thrill killing."<sup>12</sup> Garrison used the word "homosexual" to target Shaw's sexuality in his investigation. Ellis' book provides a study on the history of the French Quarter during the twentieth century and the dynamics among prostitution, politics, and tourism.

One notable book on the history of Bourbon Street is Richard Campanella's book, *Bourbon Street: A History*.<sup>13</sup> He examines the cultural history of the making of Bourbon Street

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<sup>11</sup>Scott S. Ellis, *Madame Vieux Carre: The French Quarter in the Twentieth Century* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2010), 21.

<sup>12</sup>Ellis, 82.

<sup>13</sup>Richard Campanella, *Bourbon Street: A History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2014).

and why Bourbon Street has become an artifact. In one of Campanella's chapters, he shows how Garrison changed Bourbon Street and the bar scene in 1960s New Orleans. Campanella also discusses how Garrison's clean up decreased Bourbon Street's attraction to visitors in the 1960s.

While there are no historical works on Garrison and gender, gender history can help explain the way Garrison used gender to manipulate political power in New Orleans. In Joan W. Scott's article, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," she examines different approaches to gender in history. Scott argues, "Our goal is to discover the range in sex roles and in sexual symbolism in different societies and periods, to find out what meaning they had and how they functioned to maintain social order or to promote its change."<sup>14</sup> Her article also provides the framework for gender history by offering definitions of gender and how they affect social and political history. Ultimately, Scott's article helps to define the different ways Garrison used gender to establish power in the society of New Orleans and how he helped maintain the social order.

In Jan E. Stets and Peter J. Burke's article, "Gender, Control, and Interaction," the authors examine how gender and control are closely connected with dominance. The authors' article explains the relationship between gender, dominance, and identity. The article helps understand Garrison's identity and control over his power in the 1960s. The article states, "masculine gender identity standards will on average, engage in more of the negative, oppositional behavior" to bring their self-perceptions into line with their identity standards.<sup>15</sup> The quote helps explain why Garrison engaged with prostitutes, but targeted the women in the vice industry in order to keep his public image in line with his private identity.

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<sup>14</sup>Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (December 1986): 1054.

<sup>15</sup>Jan E. Stets, and Peter J. Burke, "Gender, Control, and Interaction," *Social Psychology Quarterly* 59, no.3 (1996): 193-220, 216.

A more controversial account on Garrison comes from Joan Mellen's book, *A Farewell to Justices: Jim Garrison, JFK's Assassination, and the Case That Should Have Changed History*. In Mellen's book, she paints a heroic picture of New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison by revisiting his investigation on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Mellen's argues the FBI and CIA played a part in the President's assassination and further concludes the agencies concealed the truth from the public.

Although Mellen uses her sources carelessly, she illuminates Garrison's early life, mental health, and his character as New Orleans District Attorney. She covers Garrison's discharge from the military and later addresses Garrison's peer's impressions of him. For example, Judge O'Hara described Garrison as having a "Napoleonic Complex."<sup>16</sup> Mellen's description and detail of Garrison's mental health and relationships with women helps to understand Garrison's views and life. Garrison's personal life can help explain why he used women to manipulate his political power in New Orleans.

The majority of the scholarship of Jim Garrison centers on his investigation of President Kennedy and the Clay Shaw trial. Garrison's vice campaign predominantly targeted women involved in the New Orleans vice world. Garrison worked with his vice squad to raid the streets of the French Quarter in order to arrest and excessively charge women. The New Orleans newspapers made Garrison a hero and he continued to hunger for more media attention, which resulted in more women arrested and some unjustly charged. While Garrison took on the image of a crusader against women in vice, he also took advantage of these women in the New Orleans underworld for his own sexual pleasure and desires. Garrison helped a few of those out of trouble--those who satisfied his needs. The following cases argue that Garrison's gendered vice

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<sup>16</sup>Joan Mellen, *A Farewell to Justice: Jim Garrison, JFK's Assassination, and the Case That Should Have Changed History* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing), 21.

crusade excessively and unjustly targeted women in the vice world for his fame and empowerment. At the same time Garrison crusaded against vice, he also participated in the same forms of vice.

Garrison's Crusade



Figure 1: *Jim Garrison and Family (Inauguration Day 1966)*, 1966, Box 113, Folder 61: People Pictures, Victor H. & Margaret G. Schiro Papers, Tulane University Special Collections, New Orleans, LA.

On December 5, 1961, Jim Garrison filed his paperwork as a candidate in the New Orleans election for District Attorney. Before the election, the public and press knew little of Garrison's life or politics. To win, he needed a plank that would stand out and appeal to the public at large. Garrison used the press to his advantage and created his first pledge to advocate for a full-time district attorney. He stated, "crime is not a part-time proposition," and in order to effectively fight crime in New Orleans, the city needed a full-time District Attorney.<sup>17</sup> None of his opponents believed the city needed a full-time district attorney and argued a full-time district attorney could not make a living with that office alone.

Garrison took aim at the incumbent District Attorney and his main opponent Richard Dowling. Garrison claimed Dowling was corrupt and failed to prosecute narcotics and other related crimes. Dowling's failures as district attorney combined with the public's opinion of the strip club and vice industry in the French Quarter provided Garrison's other plank--to cleanse the streets of lewd women. The vice industry represented the bottom of the social ladder; Garrison's vice plank reinforced the social order. The Metropolitan Crime Commission asked each candidate for their evaluation of organized crime in New Orleans. All the candidates except Garrison believed it was not much of a problem, leading to the question how did his platform come about?

One reason for his platform on vice could stem from his interaction with the vice industry in New Orleans. For instance, when Garrison described why he was interested in prostitution, he explained, "that they were far from his intellectual equal."<sup>18</sup> Garrison saw himself at the top of the social ladder with prostitutes and other vice actors at the very bottom. His relationships with

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<sup>17</sup>"Garrison Hits at Half-Truths: Says Dowling Method led to Contribution," *Times-Picayune*, February 27, 1962.

<sup>18</sup>Mellen, 39.

them gave him power and asserted his dominance over women. According to Scott's study there "is a male 'need' to dominate the female that derives from the male's desire."<sup>19</sup> Garrison dominated them intellectually and with his platform he had the opportunity to dominate the women in the vice world. Prostitutes were not only an easy target in Garrison's election because of Dowling's alleged corruption and the public's opinion of them but also because vice workers could not threaten his power.

During the election, Garrison knew he needed support from political officials for his campaign. Since he was not tied to any political party, his funds were low. He hoped Mayor Victor H. Schiro would support him. A highly respected official, Schiro ran for Mayor at the same time as Garrison, but Schiro focused on the City Council's failure to fund a future biracial committee on human relations.<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately for Garrison, Schiro did not announce his support for Garrison or endorse any candidate, which led Garrison to criticize the Mayor to the newspapers. He criticized the Mayor's decision as a "cynical disregard of public interest."<sup>21</sup>

Meanwhile, Garrison continued to attack Dowling. Any time an official showed no support for Garrison, he told the press the official had no interest in listening to the public's needs. In this scenario, Garrison addressed Dowling's lack of cases on B-drinking and other vice crimes. Garrison believed B-drinking and prostitution delivered mass profit to the clubs on Bourbon and the French Quarter. He stated, "Dowling has made no serious attempt to prosecute--or even bring to trial--cases involving lottery owners; handbooks or B-drinking."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Scott, 1058.

<sup>20</sup>Edward F. Haas, *Mayor Victor H. Schiro: New Orleans in Transition 1961-1970* (Jackson, MS: University of Mississippi Press 2014), 97.

<sup>21</sup>"Stays in D.A. Race: Garrison Quits, Blasts at Schiro," *New Orleans States-Items*, January 15, 1962.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

Garrison's platform gained attention in the press. He soon had endorsements from both the *Times-Picayune* and the *New Orleans' States-Item*, New Orleans' principal daily newspapers.<sup>23</sup> The papers applauded his criticism of the city's corrupt law enforcement and practices, as well as his position for an aggressive full-time district attorney. Garrison's manipulative personality and charisma appealed to the newspapers and allowed him to reach the people of New Orleans. Other sources stated, "He had no political organization and not much money, but his magnetism and refusal to compromise appealed to the New Orleans' electorate."<sup>24</sup> Garrison's charisma convinced the people of New Orleans that he would personally fight to abolish vice once and for all. His magnetism paid off, and during the first round for District Attorney, Garrison received 45,719 votes. He placed second to Dowling with 47,576 votes.<sup>25</sup> Garrison's next mission was to find a way to break Dowling to win the runoff.

The race for district attorney grew into a duel with both Dowling and Garrison bashing the other in their campaigns. In an attempt to answer Garrison's allegations, Dowling accused Garrison of dismissing 400 cases.<sup>26</sup> Garrison handled the accusation in a typical fashion by going straight to the newspapers. He claimed Dowling lied about the accusation to mask the corruption of his own office's history. Garrison further described himself to be the type of man the people needed for D.A. "He must have a character of honesty and fair-mindedness; fair to the people of New Orleans and fair to the accused so that the innocent will not be unjustly convicted. Elect a

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<sup>23</sup>Both *Times-Picayune* and *New Orleans States-Item* advertised their endorsement of Jim Garrison on January 22, 1962.

<sup>24</sup>Playboy interview with Jim Garrison, Box 25, Folder 4, Jack B. McGuire Collection, Tulane University Special Collections, New Orleans, LA.

<sup>25</sup>"Returns Bring Runoff for DA: Dowling and Garrison Top Other Candidates," *Times-Picayune*, January 28, 1962.

<sup>26</sup>"Garrison Hits at Half-Truths: Says Dowling Method Led to Contribution," *Times-Picayune*, February 27, 1962.

competent man but one who is fair-minded.”<sup>27</sup> Garrison appeared to the public as an honest man who opposed corruption and who wanted to shape New Orleans into a prosperous society free of vice. His ability to capture the public’s imagination aided him in the last weeks before the election, but his attacks on Dowling continued.

On March 3, 1962, the day before the election, Garrison informed the *Times-Picayune* about a thank you letter, written by Dowling thanking a Bourbon Street nightclub for its contribution. Garrison described this as evidence of Dowling’s affiliation with the New Orleans underworld. He told the newspapers that the nightclubs had “records that contained charges of possession of narcotics, B-drinking, theft, obscenity, and lewdness.”<sup>28</sup> The letter screamed corruption and painted Dowling as a “no-good-politician,” hungry for power and willing to play both sides of the fence.<sup>29</sup> Garrison also received contributions from Bourbon Street clubs. One of them named “Poodle Patio” gave Garrison and Dowling both \$10,000, but his thank you letter went unnoticed and never appeared in the headlines.<sup>30</sup>

Dowling’s thank you letter portrayed the failures in the political system to the public. It made Garrison a hero who would fight to end vice crime and sex workers. The letter was the final push that won him the election for District Attorney. Garrison won the race against Dowling by 6,500 votes, Garrison with 78,668 votes and Dowling 72,086 votes.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>“Dowling Knew Of Aid, Charge: Sent Nightclub Operators Thanks. Says Garrison,” *Times-Picayune*, March 3, 1962.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Steven R. Plotkin, interview by author, video recording, New Orleans, LA, May 22, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D4FBQLdboJc>; Suzanne Robbins, interview by Christine Wiltz, 2012.0383.8, audio recording, The Historic New Orleans Collection, New Orleans, LA, <http://hnoc.minisisinc.com/thnoc/catalog/1/220409>.

<sup>31</sup>“Garrison Is Victor in His Bid for District Attorney: Tops owling by 6500 in Unofficial Tally,” *Times-Picayune*, March 4, 1962.

Garrison's victorious campaign paved the way for his vice crusade and subsequent abuse of power. Garrison's promise to clean up Bourbon Street reinforced the social order in the public's eye and easily targeted the women in the vice industry's social status. In New Orleans, the District Attorney is the most powerful official in the city's law enforcement. According to the Metropolitan Crime Commission, "His office can convert police action into careful, speedy, vigorous prosecution."<sup>32</sup> Garrison's power would enable him to arrest a large number of women in his vice investigations, which he hoped would earn him fame and glory. If anyone tried to threaten his power, he would destroy them, just as he destroyed Dowling. Harry Connick, Sr., his successor, stated it best, "If you're not prepared, he'll kill you."<sup>33</sup> Jim Garrison had the support of the people of New Orleans. Whatever he was for or against, the people were for or against. Nothing stood in his way.

Before Garrison took office, he started to plan how to clean Bourbon Street of vice. In New York, he met with Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy to learn how Frank Hogan's district attorney's office operated against organized crime.<sup>34</sup> Hogan's office inspired Garrison to model his office after Hogan's. Hogan's time as district attorney of New York County emphasized mass publicized investigations of organized crime and corruption in the city. Hogan's main investigations and prosecutions included high profile cases in the Big Apple. Garrison's desire for Hogan's success and publicity fueled Garrison in his campaign against vice.

On May 8, 1962, two months after his trip to New York, Garrison began his tenure as district attorney. He hired Pershing Gervais as his chief investigator, a move that sparked

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<sup>32</sup> "D.A. Candidates Give Views: Crime Commission Lists Replies in Query," *Times-Picayune*, January 24, 1962.

<sup>33</sup> Harry Connick, Sr., interview by Mark Cave, June 10, 2010, MSS 629.16.5, recording and transcript 40 pp, Oral Histories, The Historic New Orleans Collection, New Orleans, LA, <http://hnoc.minisisinc.com/thnoc/catalog/3/15548>.

<sup>34</sup> "Bob Kennedy, Garrison Talk," *Times-Picayune*, March 13, 1962.

controversy in the city. Gervais had a notorious reputation especially with the New Orleans Police Department. In 1952, police superintendent Joseph L. Schouring had fired Gervais as a detective because he violated police regulations.<sup>35</sup> New Orleans lawyer John D. Fitzmorris Jr. opined that Gervais “was like an eel...or an evil Robin Hood...He stole from the rich and kept it...and he never gave to the poor.”<sup>36</sup> Maybe his controversial character appealed to Garrison or his connections to the New Orleans underworld. Gervais knew the streets and where to catch the girls. During a talk at Tulane University, on an experiment with implants to give people orgasmic pleasure, Gervais laughed, saying, “I could get a girl from the French Quarter to do that without an implant.”<sup>37</sup> His statement indicated his direct involvement with vice on Bourbon Street and his crude attitude towards women’s bodies. Such a vulgar attitude towards women, especially the women who society felt to be unfit, echoed Garrison’s views on women of ill repute.

Many officials refused to support Garrison's campaign or Gervais. During trials, Gervais constantly changed his testimony three or four times.<sup>38</sup> When Mayor Schiro’s police department led an investigation into Gervais’ vice operations, Garrison wrote a letter to Schiro and stated, “Consider that the police department is supposed to be *on* our side and *against* the Bourbon Street operators... I think you will agree that the public would be shocked to know of this conspiratorial effort. Nevertheless, I have refrained from public comment.”<sup>39</sup> Garrison had Gervais’ back and no one could halt the D.A. 's attempts to clean Bourbon Street of B-girls and prostitutes. Garrison pressured Schiro to support his vice investigations, or Garrison would

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<sup>35</sup>Gene Bourg, “The Long-Checked Career of One Pershing Gervais: City Hall Report,” *State-Item*, July 3, 1971.

<sup>36</sup>John D. Fitzmorris, Jr., interview by author, video recording, New Orleans, LA, October 25, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=keO8ddYjKfw>.

<sup>37</sup>Mellen, 95.

<sup>38</sup>Fitzmorris interview.

<sup>39</sup>Letter from Garrison to Schiro, April 15, 1963, Schiro Box 7, Folder 28, Scott Wilson Papers, Tulane University Special Collections, New Orleans, LA.

spread to the newspapers the police department's lack of effort. Garrison demanded, "I would like to see the police department develop the will and capability to investigate with increasing aggressiveness... with regard to commercialized vice which operates so extensively in New Orleans."<sup>40</sup>

Garrison's campaign to clean the streets of vice targeted the women who contributed to the city's notorious reputation. He focused on types of vice that involved "loose women": B-girls, prostitutes, women who were also arrested for obscenity, lewdness, and crime against nature.<sup>41</sup> The people of New Orleans encouraged Garrison's campaign to clean the streets of "sinful" women and even the Vieux Carre Property Owners and Association wanted to work with the District Attorney to carry out his cause. Journalist Iris Kelso spoke with a local woman who claimed, "the B-girls had taken to swarming the men, even with their wives along, and suggesting in whispers that they ditch their wives and come back later."<sup>42</sup> Garrison's supporters believed these women corrupted their society by damaging family dynamics and gender roles. Bourbon Street girls' expression of sexuality lured husbands to seek alternative fantasies with prostitutes and dancers.

The stereo-typical woman's role represented purity and motherhood. Their sexual nature did not match their presumed gender roles. The seductive nature of women in the French Quarter threatened the city's social order and status quo for some of the New Orleans public. The community believed these women lured husbands to leave their wives, which threatened the idea of the female gender role inside the family unit. The sexual liberation of these women also did not fit the mold of what defined the female gender of the time. Women could not embody a

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 6.

<sup>41</sup>"Women Jailed on Vice Counts," *Times-Picayune*, May 26, 1962.

<sup>42</sup>"Jurist, DA Feud 'Like Old Times,'" *New Orleans States-Items*, August 18, 1962.

sexual identity in the status quo or social order.<sup>43</sup> This combined with the accusations that the women destroyed families, only encouraged Garrison's aggressive agenda.

Garrison created a test run to show Denis A. Barry and Michael L. Karzanazin, both assistants of Garrison, the vice activities on Bourbon. During the test run, two women at the Circus Club solicited both men. Before the assistants handed the women their money, they arrested them and charged the two women with B-drinking, attempted prostitution, and crime against nature.<sup>44</sup> Garrison's vice squad, investigators, and ten police officers from Mayor Schiro started to raid the blocks of Bourbon Street.

Within only a few months, the nightclubs and bars created a secret signal to warn their women workers of the presence of an investigator or vice squad member. Gervais and Frank J. Klein, Garrison's first assistant district attorney, walked into the Monkey Bar and heard a clicking noise that triggered a monkey light over the bar.<sup>45</sup> Women also started to detect Garrison's investigators. He tried to reach out to the police department for aid in his vice investigations, but they refused to support him. The superintendent of police, Joseph Giarusso, believed "Garrison's actions amounted to headline hunting and were doing an injustice to legitimate businessmen on Bourbon Street."<sup>46</sup> The police believed the district attorney's vice investigations were unnecessary, and Garrison just wanted his name in the papers.

Obsessed with arresting more women, Garrison created new strategies to trap the sex workers and B-girls. He turned to his own staff members and young prosecutors to join his raids; he believed they looked more anonymous than his investigators. Garrison intended for his team

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<sup>43</sup>Scott, 1066.

<sup>44</sup>"Trio Arrested on Vice Counts: DA's Aids Act Against Quarter Club," *Times-Picayune*, May 31, 1962.

<sup>45</sup>"Bourbon St. Clubs Raided: 12 Arrested as War on B-drinking Continues," *Times-Picayune*, August 23, 1962.

<sup>46</sup>"Daytime Raid is Made," *Times-Picayune*, August 31, 1962.

to be seduced by these women into illegal acts. Judge Steven R. Plotkin, who participated in one of these raids to hunt for prostitutes and other provocative women recalled the preparation:

We would get briefed by the Chief investigator, who was Pershing Gervais, we went through a class on what constitutes prostitution and what constitutes 'B-drinking' for about an hour... On a Friday night, we would then be escorted to the French Quarter and we each had a private investigator who were assigned in each section. We rendezvous at a restaurant and we were given \$100 of marked money and we were told we should go into these bars and pretend to be a patron. We each had different bars to go into... then I sat at the bar, bought a drink, chatted with a young girl... She joined me at my table but it became clear to me that she was chatting but she was not at that point asking me to buy her a cocktail or to have any kind of illegal sex with... So, I stayed for about an hour and she left to go do her dance. And then I went back to the restaurant we were rendezvousing at and each one of us to my knowledge found nobody that offered prostitution or B-drinking.<sup>47</sup>

Judge Plotkin's account provides insight into how Garrison conducted his staff on his vice raids; his detail also shows the female's resistance and restraint during Garrison's war against them. Although this account resulted in no arrests, Garrison's record of female arrests appeared unstoppable. According to officer Ronald N. Brady, "If your case was not necessarily rock solid... his office would at least try the case. Basically, take a roll of the dice. They weren't concerned with statistics."<sup>48</sup> The newspapers reported raids occurred multiple times a week. Women entertainers stopped mingling with men and stayed straight to business in fear that they might lose their jobs. Bourbon Street businesses joined forces and created the Bourbon Street Association of Nightclubs in order to protect their girls. The association adopted a code of ethics and mandated every customer who wanted to talk to a female entertainer to sign his name in a

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<sup>47</sup>Plotkin interview.

<sup>48</sup> Ronald N. Brady, interview by author, video recording, Mandeville, LA, November 2, 2019 <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCaIGFGUgKaghsIcDabIRgDA>.

book.<sup>49</sup> One cab driver told an investigator, who was looking for a fun night with a prostitute, “New Orleans never was tighter...”<sup>50</sup>

Garrison staffed his office with individuals like Gervais, who knew how to catch the women in the vice world. Once the nightclubs caught on to the raids, Garrison used his office to arrest women on the streets. His vice raids left everyone in the French Quarter on high alert. The people of New Orleans and the newspapers continued to praise Garrison’s work and express gratitude for his success, which only encouraged him to continue. Garrison not only used these women’s occupation for publicity, he also illustrated the male patriarchal role over females by arresting, raiding, exploiting them in the papers, and destroying their income. In the summer of 1962, one of the vice squad’s operations busted a high-profile case.

On June 10, 1962, Sergeant Frederick Soule, commander of the vice squad, sent six of his best undercover cops on an operation to bust one of New Orleans most famous madams, Norma Wallace of 1026 Conti Street.<sup>51</sup> In New Orleans, Wallace boasted a career as a Madam for over forty years, making her establishment the longest running prostitution operation in the city’s history. Wallace’s wealth and connections made her the most powerful individual in the New Orleans vice world. Her house of prostitution attracted people from all over the world and even Kings from Africa graced their presence at the foot of her doorstep.<sup>52</sup> Every fresh young vice

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<sup>49</sup>“Reform Is Sounding a Blue Note in New Orleans’ Bourbon Street,” *New York Times*, October 21, 1962.

<sup>50</sup>Pamphlets: Commercialized Prostitution Conditions in New Orleans, Louisiana and environs (Algiers Naval Station) (Camp Leroy Johnson) January 1964 by the American Health Association, Box 60, Folder 15, Victor H. and Margaret G. Schiro Papers, Tulane University Special Collections, New Orleans, LA.

<sup>51</sup>Arrest Record of Norma Wallace, June 13, 1962, City of New Orleans Police Department Records 1962-1966, City Archives, New Orleans Public Library Main Branch, New Orleans, LA, Microfilm, p. 1.

<sup>52</sup>Rosemary James, Interview by Christine Wiltz, 2012.0383.38, audio recording, The Historic of New Orleans Collection, New Orleans, LA, <http://hnoc.minisisinc.com/thnoc/catalog/1/220456>.

squad member dreamed of busting Wallace; she was always their prime target.<sup>53</sup> Chief superintendent of police, Giarrusso described that everyone knew her operation existed, but to gather substantial evidence to prove the case could be a problem because of her connections and ability to hire the best attorneys.<sup>54</sup>

The opportunity to bust Wallace finally appeared, on the night of June 10, 1962, around one o'clock. All six undercover men walked into Wallace's brothel as students who wished to celebrate their college graduation with the company of one of Wallace's beautiful ladies. The men picked their lady and paid for Wallace's services--forty dollars for a short visit, Paul Nazar led the group and followed the exchange of money from Betty Schwartz's hand (Nazar's picked lady) to Norma's hand.

As Nazar walked up the stairs, he noticed a bathroom behind Wallace's office and all of a sudden he heard the toilet and believed she had flushed the marked money.<sup>55</sup> Once the men reached the room with their accompanied lady, they talked with their lady for thirty minutes. As soon as Schwartz completely undressed, Nazar pulled out his badge from his sock and arrested the young lady.<sup>56</sup> Immediately the girl cried out to Norma that the police were here, Nazar then grabbed the girl and brought her out on the veranda where the other undercover police men were with their ladies.<sup>57</sup> At this point Sergeant Soule entered from the side door. Wallace raced to the bathroom in an attempt to dispose of the evidence. She was booked with soliciting for

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<sup>53</sup>Norma Wallace, interview by Clint Bolton, 2012:0383.29, recording, audio, The Historic New Orleans Collection, New Orleans, LA, <http://hnoc.minisisinc.com/thnoc/catalog/1/220439>.

<sup>54</sup>Joe Giarrusso, interview by Christine Wiltz, 2012:0383.34, audio recording, The Historic New Orleans Collection, New Orleans, LA, <http://hnoc.minisisinc.com/thnoc/catalog/1/220444>.

<sup>55</sup>Paul Nazar, interview by Christine Wiltz, 2012:0383.46, audio recording, The Historic New Orleans Collection, New Orleans, LA, <http://hnoc.minisisinc.com/thnoc/catalog/1/220462>.

<sup>56</sup>Arrest Record of Norma Wallace, 5.

<sup>57</sup>Nazar interview.

prostitution, pandering, and running a brothel. Five of her girls were also charged: Linda Bruno, Betty Schwartz, Theresa Williams, Julie Adams, and Diane Hayes.<sup>58</sup>

Wallace's testimony provides a female insight into the encounter and allows for her side of the story to be told. Throughout her career, Wallace charmed the city with her personality and established close relationships with law enforcement. Although Wallace's connections assisted her business, she would never let her guard down and stayed constantly alert that at any moment an investigator or cop would ruin everything. Inside Wallace's brothel, the girls, housekeeper, and she spoke in "Pig Latin" as a code to communicate back and forth so that their customers were left in the dark of their conversations.<sup>59</sup>

On the night of the bust, Wallace saw a flash of a red dress that alerted her to eliminate as much evidence as she could before the men could find anything. Wallace hid the money and took a match to her records. She said, "they never ever would have found the money, but I knew they had me anyway."<sup>60</sup> Wallace expected to get caught and knew her luck would run out sooner or later.<sup>61</sup> Her experience with the bust closed her brothel doors for six months. A cab driver mentioned, "cops went in there, broke down the iron doors and got her, but they didn't catch the 'tricks' that she had in place... They must of had a passageway they got out through."<sup>62</sup> Wallace's account and experience shows how she managed for the worse at all times and how the vice raids damaged her business.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>"Women Booked by Vice Squad," *Times-Picayune*, June 11, 1962.

<sup>59</sup>Norma Wallace, interview by Clint Bolton, 2012:0383.29, recording, audio, The Historic New Orleans Collection, New Orleans, LA.

<sup>60</sup>Nazar interview.

<sup>61</sup>Arrest Record of Norma Wallace, 7.

<sup>62</sup>Pamphlets: Commercialized Prostitution Conditions 1964, Box 60, Folder 15, Victor H. and Margaret G. Schiro Papers, Tulane University Special Collections, New Orleans, LA.

<sup>63</sup>Sadly, on December 16, 1974, Wallace committed suicide and newspapers covered her as the famous French Quarter madam. "Ironic that is, that a woman can find fame and fortune in the crime of prostitution only to be eulogized upon her death as a heroine of sorts. As for her

Garrison's vice investigators did not personally bust Wallace's brothel.<sup>64</sup> Before his election for District Attorney in 1962, Garrison went to Norma's parlor and gave her his card. Garrison opened an account with her brothel and insisted that her girls meet him at hotels, never at her place. Wallace never trusted him and thought he was odd; she asked him why he was interested in her business, and he stated: "It's an advantage to know how to play both sides of the fence... that he'd appreciate any business she could send his way."<sup>65</sup> Wallace feared Garrison would padlock her business, even though he participated in her activities. She sold her place on Conti in June 1963. Garrison's relationship with Wallace explains why he did not bust her and reveals his personal life with prostitution, his misconduct as a district attorney, and the hypocrisy of his vice crusade.

In another account, Garrison used his political power to take revenge on a woman who rejected him. In the early 1960s, Suzanne Robbins arrived in New Orleans with hopes to start her career. She knew of Garrison because of his reputation on Bourbon Street. She claimed, "No one really liked him, he was obnoxious, show off, and always tried to make out with show girls... he also had gay tendencies because he would go to all the gay bars."<sup>66</sup> Even New Orleans gangster Frenchy Brouillette describes Garrison as, "one of nature's authentic strange birds: a 6'7 bisexual

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proteges, their frequent arrests make substantial news copy and help convince the citizenry that our good men in blue are up to some 'good.'" Roberta Madden, "Prostitution: A Commentary," *Distaff*, January 15-February 15, 1975.

<sup>64</sup>However, Garrison's office busted other madams with the vice squad, for example Jeanne's Unique Massage Parlor (a brothel in disguise), Kay Roberts, Mary McRae, and Dianne Norton. "Woman Is Fined in Morals Case," *Times-Picayune*, October 9, 1962; "Some 38 Seized in Giant Strike at Vice in City: Three Alleged Madams in Group Arrested," *Times-Picayune*, February 25, 1965.

<sup>65</sup>Wiltz, 142.

<sup>66</sup>Robbins interview.

sex maniac with a big melon head and a obsessive hunger for hookers, swinger orgies, and picking up drag queens in the French Quarter.”<sup>67</sup>

One night at a party on Rampart Street, Robbins met Garrison for the first time and, as the night came to an end, he offered to walk her home. Once they reached her apartment, Robbins told Garrison good night and, as she proceeded to walk away, he grabbed her and insisted on coming in. Robbins told him no, and Garrison looked at her and said, “Well you won’t forget this.”<sup>68</sup> At the time Suzanne blew off his remark; but when Garrison became District Attorney, he started to target Bourbon Street, and she became one of his victims.

On January 12, 1963, as Robbins prepared for her dance at the Poodle Patio. The club was packed with visitors waiting for her performance. As she stepped out, a man wearing khakis jumped on stage as well. Robbins told the man he had to get off her stage, but he then pulled out a badge and told her she was under arrest for obscenity. Robbins’ outfit consisted of a fitted metallic jumpsuit, with a V-neck top that revealed no cleavage. The bottom half of the jumpsuit ended right below her knees, and a feathered cape went over her attire.<sup>69</sup> The officer grabbed her, took her off stage and through the crowd. Robbins felt humiliated as the people watched her being dragged out of the club.<sup>70</sup> Garrison had sent one of his own to arrest Robbins in revenge.

The man threw Robbins into a bus and brought her to the jailhouse, where she cried in a disgusting, hot cell. Once released, she had to go to court where the case was eventually dismissed. Robbins’ arrest destroyed her career. Prior to the arrest she was in magazines. After her apprehension, she received no more bookings.<sup>71</sup> Garrison’s vendetta against Robbins

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<sup>67</sup>Brouillette and Matthew Randazzo V.,163.

<sup>68</sup>Robbins interview.

<sup>69</sup>Bourbon Street entertainer Suzanne Robbins, photographed by the New Orleans Police Department after a 1963 raid, *The Times-Picayune Archive*.

<sup>70</sup>Robbins interview.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

illustrates his target of women who associated with Bourbon Street's reputation. If Robbins had worked in another profession, her arrest would not have been so easy for Garrison. In addition, her account revealed his reputation on Bourbon as being a common, lustful, grabby visitor to clubs and gay bars. Robbin's case reveals how Garrison's vice raids impacted the arrested women's lives by ruining her career. Garrison's revenge illustrates that if any woman denied him pleasure, he would use his power to destroy them. This case also shows how Garrison had a clear pattern of targeting the vulnerable, which captures the injustice of his vice crusade.



Figure 2: Bourbon Street entertainer Suzanne Robbins, photographed by the New Orleans Police Department after a 1963 raid, *The Times-Picayune Archive*.

During the summer of 1962, Garrison's vice campaign grew out of control and led to a lack of funding for his operations. He spent \$44,613.70 in his first month in office.<sup>72</sup> The New Orleans Parish's eight criminal court judges controlled the District Attorney's funds, and they believed Garrison abused his power with his vice campaign. They restricted his finances. The judges and Chief Giarusso claimed Garrison and his office acted as police officers in their vice investigation. Garrison claimed the judges intended to halt his investigation and planned to do whatever it would take to stop his efforts. He used the media to his advantage and blamed the overcrowding in the parish prisons on the eight criminal court judges' extended vacation time. He stated, "the eight judges enjoy 206 holidays a year not counting the legal holidays... The only possible way I see to put an end to this ... is to publicize this racket of holidays."<sup>73</sup> Harry Connick Sr. later commented on his accusation, "Mr. Garrison had a habit of accusing people without being able to substantiate the basis for the accusation."<sup>74</sup>

On November 8, 1962, the eight judges took action and charged Garrison with defamation for making false statements about the judges' character and vacations. Garrison himself charged the judges with blocking funds for his vice campaign and stated, "the withholding of funds raises interesting questions about the racketeer influences on our eight vacation minded judges."<sup>75</sup> The case against Garrison later went up to the Supreme Court and made national newspapers. The *New York Times* described him as, "an aggressive, 41-year-old district attorney, standing firm...convinced that he is legally right and has public support."<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>72</sup>Iris Kelso, "Garrison Spends \$2,500 on office," *New Orleans States-Item*, August 22, 1962.

<sup>73</sup>"D.A. is Critical of N.O. Judges," *Times-Picayune*, November 1, 1962.

<sup>74</sup>Connick interview.

<sup>75</sup>"Charge Garrison with Defaming Judges; Aide Dismisses Count: Clerk Told to Put Case on the Docket," *New Orleans State-Items*, November 8, 1962.

<sup>76</sup>"8 Judges in Feud with Prosecutor: New Orleans' Dispute Stirs a Bitter Exchange," *New York Times*, November 11, 1962.

Attorney Donald V. Organ and Louis P. Trent represented Garrison. They argued that Garrison had the freedom of speech to criticize these judges even though his statements might be lies directed at political officials. The Supreme Court verdict “expanded the fundamental right of free speech in the United States... and found Garrison not guilty.”<sup>77</sup> The decision ultimately clarified that the Constitution limited the state’s power to charge an individual who criticizes political officials.<sup>78</sup>

With his success at the Supreme Court’s verdict, Jim Garrison’s electoral popularity grew and proved he would stop at nothing to clean the New Orleans streets of vice.<sup>79</sup> After the decision, two of his own staff were elected as criminal court judges, which further enhanced his power.<sup>80</sup> While the judges’ case does not mention gender or women, it shows that others believed Garrison’s vice crusade to be excessive and unjust. If anyone interfered with his campaign, he made sure to destroy them the best way he knew how--by going straight to the media to reach his supporters.

During his feud with the eight judges, Garrison became unsatisfied with the number of arrests in his vice sweep up. He believed the war on vice was not over until every bar was charged with illegal activities. According to the *Times-Picayune*, “Garrison’s goal was to not have a single striptease club operating in the French Quarter... he believes that they cannot stay in business unless they are violating the law... he threatens that the clubs will either close or

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<sup>77</sup>James Savage, *Jim Garrison’s Bourbon Street Brawl: The Making of a First Amendment Milestone* (Lafayette, LA: The University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Garrett County Press, 2010), 83.

<sup>78</sup>John D. Pomfret, “Court Broadens its Rule on Libel: Defines Limits to Power of States in Criminal Case,” *New York Times*, November 24, 1964.

<sup>79</sup>Savage, 100.

<sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*, 99.

change performances.”<sup>81</sup> The first five cases Garrison targeted included Jazz Ltd., Guys and Dolls, El Morocco, Flamingo, and Club Sultana.<sup>82</sup>

On December 1, 1962, all five of the nightclubs closed due to the raids. During these cases, the nightclub owners argued that no acts of prostitution or illegal activities occurred at their clubs. Denis A. Barry, the Executive Assistant District Attorney, argued “that two state witnesses had testified that women entertainers at Jazz Ltd. had offered to commit acts of prostitution and crime against nature.”<sup>83</sup> One of the nightclub owners’ attorneys responded “asking to meet later with champagne does not suggest prostitution.”<sup>84</sup> During cross-examination, the police officer stated someone informed him the girls committed illegal acts, not that they witnessed the illegal acts. The police had no hard evidence to show the girls offered any sexual acts, they just assumed the acts occurred.

Later Jazz Ltd. attorney’s John McKay, “accused Garrison of discrimination for trying to padlock the Jazz Ltd. for prostitution and not making any efforts to padlock Norma Wallace’s facility.”<sup>85</sup> Garrison never responded to McKay’s statement and remained silent. His silence implied his protection for Wallace’s establishment.<sup>86</sup> Garrison protected the facility he attended because he benefited from Wallace’s place.

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<sup>81</sup>“Quarter Strip Clubs to Go D.A. Predicts,” *Times-Picayune*, September 20, 1962.

<sup>82</sup>“Garrison files Padlock Cases: Moves to Close 5 French Quarter Nightclubs,” *Times-Picayune*, December 7, 1962.

<sup>83</sup>“Judge Weighs Padlock Move: Decision in Jazz Ltd. Case Expected Today,” *Times-Picayune*, December 13, 1962.

<sup>84</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup>Garrison padlocked Jeanne’s Unique Massage Parlor (a brothel in disguise) and stated that, “prostitution has been carried on at the location ‘consistently and as a practice for an indefinite period of time.’” “Padlock Order Sought by D.A.: Vice Alleged at Massage Health Spot,” *Times-Picayune*, April 3, 1964.

Of the five padlocked establishments, Jazz Ltd. and El Morocco survived the closing by changing their establishment to non-striptease clubs. Garrison's operations forced other nightclubs to close their doors for good; and by March 5, 1963, the district attorney's office in cooperation with the police department had closed or temporarily closed fifteen nightclubs on Bourbon Street.<sup>87</sup> According to Suzanne Robbins, "After his campaign, all of the good club owners left town, the girls stopped dancing... the owners sold out because they couldn't even put their dancers on stage."<sup>88</sup>

Garrison's closings of the nightclubs targeted women for vice crimes. The police officers arrested some of the women on orders, not because the officers saw the crime happen. The officers' testimonies reveal the injustice of Garrison's vice campaign, since the officers did not see the crime take place.

Yet Garrison's campaign continued to gain nationwide attention; the *New York Times* commented:

What is happening is that Bourbon is turning into a street where tourists are less likely to get clipped but more likely to get bored... The girlie shows are still on Bourbon but gone are the bar girls, who once pestered a customer until he ran out of money, and noisy barkers... The girlie shows no longer rule the roost, although they are still thick in number. The barkers, who once pushed the parading Bourbon Streeters through a club's front doors, have assumed an almost saintly attitude, afraid of stepping on toes of lurking vice squads' men.<sup>89</sup>

Garrison's gendered vice crusade grew into a tornado that swept up clubs and women. Despite Garrison's crusade to clean the streets of erotic women, he spared the fate of one woman named Linda Brigitte.

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<sup>87</sup>"Liska Defends Office Budget," *Times-Picayune*, March 5, 1963.

<sup>88</sup>Robbins interview.

<sup>89</sup>"Bourbon Street Losing its Lures: Vice Clean Up Takes Glitter Out of New Orleans," *New York Times*, September 5, 1965.

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**Linda**  
**BRIGETTE**

*Sophisticated  
Provocative  
Tempestuous  
Exotic  
Exciting  
Breathtaking*

*The Most Imitated  
Act in the Quarter*

VISITORS — A MUST!

**ALLOUETTE**  
*World's Greatest Tassel Dancer*

**PHIL D'REY**  
M.C.

**MIGUEL**  
&  
**MARLA**  
*Dance Team*

**CONTINUOUS ENTERTAINMENT**  
1st Show 8:50 p.m.

**599**  
*Club*

**BOURBON at  
ST. LOUIS**



Figure 3: Bourbon Street Dancer Linda Brigette, *Where to Go in New Orleans*, August 1, 1968, Photo courtesy of Peggy Scott Laborde.

Garrison and local officials frequented the entertainment of New Orleans famous burlesque dancer, Georgia Williams LaMarca, known as her professional name Linda Brigette. In the 1950s and 60s, club owners promoted her dancing as every male's fantasy. She danced at both the 500-club owned by Frank Caracci and the Gunga Den, which her husband Larry LaMarca owned.<sup>90</sup> Brigette captivated lovers, despite her marriage to Larry LaMarca. Brigette's signature act called "Dance of A Lover's Dream" lured males inside the club. While her act amused many prominent political figures in Louisiana, Brigette's act fell into trouble during a vice raid.

On January 12, 1963, Giarrusso and Klein led a vice raid, which arrested thirty-five Bourbon Street dancers including Linda Brigette for lewd dancing at the Gunga Den.<sup>91</sup> Officer Horace Austin and partner Clinton Lauman arrested Brigette for touching herself during her "Dance Of A Lover's Dream" and confiscated a white leather couch trimmed in red and a set of plastic nipples for the prosecution of the case.<sup>92</sup> Brigette's case was dismissed until November, where vice squad members arrested her again for immoral dancing. Brigette described her act as "a form of exercise."<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>90</sup>Frank Caracci is related to crime boss Carols Marcello, who Garrison protected in an organized crime report. Maybe Caracci's connections helped Brigette's case. "Grand Jury Issues Writ for Marcello," *Monroe News-Star*, September 30, 1967.

<sup>91</sup>"Clubs Raided; 39 Are Booked: Crackdown Continues in French Quarter," *Times-Picayune*, January 13, 1963.

<sup>92</sup>Arrest Record of Georgia Williams LaMarca, January 14, 1963, City of New Orleans Police Department Records 1962-1966, City Archives, New Orleans Public Library Main Branch, New Orleans, LA, Microfilm, p. 2; Strangely enough the Intercessory Society of Mexico protested her arrest and stated, "the unjust arrest of Linda Brigette, who merely in a volcanic form swept her audience with an expression of natural art... this exotic dancer... is a victim of calumnious acts bringing as a consequence a loss of international prestige to New Orleans." Howard Jacobs, "Salon of 'La Danse' Drive Irks Mexicans," *Times-Picayune*, February 1, 1963.

<sup>93</sup>"Strip Teaser is Convicted: Linda Brigette Guilty of Lewd Dancing," *Times-Picayune*, November 7, 1963.

Judge Frank J. Shea found Brigitte guilty and sentenced her to thirty days in Parish Prison and a \$500 fine. Brigitte's attorney, Benthey Byrnes, filed bills of exception and appealed to the Louisiana Supreme Court based on the state's definition of obscenity. The two officers who testified classified Brigitte's act as a violation of obscenity. However, none of the officers questioned the club's customers of their opinion of her performance.

From the day of her arrest until 1966, Brigitte's case would come and go in the New Orleans newspaper headlines. On January 31, 1964, Judge Lancaster dismissed both cases after she failed to appear in court. Although he dismissed both cases, newspapers mention Brigitte's case again in November. This time Judge Thomas M. Brahney Jr. sentenced Brigitte to thirty days and a \$100 fine, but Brigitte and her attorneys, Donald V. Organ and Louis P. Trent were not quitting.<sup>94</sup> Both men served as Garrison's attorneys in his US Supreme Court case against eight New Orleans Criminal Court Judges. Trent stated he saw the show with his wife, and they did not consider it obscene.<sup>95</sup>

A year went by without any mention of Brigitte's case or her serving time. In 1966, Garrison stated, "his office has kept Linda out of jail because of 'substantial evidence' casting doubt on justness of her two obscenity convictions."<sup>96</sup> She also received help from Governor John McKeithen, who signed a series of stay orders which kept her out of prison at the time. On September 8, 1966, Trent wrote a letter to Garrison and asked, "will you please use your influence in having the pardon signed or the reprieves continued to another date."<sup>97</sup> In Garrison's

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<sup>94</sup>After Brigitte's previous attorney Benthey Byrnes died, Organ and Trent stepped in as her attorneys. "Dancer Given Term in Jail," *Times-Picayune*, November 26, 1964.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid.

<sup>96</sup>"Doubt Cast on Guilt--Garrison: DA Tells Why Stripper Hasn't Been Jailed," *Times-Picayune*, September 22, 1966.

<sup>97</sup>Letter from Louis P. Trent to Jim Garrison, September 8, 1966, Roll 2, Jim Garrison's District Attorney Papers 1966-1973, New Orleans Public Library, New Orleans, LA, Microfilm.

District Attorney papers, he never directly replies back to Trent's letter; instead he informed the newspapers of Brigitte's unjust conviction. Garrison stated, "citizens of good reputation informed me that they were at the scene and the violation had not occurred... Unless I myself am now suddenly regarded as a don in the Mafia... it is a little hard to see how organized crime is back of my effort to save an unjustly convicted mother of small children from a jail sentence."<sup>98</sup>

In Garrison's statement, he defined Brigitte as an exception from the other women in his vice operation and used his concept of female gender roles in order to explain Brigitte's exception. He used Brigitte's motherhood role as an explanation of her unjust conviction. Garrison also stated, "another custom in criminal court is not to give a jail sentence to a convicted woman who has children."<sup>99</sup> The motherhood role reinforced the social order and status-quo that appealed to some of the New Orleans community. These statements reveal how Garrison used gender roles for the public and media to sympathize with Brigitte as a mother.

Although he defined Brigitte as an exception, he also admitted some of his previous interactions with the dancer. During the trial Brigitte declared, "... Jim Garrison gave me permission to use it (the couch)... he saw the act and said 'Use the couch.'"<sup>100</sup> In response to Brigitte's statement, Garrison said, "he okayed the use of the couch after watching Miss Brigitte perform... 'furniture has nothing to do with it as long as the dance is proper... I saw nothing wrong with it,' and said the couch could be used."<sup>101</sup>

In Brigitte's arrest record, after she removed her white evening gown and then tights and halter, "she was lying on her back on the couch, began to gyrate her hip and caress the inner

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<sup>98</sup>"Doubt Cast on Guilt--Garrison: DA Tells Why Stripper Hasn't Been Jailed," *Times-Picayune*, September 22, 1966.

<sup>99</sup>"U.S. Attorney Won't Appear," *Times-Picayune*, September 29, 1966.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid.

<sup>101</sup>"U.S. Attorney Won't Appear," *Times-Picayune*, September 29, 1966.

portion of her thighs and lower abdomen with her hands at one time touched her sex organ with her left hand ... and caused her whole body to quiver for a short time to the quickening tempo of the drums... she was exhausted and screamed.”<sup>102</sup> Garrison watched the dance and saw Brigitte caress and play with her sex organs, but he found nothing wrong with her performance. The couch he suggested Brigitte used, supported her back and weight as she “continued to wiggle and gyrate.”<sup>103</sup> Perhaps he enjoyed the way “she turned over on her stomach and moved her hips in the same fashion, a man moves while having sexual intercourse;” either way he still believed the dance to be proper.<sup>104</sup> Garrison’s statement and interaction with Brigitte revealed his inappropriate behavior as a District Attorney. The fact Garrison saw Brigitte’s performance demonstrated a conflict of interest in the court. Garrison’s critique of her performance and suggestion of the couch illustrates further inappropriate behavior from a District Attorney.<sup>105</sup> Despite his misconduct, Garrison influenced others to pardon Brigitte.

On September 24, 1966, Governor McKeithen decided to sign a full pardon for Linda Brigitte. He praised Garrison and said, “Garrison and the Parole Board urged him so... none can doubt his (Garrison’s) sincerity in trying to rid New Orleans of crime.”<sup>106</sup> Garrison’s statements and image appealed to the Governor; Governor McKeithen believed Garrison was a crusader against vice just like the New Orleans papers. Brigitte’s pardon created controversy and infuriated Aaron Kohn, the Metropolitan Crime Commission director. Kohn stated, “This means that the man entrusted with this great power is deceiving the people because he isn’t acting

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<sup>102</sup>Arrest Record of Georgia Williams LaMarca, 1-2.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., 2.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid.

<sup>105</sup>Joan Mellon mentions that the police officers believed there was much more to Garrison and Brigitte’s relationship than him enjoying her act, but Mellon’s source is unreachable. 227, 306.

<sup>106</sup>“Governor McKeithen to Sign Pardon in Dancer Case: Ward Raps Kohn Claim as ‘Silly,’ ‘Unfounded,’”*Times-Picayune*, September 24, 1966.

against organized crime.” Garrison challenged Kohn, “‘to put up or shut up’ on organized crime... he told the Crime Commission that all of the files in my office would be available to the organization at any time. ‘I have never changed that.’”<sup>107</sup> Kohn’s statements did not change the outcome; Brigitte went on with her life and never served one day behind bars.

Brigitte’s ‘gendered’ case illustrates the pattern of injustice and abuse of Garrison’s vice crusade consistent with other accounts of sexual obsessions on Bourbon. Compared to Robbins’ life after her arrest, Brigitte’s life was different. According to the *Times-Picayune*, “Linda Brigitte and her unfulfilled jail sentence hasn’t hurt the box office... ‘All this stuff about Linda doin time is a tempest in a sexpot...’”<sup>108</sup>

Although Garrison went out of his way to defend Brigitte’s case, his drive to target women in the New Orleans underworld continued. The next big operation involved the vice squad in a framed prostitution bust with many moral charges. From Garrison’s first day in office, he sought out to target the women in the New Orleans vice world. His behavior pressured many political officials to support his vice crusade, and it especially influenced the vice squad to catch women in the vice industry.

The arrest records of Mary Young, Dawn DeBlanc, and Betty Hale (alias Betty Hale Ponthier) provide evidence of the vice squad’s credibility, injustice, and excessiveness to charge women in the vice world. Vice squad member, Charles Rodriguez received information from Robin’s Lounge in Westwego, Louisiana of a woman named Dawn DeBlanc, who would come

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<sup>107</sup>“Put Up or Shut Up, DA’s Word to Kohn,” *Times-Picayune*, September 25, 1966; “U.S. Attorney Won’t Appear,” *Times-Picayune*, September 29, 1966.

<sup>108</sup>Howard Jacobs, “A Grounded Wedding Cake Is Spectacle,” *Times-Picayune*, September 27, 1966.

to New Orleans to engage in prostitution activity.<sup>109</sup> The informant told Rodriguez to tell Dawn that a friend named Christopher Neil recommended her.

On February 17, 1964, the vice squad's setup began; Rodriguez posed as an Ohio businessman and called DeBlanc to arrange for prostitution services with her. He informed DeBlanc, "I am attempting to promote a business deal and would like to use your services to influence a gentleman to give me his business."<sup>110</sup> Rodriguez included detective Martin Ahrens and Jerry Williamson as friends to join him in the bust. In an attempt to collect as many prostitutes as possible in the vice squad's bust, Rodriguez frequently requested DeBlanc arrange for more girls to accompany his friends. They decided to meet at the Thunderbird Motel located at 1910 Tulane Avenue in room 107 at eleven o'clock on Wednesday, February 19.<sup>111</sup>

On that night, other officers waited on the Thunderbird Motel's grounds for the arrival of Dawn DeBlanc and her ladies, Mary Young and Betty Hale. Immediately after the women's entrance into room 107, Rodriguez told DeBlanc, "We want to have a little show first."<sup>112</sup> Rodriguez's definition of a 'little show' meant he wanted the women to perform oral sex on one another. Under Louisiana Law, oral sex is considered a crime against nature and since the act occurred on the same sex that is another crime. Rodriguez gave DeBlanc \$380 of marked money for the prostitution services, \$25 for the show and \$100 for six hours of regular sex.<sup>113</sup> The women undressed and began to perform oral sex on each other. The three detectives sat and

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<sup>109</sup>Arrest Record of Dawn DeBlanc, Mary Young, and Betty Hale alias Betty H. Ponthier, February 19, 1964, City of New Orleans Police Department Records 1962-1966, City Archives, New Orleans Public Library Main Branch, New Orleans, LA, Microfilm, p. 2.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid.

<sup>111</sup>In the 1950s and 60s, many hot spots for prostitution activity took place on Tulane Avenue. Ibid., 3.

<sup>112</sup> Arrest Record of Dawn DeBlanc, Mary Young, and Betty Hale alias Betty H. Ponthier, 4.

<sup>113</sup>Arrest Record of Dawn DeBlanc, Mary Young, and Betty Hale alias Betty H. Ponthier, 4.

watched all three women commit the sexual act without halting the ladies' actions. Once the women finished, DeBlanc instructed the officers to take off their clothes and as the officers stood up to undress themselves, they showed their badges and told the three women they were under arrest.<sup>114</sup>

Officers outside entered the room and immediately searched the women's purses and clothes for the marked money. Inside DeBlanc's purse, an officer found the marked money and pornographic comic books, which they used as evidence and added an additional charge against DeBlanc.<sup>115</sup> The obscene comic books were never taken out from the handbag or even mentioned until after the officer searched DeBlanc's bag.<sup>116</sup> Officer Robert Grevemberg photographed numerous polaroids of Betty Hale, Mary Young, and Dawn DeBlanc all in a state of undress.<sup>117</sup> He also photographed one photo of DeBlanc fully dressed. The detectives wanted to use the photographs as evidence for the prosecution, but they never used the photos.

The vehicle Young drove to the Thunderbird Motel belonged to Jake Gassenberger, the owner of Robin's Lounge. Later the vice squad found out "the establishment had a reputation of being a rendezvous for prostitutes, panders, and other notorious characters."<sup>118</sup> The vice squad thought about the possible prosecution of Gassenberger, but he was never arrested or prosecuted. The refusal to prosecute or arrest Jake Gassenberger shows how Garrison's campaign targeted specifically women and ignored male participation in the vice world.

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<sup>114</sup>Ibid., 5.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid., 5-6.

<sup>116</sup>Garrison also happened to be a fan of erotic literature with his monthly membership to the Playboy Club; he signs Jim Garrison, District Attorney in any correspondence with the magazine. Letter from Jim Garrison to Playboy Clubs International, February 14, 1967, Reel 2, Jim Garrison's District Attorney Papers 1966-1973, New Orleans Public Library, New Orleans, LA, Microfilm.

<sup>117</sup>Arrest Record of Dawn DeBlanc, Mary Young, and Betty Hale alias Betty H. Ponthier, 5.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid., 6.

Garrison's vice squad charged DeBlanc, Young, and Hale with as many charges as they could. Not only did the vice squad charge all three women for prostitution and crime against nature, but they also charged the women each time they committed the act and permitted the act on each other, and because the act was considered "unnatural carnal copulation."<sup>119</sup> Mary Young and Dawn DeBlanc were charged on pandering, and since Young was a minor, DeBlanc received a charge of influencing a minor into prostitution. The record states DeBlanc "enticed, placed, persuaded, encouraged... Young into prostitution."<sup>120</sup> Although Young happened to be a minor, no evidence shows DeBlanc influenced Young into prostitution. It would not make sense for Young to state this since both DeBlanc and Young went to trial together and used the same defense attorney George Wray Gill, Senior.<sup>121</sup>

On August 13, 1964, a five-man jury convicted Young and DeBlanc for committing a crime against nature.<sup>122</sup> Judge Frank J. Shea increased their bond from \$1000 to \$2500 each and denied a new trial. In another criminal district court, Betty Hale remained charged for her participation, but on December 30, 1964, Judge Schulingkamp dismissed Hale's prostitution charge.<sup>123</sup> Also, Judge Edward A. Haggerty Jr., affidavit dismissed Hale's two crime against nature charges.<sup>124</sup> Ironically, in 1969 the vice squad raided the DeVille Motel for prostitution and arrested fourteen people including Judge Haggerty.<sup>125</sup> His involvement in prostitution might

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<sup>119</sup>Ibid., 13-30.

<sup>120</sup>Ibid., 21.

<sup>121</sup>Defense Attorney Gill handled high profile cases in New Orleans such as organized crime boss Carlos Marcello and even represented David Ferrie in 1961 and 1963, where Garrison suspected Ferrie's involvement in President John F. Kennedy's assassination.

<sup>122</sup>"Two Sentenced In Morals Case: Women Convicted for Obscene Acts," *Times-Picayune*, August 18, 1964.

<sup>123</sup>"Criminal District Court Decisions," *Times-Picayune*, December 30, 1964.

<sup>124</sup>"Criminal District Court Decisions," *Times-Picayune*, March 18, 1964.

<sup>125</sup>Officer Ronald N. Brady stated, "there was some large fellow with white hair that was struggling with the other officers...so I got the guy down on the floor... face down and I put the handcuffs on him and it turned out to be Judge Haggerty." Ronald N. Brady interview.

explain why he dismissed Hale's charges. Although Hale's charges were dismissed, Young and DeBlanc were still fighting their case.

On November 7, 1966, Young and DeBlanc appealed to the Louisiana Supreme Court challenging their conviction of a crime against nature.<sup>126</sup> During cross-examination, vice squad member Rodriguez stated he talked to DeBlanc over the phone and that she mentioned that sometimes they "gave a show." Defense attorney, George Wray Gill Sr. requested for the police report to see if Rodriguez's statement matched the report. Gill stated, "I wish to have it for... testing his credibility and memory."<sup>127</sup> Judge Hawthorne refused Gill's request as a "fishing expedition to obtain a police report."<sup>128</sup> Based on the arrest record, Rodriguez told DeBlanc at the motel, not on the phone, that the officers wanted a 'little show' before sexual intercourse. The record contradicts Rodriguez's testimony of who initiated the show as well as the time frame of events. The evidence casts doubt on Rodriguez's credibility and questions the credibility of the arrest record. The officers could have forged information in order to arrest and charge the women. Rodriguez's questionable credibility could have changed the jury's verdict, if Gill had the police report.

Another officer identified the nude photographs before they were even put into evidence. Gill objected to the identification and stated, "these photographs were taken after the police made known their identity, when these defendants were tendered information they were arrested."<sup>129</sup> Judge Hawthorne once again disregarded Gill's objection because of no legal basis.

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<sup>126</sup>State of Louisiana v. Mary Young and Dawn DeBlanc, (1966) No. 48196, La. LEXIS 2172, 1.

<sup>127</sup> State of Louisiana v. Mary Young and Dawn DeBlanc, (1966) No. 48196, La. LEXIS 2172, 2.

<sup>128</sup>Ibid.

<sup>129</sup>Ibid., 3.

The officers' identification exposes the women's bodies before the photos were even in evidence. The officers sexually objectified DeBlanc and Young to declare dominance and to reinforce the male patriarchy. The court trusted the officers that sexually objectified DeBlanc and Young, and never questioned their testimony.

Although the arrest records contradicted the officers' testimony, Judge Hawthorne showed no concern towards the officer's credibility. Judge Hawthorne stated, "The record discloses that the officers who were in the motel room and witnessed the acts which formed the basis of the charge testified... We do not determine the weight to be given to testimony or the credibility of witnesses."<sup>130</sup> Besides the fact that he refused the police report, he also did not care about the credibility of the officers, which influenced the court's outcome. The court affirmed Mary Young and Dawn DeBlanc's convictions and sentenced them to thirty months in parish prison.

The vice squad's setup of Mary Young, Dawn DeBlanc, and Betty Hale illustrates the excessiveness and injustice of Garrison's crusade to charge women in the vice world and questions the credibility of vice squad members. The vice squad went against police procedure and entrapped the women. Vice Squad member Rodriguez initiated not only the meet up with the women to come to New Orleans from the Westbank, but also proposed the 'little show.' He persisted to ask DeBlanc for more women to join them in order to arrest and charge as many prostitutes as they could. Rodriguez, Ahrens, and Williamson watched and waited for all three women to commit the oral sex act before the men even produced their badges. In police procedures, once the ladies accepted the money for prostitution and fully undress, officers would

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<sup>130</sup>State of Louisiana v. Mary Young and Dawn DeBlanc, (1966) No. 48196, La. LEXIS 2172, 4.

then identify themselves and arrest the women--not watch the sexual act happen.<sup>131</sup> The vice squad members watched the sexual act in order to charge Young, DeBlanc, and Hale with another crime. It was clear the officers were not content with a simple case for prostitution. According to Gill, "The police were indulging in some wholly unnecessary conduct in prompting and paying these women to degrade themselves for their amusement."<sup>132</sup>

In the Louisiana Supreme Court, Gill requested the police report in order to test Rodriguez's testimonies, but Judge Hawthorne refused. The arrest record contradicts Rodriguez's testimonies, which further questions his credibility. However, Judge Hawthorne did not care about the officers' credibility and believed their testimony to be sufficient.

Garrison's behavior influenced the vice squad's bust to entrap the women for multiple vice charges, which reveals the injustice of the squad. The vice squad's arrangement for the women to come to New Orleans illustrates the great lengths they went through to arrest women in the New Orleans vice world. Prostitution was not enough for Garrison's vice squad and so they charged the women with everything they could. Judge Hawthorne also shared the same behavior and attitude towards Garrison's vice campaign. Judge's Hawthorne's lack of concern for the officers' credibility affected Mary Young and Dawn DeBlanc's final decision. Mary Young and Dawn DeBlanc's case reveals more patterns of the injustice in Garrison's gender vice crusade and exposes the misjudged credibility of the vice squad members.

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<sup>131</sup>State of Louisiana v. Mary Young and Dawn DeBlanc, (1966) No. 48196, Law Library of Louisiana, New Orleans, Louisiana, 3.

<sup>132</sup>State of Louisiana v. Mary Young and Dawn DeBlanc, (1966) No. 48196, Law Library of Louisiana, New Orleans, Louisiana, 5.

From 1962 to 1966, Garrison's vice campaign increased his caseload by approximately 65%, but his crusade against vice slowly faded from the New Orleans newspapers' headlines.<sup>133</sup> Garrison's obsession for media attention found another subject matter that drew nationwide attention. In late 1966, he began an investigation into President John F. Kennedy's assassination, which launched Garrison's name back into the headlines. Garrison accused and arrested Clay Shaw of conspiracy to assassinate President Kennedy. Garrison called Shaw's involvement a "homosexual thrill kill," which targeted Shaw's sexuality.<sup>134</sup> On March 1, 1969, the jury found Shaw not guilty of the charges, but his life was never the same because Garrison tarnished his image as he did to all the women in his vice crusade.

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<sup>133</sup>Letter from Jim Garrison to City Councilman President Maurice E. Landrieu, November 22, 1966, Reel 2, Jim Garrison's District Attorney Papers 1966-1973, New Orleans Public Library, New Orleans, LA, Microfilm.

<sup>134</sup>Ellis, 82.

## Conclusion

In these cases, it was the women who represented New Orleans' bedazzled reputation that gave Jim Garrison his fame and glory. They were his focus both privately and publicly. In Garrison's district attorney campaign, he created a plank to target the women in the New Orleans underworld. While he took advantage of them for his personal desires, he portrayed this image of a vice crusader to the public. To the media and public, Garrison was a hero and they believed in everything he stood for or against. Once elected into office, Garrison became so obsessed with his gendered vice campaign that he used his own staff members to participate in his vice raids. During the vice raids, Garrison had some of the women unjustly arrested like Suzanne Robbins for revenge. However, Norma Wallace and Linda Brigitte who pleased Garrison's fantasies and entertainment he protected. Garrison's behavior throughout his vice crusade ultimately affected the city of New Orleans as a whole with judges accusing him of abusing his power and his vice squads' operations. Garrison's vice squad excessively charged Mary Young and Dawn DeBlanc, which further led to an unjust trial and questionable credibility from the squad. Garrison's gendered vice crusade excessively targeted and unjustly arrested some of the women in the vice industry, which brought him notoriety. While Garrison's public image portrayed a crusader, his private life illustrated the hypocrisy of his own crusade.

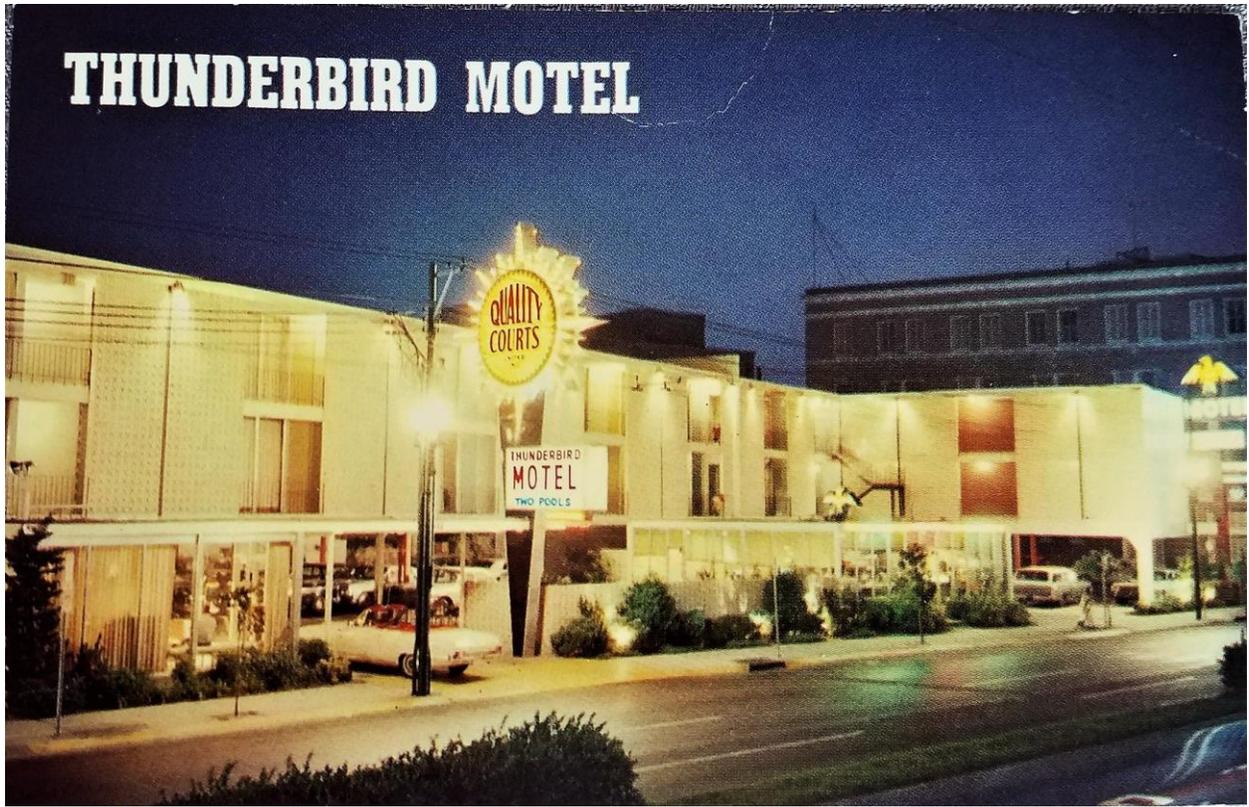


Figure 4: Thunderbird Motel, Postcard, owned by the author.

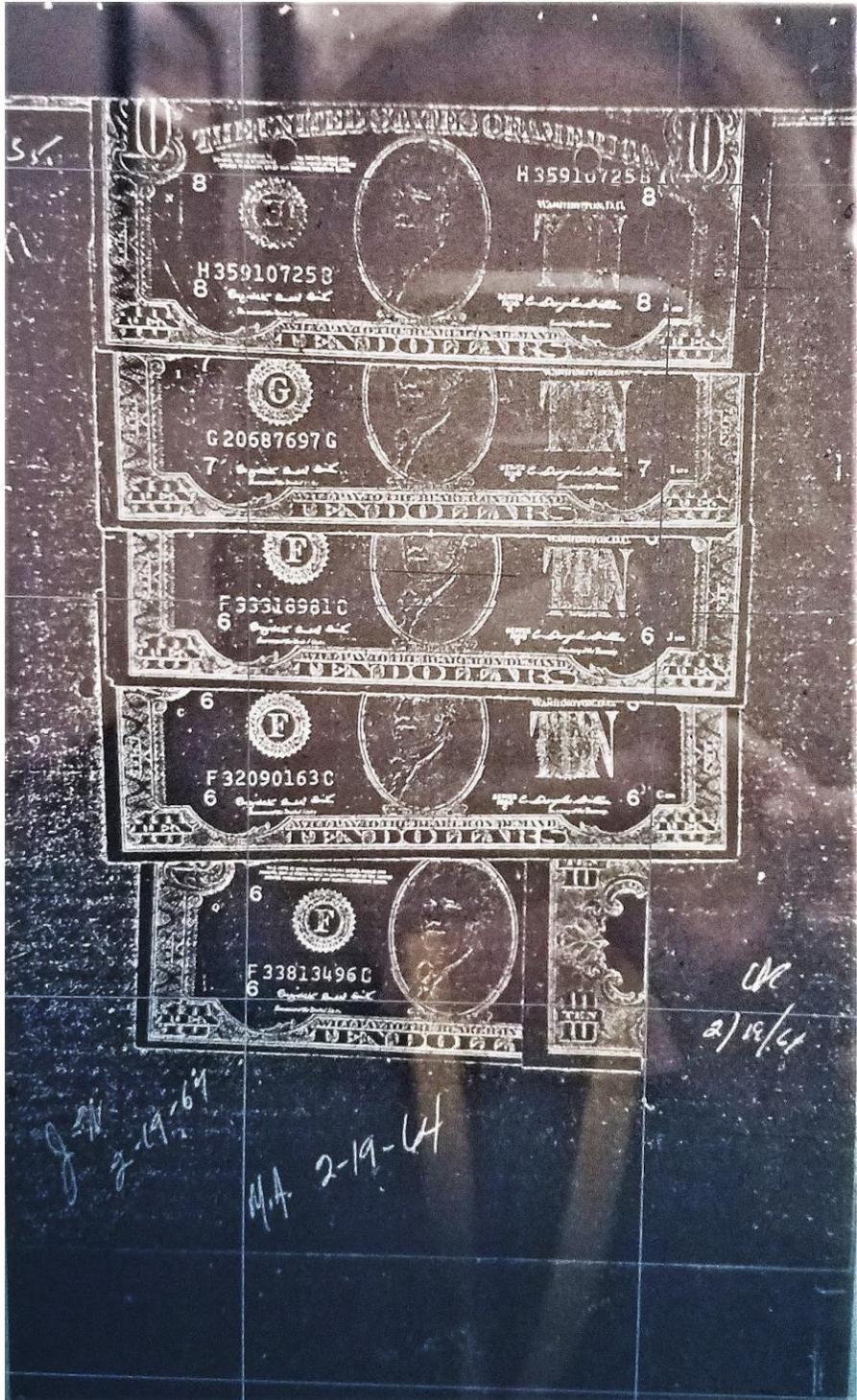


Figure 5: The Marked Money, State of Louisiana v. Mary Young and Dawn DeBlanc, (1966) No. 48196, Law Library of Louisiana, New Orleans, Louisiana, 31.



Figure 6: Pershing Gervais & other lawmen in *Damn Citizen*, 1957, owned by the author.

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## Vita

Rebecca Poole was born and raised in Gonzales, Louisiana. She enjoys art, theatre, and studying gender and sexuality history. During high school, she created activities at the LSU Museum of Art to flourish minds and to make children more enthusiastic about art. She also assisted with the George Rodrigue exhibit when it was at the LSU Museum of Art. In December of 2017, Rebecca received her Bachelor of Arts degree in history from the University of New Orleans. During college, she studied abroad in both Rome and Montpellier. Before starting graduate school, she worked as a site interpreter at Oak Alley Plantation. She currently interns at the National WWII Museum and assists in researching WWII veterans. In addition, she also interns at WYES a New Orleans public television station and helps find material for their documentaries. Writing this thesis has been an honor and privilege to shine light on some of these incredible women and establishments.