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Key Witness

Describes

the Kennedy 'Plot'

Raffyach
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On...
et...
John F. Kennedy

- Tolson _____
- DeLoach _____
- Mohr _____
- Wick _____
- Casper _____
- Callahan _____
- Conrad _____
- Felt _____
- Gale _____
- Rosen _____
- Sullivan _____
- Tavel _____
- Trotter _____
- Tele. Room _____
- Holmes _____
- Gandy _____

Says Shaw, Oswald Were At Meeting

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—A jittery state witness told a three-judge state panel today he was present when Lee Harvey Oswald and two other men plotted in a New Orleans apartment in September 1963 to kill President John F. Kennedy.

Perry Raymond Russo, 25, a Baton Rouge insurance man, said Oswald, Clay L. Shaw and David W. Ferrie were the conspirators.

Russo, a man about 5 feet 9 inches tall, dapper in a brown Ivy League suit, said he attended a party at Ferrie's apartment in "mid-September" of 1963 at which Ferrie advised Shaw and Oswald on how to assassinate Kennedy.

Under questioning by Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison, Russo said Oswald was introduced to him as "Leon Oswald" and Shaw as "Clem Bertrand."

Shown a photograph by Garrison, Russo identified Leon as Lee Harvey Oswald—the man the Warren Commission said was the assassin, acting alone.

Asked if Clem Bertrand was in the courtroom, Russo pointed at Shaw. At Garrison's direction, he stepped from the witness table and held his hand over his very white hair.

Russo an "Unknown"

The 54-year-old Shaw didn't move. Former managing director of the International Trade Mart here, he has denied any part in an assassination conspiracy.

(It was assumed that Russo is the "confidential informant" on whom Garrison is believed to be basing his investigation of the Kennedy assassination.)

(A spokesman for the Federal Bureau of Investigation said that names connected with their investigation of the assassination would be indexed in the records of the investigation in the National Archives.)

(Russo's name is not listed in the Warren Commission reports. It is also reliably understood that it does not appear in any of the other lists of persons questioned in connection with the Kennedy assassination. Russo, in the words of one

See PROBE, Page 4-8

- The Washington Post and Times Herald _____
- The Washington Daily News _____
- The Washington Evening Star *A.J.*
- New York Daily News _____
- New York Herald Tribune _____
- New York Post _____
- The New York Times _____
- New York World Journal _____
- New York World Journal Tribune _____
- The Baltimore Sun _____
- The Worker _____
- The New Leader _____
- The Wall Street Journal _____
- The National Observer _____
- People's World _____
- Date 3-14-67

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source, is "just a complete unknown."

(Marion Johnson, a staff member at the Archives who works with the investigation papers, said a check revealed no reference to Russo.)

(The library staff at the New Orleans States-Item said their files contained nothing on Russo.)

President Kennedy was killed by high-powered rifle bullets in Dallas Nov. 22, 1963—some two months after the alleged meeting here.

The rare three-judge criminal district court panel was called to hear the preliminary case and decide whether there

is enough evidence to warrant formal charge and trial for Shaw, now retired.

Shaw was arrested in Garrison's office on March 1. He was booked—but never formally charged—with conspiring to kill the President. Such procedure is common under Louisiana law.

Ferrie, a former airlines pilot, was found dead in his bed Feb. 22. The coroner ruled death resulted from natural causes.

His Story

After leading Russo through a brief summary of his educational background and present job, Garrison asked if he knew Ferrie.

Russo said he not only knew Ferrie but had had an "open book invitation" to visit Ferrie's apartment at any time.

He said that it was in the summer of 1963 that Ferrie "indicated to me that he was obsessed with Kennedy." This drew an immediate objection as being a conclusion reached by the witness. The court sustained the objection.

"Don't tell us your conclusions," resumed Garrison. "What did Ferrie say to you in regard to Kennedy?"

This drew a new objection, also sustained.

Garrison then switched the

testimony to the apartment party with this question: "Do you recall anything unusual happening at Ferrie's apartment in 1963?"

"Sometime around the middle of September I went to the house and at that time there was some sort of party in progress. There were eight or nine people there. As the party dissipated—it narrowed down to three people beside myself because I had no ride home."

At this point, Garrison drew from Russo testimony regarding the identification of Oswald and Shaw as Leop Oswald and Clem Bertrand.

Ferrie Pictured

Russo testified that Ferrie, 49, a free-lance pilot who was under investigation by Garrison at the time of his death, did most of the talking about an assassination.

Ferrie, pacing the floor, said the attempt should have three gunners in order to provide "a triangulation of cross-fire," Russo testified.

He quoted Ferrie as saying that one man would have to be sacrificed as scapegoat.

Ferrie, Russo added, was to be the get-away pilot, flying in to Mexico to refuel for a flight to Cuba.

Objections were raised by Bertrand, Russo said. He said

Russo said Ferrie seemed to be "the leader" at the CAP meetings. "He performed demonstrations that impressed me," Russo said.

Legal Battle

There was a tangled legal argument over some of Russo's testimony—which Shaw's lawyer objected to as hearsay.

UPI quoted Russo as adding that Ferrie said one of the assassins would have to be sacrificed and the others should be "in the public eye" on the day of the assassination. Russo said Ferrie told the others he would be at Southeastern Louisiana College at Hammond, La. Russo said Shaw said he would go to the West Coast on business.

Russo graduated in 1964 from Loyola University of the South in New Orleans with a degree in political science.

He said he once met Ferrie at a Civil Air Patrol meeting in Kenner, La. He said he knew him for some time and they often visited at one another's home.

Saying Ferrie was obsessed with Kennedy, Russo said:

"At his apartment, I saw clippings of the President and his picture. There was always much talk and deliberation."