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Garrison Moving Along With Imp Out of Bottle

By George Lardner Jr.
Washington Post Staff Writer

NEW ORLEANS, March 19—The bartender at the Top of the Mart was con-

vinced. "Garrison must have something," he said, ringing up the cash register in the cocktail lounge atop the 33-story skyscraper that was Clay Shaw's dream. "The papers give Garrison a hard time, but you know the papers—they'd knock Coca-

Cola. "After all," he said, leaning across the bar, "Ferrie was single. Ruby was single. Shaw's single. Oswald?" He shrugged suggestively.

"... And Ferrie was da high priest," a sturdy citizen advised his companions over oysters at Felix's late-hours oyster bar blocks away, as if picking up the thread of the conversation.

The Imp is out of the bottle. Out of the paperbacks and into the courtroom, nourished now by sworn testimony as well as speculation.

District Attorney Jim Garrison has owed a succession of arrests, promised convictions and predicted suicides. And on a ruling from three Louisiana judges off-again narcotics addict and a young insurance salesman whose precise recollections were assisted by hypnosis, he has on a ruling for three Louisiana judges at businessman Shaw should be held for trial for conspiracy to murder President Kennedy.

Nevertheless, a four-day preliminary hearing left the promises unfulfilled.

Insists There Was a Plot

Garrison says a conspiracy to assassinate the President was hatched in September of 1963 at meetings attended by Clay Shaw (alias Clay Bertrand), Lee Harvey Oswald and David W. Ferrie and others.

"One of the sources of information..." the statement added, "is a confidential informant who was present at these meetings and saw the conspirators and heard the plan."

With both Oswald and Ferrie now dead, it is the "others" who become crucial to Garrison's theories, especially since he has gone so far as to state that he does not believe Oswald was the real assassin.

At the preliminary hearing, Garrison's 25-year-old Perry Russo, a young Republican with eclectic tastes

("God is everyone, you, me, everybody here") and a mixed bag of emotions about the late Dave Ferrie ("I always felt he was an anarchist anyway"). But it was never stated whether or not he was the "confidential informant."

Russo swore that he heard Ferrie outline a plot requiring two or three gunmen to Shaw and Oswald at a party in Ferrie's apartment. But he testified to knowing about only one conspiratorial meeting, said nothing of "other" individuals involved in the alleged plot, and said he knew Shaw as "Clem Bertrand," not "Clay Bertrand."

Pictures Identified

Russo identified several pictures of Lee Harvey Oswald as the "Leon Oswald" he met at the party, but later backed off considerably, sticking strictly to an artist's sketch showing a bearded, messy-haired Lee Harvey Oswald. He refused to identify several photos of a clean-shaven Lee Harvey Oswald even though he acknowledged having seen "Leon Oswald" clean-shaven on one occasion.

The narcotics addict, Vernon Bundy, an inmate of the Orleans Parish Prison, swore that he had seen Shaw and Oswald (whom he, too, identified from a bearded sketch rather than any photo) together in June or July of 1963 on the New Orleans lakefront where Bundy was in the process of giving himself a heroin fix.

The judges required nothing more. No overt act in furtherance of the conspiracy was shown.

"Technically that covered it," said one of Garrison's aides. "You don't have to show an overt act at a preliminary hearing."

It seems clear, however, that Garrison has so far won virtual carte blanche to develop the case as he wishes. And the DA, who works at home in a study decorated with paneled chessmen, has been known to liken his investigation to a chess game.

In chess, the pawns are usually the first to be played. Meantime, Garrison keeps picking up new pieces to put on the board.

Russo decided to speak up after he read that Ferrie was dead. He wasn't even contacted by a Garrison man until Feb. 25, the day after he proclaimed to the world that "we have solved the assassination beyond any shadow of a doubt."

The testimony he has presented was all gathered since then. What he had to begin with, he has yet to disclose.



New Orleans D.A. Jim Garrison with his

- 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 _____
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