

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

# Ex-Convict Awaits Call to New Orleans Trial

By Jack Taylor

The heavy-set ex-convict sat in a downtown Oklahoma City tavern living an impossible dream — that he is the star witness in the Kennedy assassination conspiracy trial now unfolding in New Orleans.

James Frederick Hicks apparently refuses to believe that he is no longer wanted by the New Orleans district attorney who once talked to him about the Clay Shaw case.

Hicks was a witness that fateful day in Dallas more than 5 years ago when President John F. Kennedy was assassinated.

He was subpoenaed to appear in New Orleans in 1967 to relate what he saw for the benefit of District Attorney Jim Garrison, who disputes the Warren Commission findings that a single assassin killed the president.

Hicks also disputes the Warren Commission's findings. But whatever he had to say in New Orleans apparently is not considered necessary for the ears of jurors now being selected for Shaw's trial.

"I've been subpoenaed," Hicks maintains. "I'm the chief witness."

"From what Mr. Garrison told me, I'll be the first or second witness and I'll be on the stand from 3 weeks to 3 months.

"I can identify the other parties who shot him (the president)," Hicks said. "I know them personally."

Hicks said he is not in New Orleans now for his own protection and Garrison told him he could stay in Oklahoma until needed.

As far as Garrison is concerned, Hicks probably can stay in Oklahoma forever.

Hicks has not been subpoenaed and most probably will not be.

Hicks' residence for all but 51 days in the last 11

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months has been the Garfield County jail in Enid and Western State Hospital at Fort Supply.

While in jail for his most recent stay, Hicks fired off a stream of letters to Garrison seeking the latter's help in securing Hicks' release.

Jailers who censored his mail said Hicks finally did receive a reply from Garrison. The New Orleans prosecutor told Hicks he wouldn't be needed again — ever, Deputy Bill Henderson said.

Hicks was released from

the Enid jail on January 13 after he paid a \$250 fine for writing hot checks. He had been behind bars for more than 3 months.

He claims he went to New Orleans after his release, but that could not be verified. If he did go to New Orleans and if he did try to talk again with Garrison, his effort apparently was in vain.

His story of what he claims to know about the assassination may have found its most attentive listener in the local bartender Hicks claims Garrison

has asked him to retain as a bodyguard.

"I saw two shoot at the president," Hicks repeated in the tavern. "One from a car trunk behind the fence on the knoll, the other one on the other side of the knoll."

"Neither one was Oswald (Lee Harvey Oswald, whom the Warren Commission names as the assassin).

"I had met them in Dallas, including a man by the name of Clay Bertrand. He looks exactly like Clay Shaw.

"There were five of them in all," Hicks said. "Three I can identify; the others I can't."

Hicks' apparent trouble with his memory is nothing compared with his civil and criminal troubles that have run the course of his marriage and an FBI rap sheet.

He has been arrested numerous times over the last 11 years and his wife finally divorced him last June.

Hicks maintains the man with the criminal record is someone else. "That's not me. I'm James Fred

Hicks, not James Frederick Hicks," he said.

If so, it is someone born 30 years ago in the same town in Arkansas of the same parents, who was married to and divorced from the same two women and whose photograph is identical.

Floyd Schultz, a Garfield County sheriff's deputy, got to know Hicks pretty well during six incarcerations over the last year.

"They need to watch that guy," Schultz said. "He's going to wind up hurting somebody."



James Frederick Hicks