

Third indictment for Garrison

STEVEN J. BURTON

NEW ORLEANS Feb. 22—Kerry W. Thornley has been charged with perjury in Jim Garrison's Kennedy assassination probe for denying that he knew Lee Harvey Oswald in New Orleans in 1963.

The indictment is the third in the probe. Dean Andrews was convicted last August for denying that he knew whether Clay Shaw was Clay Bertrand. Layton Martens will stand trial after the Shaw trial for denying that he knew Gordon Novel, recently subpoenaed for grand jury testimony.

Thornley testified before the Warren Commission, saying that he knew Oswald when they were stationed in the same marine outfit in Orange County. He told the Commission that Oswald was a Communist, but had a higher security clearance than others in the outfit.

Before the New Orleans Grand Jury, Thornley denied that he ever saw Oswald after he left the Marines. However, Garrison claims that he was with Oswald in a French Quarter bar in September, 1963.

In a news release, Garrison said that "evidence indicates that Oswald and Thornley were both part of the covert federal operation operating in New Orleans."

Garrison denied that Oswald was a Communist and identified Thornley as the Warren Commission's star witness concerning Oswald's early "left wing" leanings. He said, "Inasmuch as he (Oswald) was sent to Russia as an employee of the United States Government, it was necessary to have a major witness testify in great detail to create an early image as a Marxist so that there would not be too much public curiosity about the real reasons for Oswald's abrupt departure from the Marine Corps to sail to Russia.

Garrison added that because

other Marine buddies of Oswald's did not identify him as a Marxist, their testimony was presented in brief affidavits.

"It is thought-provoking that the only one of Oswald's former Marine comrades who testified that he was a 'Marxist' is also the only one who was in personal association with Oswald in New Orleans in 1963," Garrison said. "Thornley's associates and pattern of activity clearly mark him as an employee, like Lee Oswald, of the Central Intelligence Agency."

Garrison further charged that Thornley and Oswald had post office boxes in the Federal Building in New Orleans which are customarily used by federal employees with clandestine assignments as 'message drops'. He said that the boxes afforded these people excuses for regular visits to a federal building.

He also said that Thornley was seen in the company of one of the figures charged with conspiracy to murder President Kennedy. Clay Shaw will stand trial shortly in New Orleans. Edgar Eugene Bradley is awaiting an extradition hearing to determine whether he will have to go to New Orleans to stand trial.

In grand jury testimony released as part of the indictment, Thornley told how a friend, Barbara Reid, told him after the assassination that she had seen him with Oswald in a French Quarter bar. Reid was at the bar while Thornley sat at a table. Thornley said that there was a man next to him whom Mrs. Reid identified as Oswald. Thornley said that he did not remember who it was.

Mrs. Reid said that she was positive that it was Oswald because she was a casting director and never forgot a face.

Thornley, now a free lance writer in Tampa, Florida, said

that he will not contest extradition. He protested his innocence and charged that he is being framed by someone "with a large amount of money". He said that he has no money and will ask for a public defender in New Orleans.

(Editor's Note: Kerry Thornley has written for the FP in the past and has offered us an interview with him on the Garrison charges which we hope to print soon).

Thornley has written two books about Lee Harvey Oswald. One, "The Idle Warriors," was written before the assassination and was, according to Thornley's Warren Commission testimony, inspired by Oswald's defection to the Soviet Union. The other, "Oswald," was written after the assassination.