

OSWALD WIDOW THROWS

3/15/67

DOUBT ON RUSSO'S STORY

Lee Harvey Oswald and David William Ferrie were roommates in New Orleans two months before President John F. Kennedy was slain, a key witness in Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison's probe of the

assassination testified today. But in Dallas, Oswald's widow cast doubt on the story.

Perry R. Russo, who yesterday electrified the preliminary hearing for Clay L. Shaw by testify-

ing that Shaw, Oswald and Ferrie plotted JFK's death in Ferrie's apartment in September, 1963,

A story on the testimony today of Dean A. E. Papale of the Loyola University School of Law will be found on Page

The reaction of Edwin Russo to his brother Perry's testimony yesterday in the conspiracy hearing appears on Page 1.

The atmosphere inside and outside of the courtroom is described on Page 25.

today said Oswald and Ferrie were rooming together at that time.

Earlier in his testimony today, Russo said that he once was under psychiatric treatment for more than a year.

Mrs. Marina Porter, the ex-wife of Oswald who has remarried since his death, said in Dallas she has not heard of Ferrie, Clay Shaw, or Clay Bertrand.

Oswald was named by the Warren Commission as the sole assassin of Kennedy. He was killed two days after the assassination by Jack Ruby, who died this January of cancer.

FERRIE, A NEW ORLEANS PILOT AND PRIVATE investigator, was named by Russo in yesterday's testimony as a key figure in the plot. He was found dead here Feb. 22.

Shaw was arrested March 1 and booked with criminal conspiracy in a plot to slay the President. The current

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ENDICOTT A. BATCHELDER
Tulane registrar



FRANK J. STASS
Loyola registrar

hearing in Criminal District Court is to determine whether there is enough evidence to hold him for trial.

In today's testimony Russo, a 25-year-old Baton Rouge insurance man, was questioned closely by defense attorney F. Irvin Dymond on details of the party in Ferrie's apartment at 3330 Louisiana ave. pkwy. in September, 1963, at which Russo says the assassination was plotted.

Dymond asked Russo if a person by the name of Leyton Martens was Ferrie's roommate at that time.

Russo answered, "No, sir."

"What was the name of the roommate?"

"The roommate at the Louisiana ave. pkwy. apartment was Leon Oswald," said Russo.

Russo, in earlier testimony, said Oswald was introduced to him as "Leon." But he identified pictures of Lee Harvey Oswald as the "Leon Oswald" whom he knew.

"WHAT YEAR ARE WE TALKING about?" asked Dymond.

"1963."

"What month?"

"September."

In answer to a question, Russo said he saw Oswald at the apartment three or four times. When asked when he last saw him there, he answered:

"In the middle of October or late September."

The former Marina Oswald, now Mrs. Kenneth Porter, said Garrison has never contacted her during his probe.

Russo testified yesterday that Oswald and Ferrie were talking in Ferrie's apartment and Oswald described trouble with his wife.

Russo quoted Ferrie as telling Oswald, "Don't worry, I'll handle it."

RUSSO YESTERDAY IDENTIFIED SHAW AS THE man he knew as "Clem Bertrand" in the apartment. Earlier, Garrison had said Shaw used "Clay Bertrand" as an alias. Shaw has said he never used either name.

Under cross-examination today, Russo said he underwent the psychiatric treatment from October of 1959 until late 1960 or early 1961.

The questions about Russo's treatment by a psychiatrist were part of a line of questioning aimed at attacking the credibility of the witness. The questions were put by Dymond.

Dymond said he could show that Russo has made contradictory statements.

Other witnesses on the stand this morning included: James Kenney, agency director of the Equitable Life

Assurance Society, which employs Russo. He identified records of the firm pertaining to the witness.

Endicott Batchelder, registrar at Tulane University, who identified some student records of his office. Russo once attended Tulane.

Dean A. E. Papale of the Loyola University School of Law, which Russo also attended.

Frank J. Stass, 51, of 400 Faye ave., Metairie, the registrar at Loyola.

Subpenaes also went out today to television stations WDSU and WVUE, for taped interviews with Russo.

The three-judge panel handling the case includes senior Judge Bernard J. Bagert and Judges Matthew S. Braniff and Malcolm V. O'Hara.

The hearing, which opened yesterday, represents the first time since the President was slain on Nov. 22, 1963, that any aspect of the case has gone before a court of law. The previous investigation was made by the Warren Commission, a special body appointed by President Lyndon B. Johnson.

Garrison maintains that a New Orleans-based conspiracy plotted the President's death. Shaw's arrest on March 1 was the first since the States-Item revealed on Feb. 17 in an exclusive story that the probe was under way.

Shaw entered the courtroom at 9:30 a. m. with his lawyers. He stood by the defense table conferring with them.

The DA's chief investigator, William Gurvich, was the first member of the prosecution team to enter the courtroom, almost a half-hour before start of the 10 a. m. hearing. Garrison and Russo appeared promptly at 10.

ORLEANS PARISH Coroner Dr. Nicholas J. Chetta was also on hand early, conferring with Garrison and his assistants. He has been called by the state as an expert witness.

The judges took the bench at 10:15 a. m.

Garrison was wearing a light green suit with a green tie and Russo was clad in a conservative brown suit and tie. Gurvich was less somberly dressed in a navy blue blazer and a yellow shirt.

SEVERAL NEW procedures were added this morning to the process of admitting newsmen and spectators into the crowded courtroom.

Police detectives and two female policemen were stationed within the foyer of the courtroom frisking persons as

they entered.

In addition, several criminal sheriff deputies were added to the large group of guards in and around the courtroom.

Mrs. Nina Sulzer, secretary to Criminal Sheriff Louis A. Heyd Jr., said changes in procedures for admitting newsmen were made to speed up the process.

Shortly after 10:15 Judge Bagert asked if the state and defense were ready to proceed.

IN THE FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS, Heyd reported that his office had returns on all three subpoenas issued by Shaw's attorneys yesterday.

They went to Loyola and Tulane universities, where Russo went to school, and to the Equitable Life Assurance Co., where he works.

Dymond then filed application for two more subpoenas for immediate return. He then asked that Dean Papale be called to testify.

At this point Judge Bagert, at the request of Dymond, ordered all witnesses out of the courtroom.

Before Dean Papale took the stand, Thomas Rayer, Loyola University attorney, asked the court to order the university to "remove all records on Mr. Russo and place them in my custody as attorney for the university."

HE THEN OFFERED AN ENVELOPE CONTAINING the records to the court.

He requested that the records be removed as a "precaution to assure the court that none of the contents of the record would be divulged outside the court or would be lost."

Rayer said a number of people have been to the university to look at the records.

Dymond then began questioning Dean Papale. His line of questioning was aimed at establishing legally that the records turned over to the court were those of Russo. He went through a similar procedure with Stass.

Russo then took the stand for his first questioning by the defense.

Dymond questioned Russo closely as to his belief in God. Russo said, "I don't consider my conceptions of God more peculiar than anyone else's."

When Dymond persisted, Judge Bagert said:

"This is not a catechism class. Let's move on out of this area."

Dymond then questioned Russo about his family background, his number of brothers and sisters and whether his

parents had ever been married to persons besides each other. Russo said he didn't know, but his father might have been.

Russo testified that his mother died in 1963, and that he has a brother named Edwin. He said he was supporting his grandmother, who lives in Mississippi.

Dymond questioned Russo at length on these family matters until Assistant DA James L. Alcock jumped to his feet and objected, saying he saw no point to the line of questioning.

Dymond told the judge that the line of questioning bears on the credibility of the witness. He said he could furnish evidence that Russo has made contradictory statements.

After some dispute, as to whether Russo had ever claimed his grandmother as a dependent, Dymond dropped the bombshell of the morning testimony. He asked:

"Did you ever have any psychiatric treatment?"

"Yes, sir," Russo said.

"When?"

"In 1959 . . . mid-1960, or maybe it was late 1960.

"It consisted of treatment and consultations and covered a period of one and a half or two years," Russo said.

HE THEN SAID THE TREATMENT BEGAN in October, 1959, and ended in late 1960 or early 1961. Asked whether he had visited a psychiatrist since, Russo said:

"When my mother died, I went back for a visit."

He said he went "whenever I felt like I wanted to talk about my past life."

As Dymond took up a new line of questioning, Russo said he first met David William Ferrie in 1960 or 1961.

He said he and Ferrie met through a mutual friend named Al Landry.

In response to a question, Russo denied that he was threatened with expulsion from McDonogh High School because he did not believe in God.

He said he didn't remember whether the issue ever came up.

RUSSO TESTIFIED THAT HE WAS GRADUATED from McDonogh in 1959 and entered Tulane University, where he studied for two years. Asked what the occasion was of his leaving Tulane, Russo said:

"My father told me I was going to Loyola."

Dymond asked:

"Were you ever accused of giving false testimony at any proceeding while you were in college?"

"No, sir, I never have," Russo answered quickly. Asked if he were sure, he replied:

"Yes, I am sure. I never gave false testimony anywhere."

Returning to questions about Ferrie, Dymond asked where Russo was introduced to him.

Russo related an incident in which Landry had reportedly left home. Russo said he talked to Landry's parents and told them that "if there were anyone who could alienate Dave and Al, I felt I could."

The witness said he subsequently was invited to Ferrie's home in Kenner by Landry. He said he went with a group of friends, one of whom he identified as "Peterson."

Asked when he last saw Peterson, Russo said:

"In Mr. Garrison's office."

"Oh, so he was there, too?" asked Dymond.

"Yes, sir," said Russo.

Earlier today, extra security precautions were ordered for the courthouse after threatening telephone calls were received.

One man described by police as an ex-convict from Michigan was arrested and booked with making threatening phone calls.

Heyd would not say what his extra security measures were, on the ground that this would serve to tip off potential troublemakers.

Arrested yesterday was James R. Liscombe, 30, of 708½ Bourbon. Police identified him as a musician for a Bourbon st. night club.

Heyd said the ex-convict telephoned his former warden in Jackson, Mich., and said he was brooding and "intended to make national headlines in New Orleans."

HE WAS ARRESTED at his apartment and booked with making threatening telephone

calls after the Michigan prison official notified local police.

There were reports that Liscombe was seen in the crowd at the Criminal District Court building yesterday jostling newsmen, but this could not be confirmed.

His prison term in Michigan was for vandalism, Heyd said.

Heyd added there were other phone calls to various persons involved in the case, and Judge Bagert asked for the extra precautions.

SHAW ARRIVED at the court building at 9:30 a. m. today in a car driven by Dymond. Despite efforts to keep his arrival secret, he was besieged by newsmen and photographers before being escorted inside by Heyd and his deputies.

Shaw visited his home at 1313 Dauphine briefly about 8:25 a. m. He apparently had spent the night elsewhere. From there, he went to the National Bank of Commerce Building with his other attorneys, Edward F. and William Wegmann. Their law office is on the 10th floor of that building.

In contrast, the arrival of the other key figure in the case, Russo, went almost unnoticed at the courthouse this morning.

RUSSO WALKED into the Broad st. entrance at 8:37 and went up the stairs to the DA's office. No photographers were on hand, and only a handful of newsmen.

Yesterday's hearing was recessed unexpectedly early in the afternoon at the suggestion of the prosecution and with the concurrence of the defense after Shaw's attorneys asked that personnel records on Russo be subpoenaed.

A relaxed and sun-tanned Garrison turned his "mystery witness" over to defense at-

torneys for cross-examination early yesterday afternoon.

SHAW WAS arrested March 1 and booked with criminal conspiracy in the President's death. He has never been charged, however.

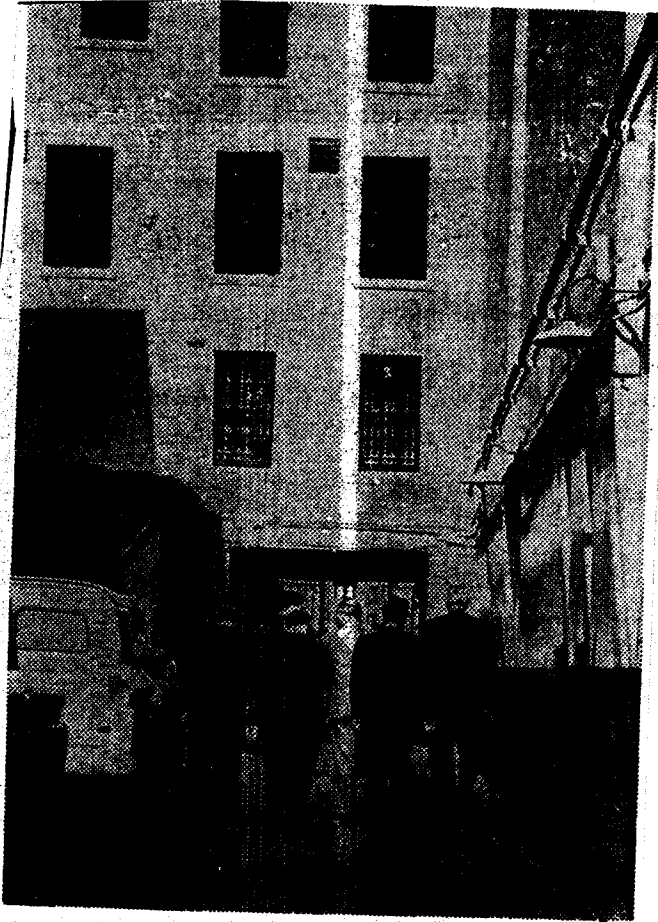
The community leader and former director of the International Trade Mart has stoutly maintained that he is innocent.

The identity of Russo had been a closely guarded secret until he was called to the witness stand yesterday.

Garrison, who appeared at the hearing with a sunburned face, was asked how it happened by a friend.

"I was interviewing a witness in the sun and I got so wrapped up in what I was doing that I stayed in the sun too long.

William Wegmann, one of Shaw's attorneys, was asked if the defendant would take the stand in a possible defense effort to disprove the state's allegations. He said the defense had not yet made a decision. *END*



—States-Item photo.
CLAY L. SHAW, right, is accompanied by attorneys as he walks through the Parish Prison yard on his way to Criminal Court this morning.