

NCT
Oswald Widow Dubious 3/16
DALLAS, March 15 (AP) —
The former wife of Lee Harvey
Oswald said today that she had
never heard of nor met any of

the persons mentioned in the
New Orleans investigation into
a possible conspiracy to kill
President Kennedy.

"I never met David Ferrie —
I never heard of him," said Mrs.
Marina Oswald Porter, who
is now married to Kenneth Jess
Porter.

Asked if she had ever met
or heard of a Clay Shaw, she
replied in an interview: "Not
until I saw him on television
recently."

She said Jim Garrison had
not been in touch with her
during his inquiry, and she
added: "I don't want any pub-
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thing. Please go away."

She asked: "When was all
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Shaw Attorney Casts Doubt on Informer's Story

Witness Undergoes Sharp Cross-Examination on Claim of Kennedy Plot

BY NICHOLAS C. CHRISS
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Times Staff Writers

NEW ORLEANS—Biting cross-examination of the young insurance agent who claims to have overheard a plot to kill President John F. Kennedy cast sharp doubt Wednesday on the informer's credibility.

Perry Raymond Russo, 25, lost none of the poise he exhibited Tuesday when he made the sensational charge, but a defense attorney for Clay L. Shaw found apparent soft-spots in his story.

Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison contends Shaw, one of New Orleans' leading citizens, conspired with Lee Harvey Oswald, David W. Ferrie and others to murder the President.

Garrison's accusation against Shaw, still not formally charged, is part of his claim that he has "solved" the Presidential assassination and will bring to justice the persons involved.

Must Prove 'Probable Cause'

Garrison and his aides are attempting to establish at a preliminary hearing that Shaw should be brought to trial. They must establish "probable cause" for such a trial.

Irvin Dymond carried the brunt of Shaw's defense Wednesday and

caught Russo in a variety of conflicting statements.

Over and over again, Dymond asked Russo, a former law student at Loyola University of the South, to explain why he had waited so long to come forth with his story.

Russo responded with a wide range of answers; some vague, some in outright conflict with earlier statements.

Dymond made possibly his most telling point when he asked when Russo last heard Ferrie make "specific threats" against the life of the

President.

Ferrie Statement Recalled

"In late September or October (1963)," replied Russo, recalling that Ferrie, found dead in bed of natural causes last Feb. 22, had said at the time: "We'll get him and it won't be very long."

"Was the man you knew as Oswald present?" Dymond asked.

"Sometimes, sometimes not . . ."

Question—"When was the last time you saw Oswald?"

Answer—"I think the beginning of October (1963) . . . I'm putting it in contact with other things . . . We went to many football games. It was not far into the school year. It was my impression that it was the beginning of October (in Ferrie's apartment)."

Then Dymond asked sharply:

"Are you aware that it is documented that Oswald left New Orleans Sept. 25 to go to Mexico and Houston — and never did return

Pl here?"

The prosecution objected and Presiding Judge Bernard J. Bagert sustained the objection.

After a lengthy dispute over the question's admissibility, Dymond rephrased it: "You still say October—and that Oswald was present?"

"Yes, sir. I say October was one of the times. Yes, sir," Russo replied in a subdued voice.

Amazement Told

Dymond repeatedly expressed amazement that Russo had overheard a plot "to assassinate a President of the United States" and had waited so long to tell about it.

When the attorney expressed this amazement, in a variety of searching questions, Russo gave such answers as:

"I have the answer—because everyone but Mr. Garrison was saying that Oswald did it alone."

"They didn't say anything about Dallas. Anything like that. They didn't say anything about Dallas."

"I never push myself on anybody . . . every nut off the street had something to say . . . I thought every screwball in the street was calling up everyone (with assassination tips)."

Mother Died

"I gave it thought. Then I got involved and forgot . . . I had a lot on my mind. There was school (Russo was a Loyola undergraduate in 1963), my mother had just died, there was some inconvenience with the estate—I was left with a 'cold hand.' I thought about it—but maybe not . . ."

Dymond pressed Russo: "Didn't you think it was your duty as an American to volunteer testimony . . .?"

A—"No, because I was involved with school which was much more pressing to me."

Q—"It was your opinion that your personal involvements were so important as to keep you from testifying?"

A—" . . . I had confidence in the FBI, that they knew what they were doing."

Dymond recalled that on Feb. 22, after learning of Ferrie's death, that Russo had told a television interviewer he had never heard of Lee Harvey Oswald, the man the Warren Commission said acted alone in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963.

Why, asked Dymond, had he said this when now, less than a month later, he was claiming the Presidential assassin and a man he knew as Leon Oswald in New Orleans in the fall of 1963 were one and the same man?

Photographs Shown

"I had known Leon Oswald, who was dirty, had whiskers and his hair ruffled up," replied Russo, adding that photographs he had seen of Lee Harvey Oswald showed him to be carefully groomed and clean-shaven.

Then he explained how he had first firmly decided that Lee Harvey Oswald and Leon Oswald were the same man.

An aide to Dist. Atty. Garrison had shown him pictures of the assassin in Baton Rouge on Friday, Feb. 24.

"I said that's the roommate (Ferrie's) . . . but, no—that's Oswald (Lee Harvey)," Russo recalled telling the assistant district attorney.

Then, Russo said, he told the Garrison aide that the man he had known as

Leon Oswald had been dirty and bewhiskered.

He said he still was unable to make a positive identification when the Garrison man pasted cut-out beards on the photo of Oswald's face.

"I wanted to make absolutely sure the picture I had in my mind was identical," Russo testified.

So, he added, a police artist drew a light stubble on the face in the photograph because Russo had said Leon Oswald, when he had seen him, always wore a "three or four-day" growth of whiskers.

Studied Composite

Upon looking at what he called the "composite," Russo recalled saying, "that's the guy."

Dymond challenged Russo, saying:

"Didn't you seize upon the death of Ferrie to come forward with your story to get publicity? As a matter of fact, didn't you wait until Ferrie was dead so there would be no witness to contradict your statement?"

Russo denied this, and claimed he never had spoken before Ferrie's death because he did not know if

the man identified by newspapers and television as "David W. Ferrie" was his friend since 1960. He claimed to have known him only as "Dave Ferrie."

"Have you ever known another Dave Ferrie?" snapped Dymond.

"No," replied Russo.

Asked why he hadn't gotten in touch with authorities when Garrison's investigation became public knowledge in mid-February and Ferrie's name was mentioned, Russo answered: "I didn't expect Dave to die."

Russo conceded that on Feb. 22 he had told a television interviewer he thought Ferrie was "joking" in the summer of 1963 when he made threats against President Kennedy.

"I make no claims to this minute that anything was serious during the summer months," he said. "But during September things were a little different, maybe a little differ-

ent late in the summer."

Garrison Absent

However, he said he had learned never to challenge anything Ferrie ever said or the boasts he made. "He could either talk a big game — or play a big game," Russo said.

Garrison, who handled the direct examination of Russo Tuesday, was ab-

sent during Dymond's assault on Russo's credibility.

Russo testified Tuesday that Clay Shaw had been introduced to him as "Clem Bertrand" at a party in Ferrie's apartment in mid-September, and that after all present except he, Shaw, Ferrie and Oswald had left, he overheard the plot.

Garrison has accused Shaw of using the alias "Clay Bertrand."

Under questioning Wednesday, Russo could not recall the time of his arrival at the party or the names of most other persons present. He said he had arrived with three carloads of "friends," but could only vaguely recall two names: "Lefty" Peterson and Sandra Moffett.

Not Certain

He could not say for certain even that the latter two entered Ferrie's apartment but suggested if they did, that each stayed "about two hours."

Wednesday's session began on an unexpected note, with Dymond wondering whether Russo believed in God and, thus, would feel bound by the oath.

"This is not a catechism class. Let's get on..." said Judge Bagert.

Russo, under examination by Dymond, then admitted he had been under regular psychiatric care from 1959 to the middle of or late 1960.

He said he visited a psychiatrist when his mother died in 1963, and subsequently spoke about personal matters with a doctor-friend.

The defense attorney asked Russo if he had been threatened with expulsion during high school for making public state-

ments that he did not believe in God. Russo replied that he had not, and in answer to another question, said he had never been accused of giving false testimony while attending Tulane University.

Russo's Testimony

William Gurvich, Garrison's chief investigative aide, was asked after Wednesday's session recessed whether Russo's testimony was one of the "strongest" or "weakest" bits of evidence the district attorney had to offer.

"We have other witnesses as strong," he replied. "It depends on what you mean by weak or strong. Some witnesses bear up a lot better under cross-examination, whether telling the truth or lying."

He also said other witnesses were "available" to describe other meetings "between the principals."

The hearing will resume today with the appearance of James Lewallen, who was subpoenaed by Garrison March 1 several hours before Shaw was arrested.

Lewallen was a close friend of Ferrie's and lived near Shaw in the French Quarter several years ago. His friendship with Ferrie dated back to years ago when his parents were close friends of Ferrie's parents in Cleveland. *END*

Never Met Persons in Probe--Oswald Widow

Marina Says She Has Not Heard of Any Mentioned in New Orleans Investigation

DALLAS (AP)—The widow of Lee Harvey Oswald said Wednesday she had never heard of nor met any of the persons mentioned in a New Orleans probe into an alleged conspiracy to kill President John F. Kennedy.

"I never met David Ferrie—I never heard of him," said Mrs. Marina Oswald Porter, who now is married to Kenneth Jess Porter.

Asked if she had ever met or heard of a Clay Shaw or Clay Bertrand, Marina replied in an interview, "not until I saw him on television recently."

The Warren Commission declared Oswald, alone, assassinated President Kennedy Nov. 22, 1963, in Dallas. New Orleans Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison claims he has proof Oswald, Ferrie, Shaw and others conspired to kill the President.

Natural Causes

Oswald was killed two days after the assassination by Jack Ruby, who died of cancer this January. Ferrie died of natural causes Feb. 22, after Garrison announced his investigation.

Garrison arrested Shaw, 54, a New Orleans civic leader, March 1.

A three-judge panel in New Orleans is holding a preliminary hearing to determine if Shaw should be held for trial.

A Garrison witness, Perry Raymond Russo,

testified Tuesday the last time he saw Oswald was in Ferrie's apartment.

Marina said Wednesday, "I never met Ferrie, or any of the others."

She said Garrison had not contacted her during his probe — and she stressed, "I don't want any publicity. I don't wish to say anything. Please go away."

She asked, "When was all this supposed to be taking place? I wasn't even in New Orleans then. I believe that all this is blown up and said over and over again, and then people just believe it."

She apparently referred to Garrison's charge that Oswald conspired with others in the assassination. Marina said months after the 1963 events that she was convinced Oswald killed Mr. Kennedy.

Meeting Claim

Garrison claims Oswald, Ferrie and Shaw met in September, 1963, to plan the assassination.

The Warren Commission said Marina had been driven from Dallas to New Orleans May 11 after Oswald found a job there. She left New Orleans Sept. 22 to return to Dallas, but Oswald remained until Sept. 25. Oswald returned to Dallas Oct. 3 after a swing through Mexico.

Marina, 25, was alone at home with her three children, two by Oswald.

Porter, 28, operates a bar and grill here. **END**