

# The 'Oswald Plot,' or Something

By GENE ROBERTS

Special to The New York Times

NEW ORLEANS, March 18—No one was more surprised this week than newsmen in Baton Rouge when Perry Raymond Russo, a 25-year-old insurance salesman, proved to be the chief witness in an alleged plot to assassinate President Kennedy.

Only three weeks ago, Mr. Russo telephoned newspaper and television stations in the Louisiana capital to say that he had known the late David W. Ferrie, a former airline pilot, to be so "obsessed with Kennedy that he sometimes talked of killing him.

Had Mr. Russo ever known Lee Harvey Oswald? No, Mr. Russo answered. He had never even heard of him until President Kennedy was assassinated and Oswald was charged with the slaying.

When District Attorney Jim Garrison of New Orleans put him on the witness stand this week in a court hearing into the alleged conspiracy, Mr. Russo told a different story. He said he had not only known Oswald but had quietly sat in on a conspiratorial meeting in mid-September of 1963 and heard Oswald, Mr. Ferrie, and Clay L. Shaw, a retired business executive, talk of "triangulation of crossfire," scapegoats and escape route to Brazil and Cuba.

## Meeting Followed Party

The meeting, Mr. Russo went on, had taken place immediately following a party which "eight or ten people" had attended at Mr. Ferrie's apartment in New Orleans.

Another witness, a former narcotics addict, testified that although he knew nothing of any conspiracy, he had once seen Oswald and Mr. Shaw talking together on the shores of Lake Pontchartrain. At the time of the alleged conversation, he added, he was regularly taking three or four capsules of heroin daily.

With that, a panel of three judges ruled there was enough "probable cause" that a crime had been committed to warrant a trial for Mr. Shaw on charges that he participated in an assassination conspiracy.

The ruling was not surprising. Not much proof is required in Louisiana to set a



Conrad in The Los Angeles Times

"Dallas re-run"



**NEW ORLEANS DRAMA:** District Attorney Jim Garrison, left, brought Perry Russo, right, before a preliminary hearing last week to tell a bizarre tale of hypnotism, "truth drugs" and an alleged meeting in September, 1963, at which Lee Oswald—the Warren Commission's findings to the contrary—conspired with others to assassinate President Kennedy.

trial in motion. Judges can and do clear the way for trials if one or two people—usually law enforcement officers—say they have reason to believe a crime has been committed by a defendant.

More surprising, however, was the chain of events that led to the hearing. On Feb.

18, Mr. Garrison announced that he would make arrests in the Kennedy assassination case. And on Feb. 23, he asserted that he had "solved" the case and that the Warren Commission was wrong in concluding that Oswald had killed President Kennedy alone and without being a part of any conspiracy.

Yet, at the hearing, the only witnesses presented

against Mr. Shaw were two people who did not talk to district attorney investigators until after he had said he had "solved" the assassination. Mr. Russo did not talk to Mr. Garrison's investigators until Feb. 27. And the narcotics addict, who was voluntarily in jail this week because he had felt an urge to go back on narcotics, did not talk to Mr. Garrison's staff until the day before he testified at the hearing.

What evidence then, did Mr. Garrison have of a conspiracy at the time he said he had "solved" the case? He was not saying, and

newsmen were unable to find traces of any evidence prior to Mr. Russo's visit to the district attorney's office.

There were indications, however, that Mr. Garrison's theories about the alleged conspiracy had changed since he first said he had "solved" the assassination.

Three weeks ago, the six-foot, six-inch district attorney was talking of a "through-the-looking-glass conspiracy" in which anti-Castro forces set out to kill the Cuban Premier but changed their minds and decided to shoot President Kennedy instead.

But in his testimony at the hearing, Mr. Russo had Mr. Ferrie, who was known here to hold strong anti-Castro views, discussing the possibility of going to Cuba after the assassination to seek

refuge.

Mr. Russo offered no explanation for this nor did he say why none of the "eight or 10 people" who allegedly saw Oswald at the party at Mr. Ferrie's apartment, has ever come forward to tell their story.

### Warren Report Doubted

Whatever the hearing might have established about the presence or absence of the conspiracy, it did seem to indicate firmly that there are widespread doubts about the conclusions of the Warren Commission.

Although no exact count was possible, it appeared that more than 150 newsmen, photographers and television cameramen from throughout the world were in New Orleans to cover the hearing. And more often than not the stories and pictures they sent home were given prominent display.

It was clear, too, that New Orleans took the hearing seriously indeed. Dozens of sheriff's deputies hovered about the courtroom to inspect and frisk each person as he entered. They seemed especially concerned that an F.B.I. agent or some other representative of the Federal Government might try to "infiltrate" the proceeding. Once, they ordered a newsman from the courtroom and double-checked his credentials on the suspicion that he might have been an F.B.I. agent.

Even the three-judge panel, which presided over the hearing, was caught up in the

doubt surrounding the Warren report.

"If we are going to accept the Warren report as factual then we've wasted a week of time," said Judge Bernard J. Bagert near the end of the hearing.

"It is fraught," Judge Mathew S. Braniff added, "with hearsay and contradictions."

1947 January 2-1947

## 'MacBird' Appears In a Caracas Paper In Pirated Version

Special to The New York Times

CARACAS, Venezuela, March 8—A pirated Spanish translation of Barbara Garson's comedy "MacBird!" was published this week by El Mundo, the afternoon newspaper.

But the play is not to be seen. For days, El Mundo has run large front-page promotion ads billing Miss Garson's highly political satire on Shakespeare's "Macbeth" as an "extremely informative" account of the "assassination of J. F. Kennedy."

The implication intended by El Mundo's editors was crystal clear for Venezuelan leaders accustomed to getting much of their news from between the lines: "MacBird!" contains more "news" than theater.

"We estimate that the publication of the play is going to raise our circulation by 20,000 readers a day," said Eloy Enrique Torras, director of El Mundo.

Miss Garson's play satirizes "Macbeth" with undisguised allusions to President Johnson, whom MacBird seems to resemble; Mrs. Johnson, as Lady MacBird, President Kennedy as Ken O'Dunc, and on down a long list of characters involved in

the Kennedy Administration at his death.

The translation of the play was copied from a Spanish-language book published in Mexico a month or so ago. There was no indication in the Mexican book as to whether or not it was legally translated.

El Mundo received the book from its correspondent in Mexico City four days ago and immediately rushed it into print.

## Shaw Enters Hospital for Observation

NEW ORLEANS  
(AP) — Clay L. Shaw, the wealthy retired executive ordered to stand trial on a charge of conspiring to murder President John F. Kennedy, entered a hospital Saturday for a "rest."

The tall, white-haired Shaw sat impassively through a four-day preliminary hearing on whether he should stand trial. But his eyes were bloodshot at the end Friday and he obviously had been under a strain.

Edward Wegmann, one of Shaw's defense lawyers, said Shaw was not ill but was admitted to Southern Baptist Hospital for rest and observation.

Shaw is a major figure in Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison's probe of the Presidential assassination. *E. H. H.*

# MANCHESTER ADDS EPILOGUE ON FIGHT

Article Relates More Details  
of Kennedy Book Dispute

By JOHN CORRY

William Manchester defends his book, tells of his travail and takes issue with Mrs. John F. Kennedy and Senator Robert F. Kennedy in the April 4 issue of Look magazine, which is on sale tomorrow.

Writing about his dispute with the Kennedy family, he says: "No one has the right to distort the past. No fact, however disagreeable, may be expunged from the record."

This, he says, is why he fought the suit filed by Mrs. Kennedy to prevent the publication of "The Death of a President" by Harper & Row and its serialization by Look.

However, even before that, Mr. Manchester says, he was involved with two other books that disturbed Mrs. Kennedy. One was "Kennedy" by Theodore C. Sorensen, the other "A Thousand Days" by Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. Both men had been advisers to President Kennedy and both were writing about his Administration.

Mr. Manchester says he tried to persuade Mr. Sorensen not to change his manuscript simply to please the Kennedys, but that "Ted took the easy way, giving way on point after point and weakening what would have been a great volume."

## Says Schlesinger Ballad

Mr. Schlesinger, he says, did not give way, which annoyed Mrs. Kennedy. Mr. Manchester says that he subsequently wrote to Mrs. Kennedy, without mentioning Mr. Schlesinger's name, and told her that it was unwise to tamper with history.

He says that Mrs. Kennedy "understood me clearly" and

that she wrote to him and said she knew he had been "a comfort to Arthur." Mr. Manchester is certain, he says, that he helped "A Thousand Days" toward publication.

Mr. Manchester had been authorized by the Kennedys on March 26, 1964, to write an account of the assassination of President Kennedy. For the next 26 months, he says, he worked long and hard, and often in anguish.

He began his research in the offices of the Warren Commis-

sion, where he had access to the documents the commission used in its investigation of the assassination.

Later, he says, Chief Justice Earl Warren "rather cannily" asked him to read a first draft of the commission's report and to say, as a friend of the Kennedy's, that its findings were acceptable to the family. Mr. Manchester says he felt this would be improper.

## Saw Two Advantages

Furthermore, he says, he was not equipped to judge the report then. His own investigation was only beginning, and he wanted to explore the full sweep of the assassination, not simply the crime.

While he was intimidated by the thought that he might be competing with the commission, he says, he felt that he had two advantages over it.

The first was that he would be working alone. "The single eye sees," he writes, "what the rows of eyes miss." Of the second, he says:

"As I knew then, and as the nation has since discovered, the prestigious names of Earl Warren's panel did little except glitter; the long hours were put in by junior staff men . . . I believe I had more investigative experience than any of them."

Mr. Manchester says he had promised Mr. Warren that he wouldn't visit Texas until after the President had accepted the commission's report. When he finally got to Dallas, where President Kennedy died, he says, his connection with the Kennedys was of little help.

## Says He Got Little Help

In fact, he writes, Mrs. Kennedy failed to help him throughout the inquiry. "I can think of only three doors that she actually opened for me," he says, "none of them significant."

Nonetheless, Mr. Manchester says, he established a social rapport with both the Senator and Mrs. Kennedy. "After nine months and some gentle teasing" from Mrs. Kennedy, he writes, he began to call her Jackie.

Mr. Manchester says that he lived in a "state of continuous shock" for two years as he sought to recreate the death of President Kennedy. He speaks of enduring blow after blow, and he writes that "grief is hardest to bear when it cannot be shared."

Mr. Manchester says that during his research he became

a "reservoir of inmate confidences" that he was unable to tell anyone except the Kennedys, but that their staffs, particularly Mrs. Kennedy's, discouraged him from seeing them. He says he was forced to deal with intermediaries and that this "Byzantine labyrinth" led to Mrs. Kennedy's suit.

This withdrawal by the Kennedys, their failure to understand what he was doing, Mr. Manchester says, arose from the grief that left them unable to view the assassination rationally.

He cites a telegram the Senator sent to the book's editor at Harper & Row asking him to cancel publication and to tell Mr. Manchester about it.

"And indeed," Mr. Manchester says, "it is this sheer insanity that explains the Kennedy behavior throughout the controversy."

Nonetheless, Mr. Manchester indicates that he feels no bitterness toward the Kennedys.

A suspended Jefferson Parish (La.) official was scheduled to be arraigned in New Orleans Wednesday on perjury charges resulting from a grand jury investigation into an alleged New Orleans plot to assassinate the late President John F. Kennedy. Dean A. Andrews Jr., suspended as assistant district attorney after he was indicted last week, had previously told the Warren Commission that he had been asked to represent Lee Harvey Oswald after Oswald killed Mr. Kennedy.

3-21-67