

Garrison to Open

Feb 3, 1969 State Item

District Attorney Jim Garrison will personally make the state's opening statement to the jury in the trial of Clay L. Shaw, the States-Item learned today.

Garrison, whose investigation of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy led to the indictment of Shaw on charges of conspiring to kill the President, has made only one brief appearance so far in the 12-day-old trial.

But courthouse sources today indicated he will make a lengthy statement of the state's case as soon as the jury selection process is completed.

Jury selection continued to drag on today. A panel of 12 has been sworn in, but two alternates must still be picked.

JUDGE EDWARD A. HAGGERTY JR. summoned 150 jurors to appear this morning, but only 144 showed up. Of

these, 103 were quickly excused for medical reasons, fixed opinions or financial problems.

Questioning of the remaining 41 potential jurors began shortly before noon.

Thus far in the trial, most of the state's courtroom work has been done by assistant DA James Alcock, named by Garrison as chief prosecutor before the trial got under way.

ASKED TODAY IF GARRISON would make the opening statement, Alcock nodded affirmatively and said: "Yes, I believe so."

In court today for the first time was author Mark Lane, a leading critic of the Warren Commission which reported that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in killing

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Kennedy on Nov. 22, 1963. Garrison contends Shaw conspired with Oswald and others to kill the President.

LANE SAT BEHIND THE STATE'S table and conferred frequently with assistant DA Alvin Oser.

Courtroom observers expressed some hope that the two alternate jurors would be picked today, so that the opening statements by both state and defense could come tomorrow.

Each side has a peremptory challenge, by which it can reject a juror without giving a reason, for each of the alternates.

The state used one of its challenges Saturday, and will get no more until the first alternate is chosen.

GARRISON'S OPENING STATEMENT may answer the question which has been raised all through the trial: Will the state attempt to prove that the alleged conspiracy involving Shaw actually resulted in the death of Kennedy?

Under the state conspiracy law, the prosecution is only required to show a conspiracy involving Shaw existed, and that an overt act in furtherance of the object of the conspiracy was committed.

But Garrison, in subpoenaing former Gov. John Connally of Texas and other persons who were present in Dealey Plaza when Kennedy was shot, has indicated he intends to put the Warren Report on trial and challenge its version of what happened there.

LAST WEEK, FEDERAL JUDGE Charles E. Halleck Jr. of General Sessions Court in Washington gave Garrison until Wednesday to make clear his intentions, so Halleck can decide whether autopsy reports and photos on Kennedy are relevant to the Shaw case.

GARRISON IS SEEKING a court order for the record to be released, maintaining it would help back up his claim that Kennedy died in a crossfire, instead of being slain by Oswald alone.

Meanwhile, it was learned that officials in Houston have notified Garrison that Connally and his wife will testify as state witnesses.

The Connallys were riding in the car in which Kennedy was shot in Dallas. Garrison subpoenaed them last week.



—Associated Press photo.

CLAY SHAW WEARS A SMILE as he arrives for his third week in court on charges he conspired to murder President John F. Kennedy. Usually Shaw and his attorneys drive into Parish Prison next to the court but today he jokingly told newsmen "we had to catch the bus because we are getting poor."