

Shaw's Attorney Calls Russo Liar

F. Irvin Dymond, chief counsel for accused conspirator Clay L. Shaw, outlined the defense's position in his opening statement to the jury this afternoon in Judge Edward A. Haggerty's courtroom.

Dymond's statement, denying most of the allegations contained in the opening statement of District Attorney Jim Garrison, was brief in comparison to Garrison's.

Some of Dymond's remarks were interrupted by assistant district attorney James L. Alcock, who argued that Dymond was "going beyond the limits" of an opening statement.

DYMOND TOLD the 12-man jury that the defense would prove that the state's star witness, Perry Raymond Russo, was a "liar" and that Shaw had never known Lee Harvey Oswald and David Ferrie, who Garrison contends conspired with Shaw to kill President Kennedy.

Here is a resume of the first part of Dymond's statement:

Dymond said although the defense is not required to make an opening statement, "there are certain salient facts which must be brought out at this time."

Dymond said, "We are not here to defend the findings of the Warren Commission." He said the defense had "neither the inclination, the desire, nor the money to do so."

HE EXPLAINED it would be necessary to bring in about 25,000 witnesses. Dymond said the defense would prove not only that Shaw did not take part in a conspiracy but that Shaw "never laid eyes" on either Ferrie or Oswald.

He said the defense would strike at the core of the state's case, the alleged meeting between David Ferrie, Oswald and Shaw.

Referring to the reported meeting, Dymond said "this alleged meeting was never even conceived until after the death of Ferrie."

HE EXPLAINED THERE

were two courses of action for the defense to take:

1. To prove that Shaw was somewhere else at the time of the alleged meeting. He said this would be impossible because, he explained, never has the state seen fit to give the exact date of the alleged meeting.

"Moreover, Mr. Shaw would have to go back 3½ years to account for his whereabouts even if they did give a date."

2. The other alternative would be for the defense to prove that the person who said that Shaw was at the meeting lied when he said that.

"THE DEFENSE WILL prove that Perry Raymond Russo is a liar—a notoriety-seeking liar whose very name does not deserve to be mentioned among honest people."

At this time Dymond told the jurors he was going to give them a brief history of Perry Raymond Russo, at which time Alcock objected.

"Mr. Dymond is making an argument before the jury. He's going beyond the limits of an opening statement."

"I agree with you, Mr. Alcock," said Judge Haggerty and instructed Dymond not to present arguments before the jury.

DYMOND DENIED HE was arguing and Judge Haggerty ordered him to proceed.

He continued, "We will begin with Russo's first entrance into this case. Perry Raymond Russo wrote a letter the day after Dave Ferrie died, to the district attorney, said he knew David Ferrie and some of his friends.

"On Feb. 24, 1967," said Dymond, "Russo was interviewed by Bill Bankston, a

reporter for the Baton Rouge State-Times. He later told in a 45-minute interview with Bankston that he wanted to get down all he knew about the case.

"HE DID NOT mention Clay Shaw in this interview, nor a Clem Bertrand, nor any other of the principals in this case.

"We will show that after Bankston's story broke in the paper, that reporters swarmed on Russo at Baton Rouge. We will prove that in statements made to three reporters he did not mention anything about Clay Shaw, Ferrie or Oswald, the three principals alleged in this conspiracy.

"On Feb. 25, we will show that an assistant district attorney went to Baton Rouge to interview Russo, and this interview lasted 3½ hours.

"THE ASSISTANT district attorney, Mr. Andrew Sciambra, later returned to New Orleans and on Feb. 27 wrote a memo of 3,500 words reporting to Mr. Garrison the information he had gotten from Russo.

"We will show that nowhere in the report was there any mention of Clem Bertrand, Clay Shaw or any mention of any conspiracy evidence."