

Garrison Puts Warren Report, Shaw on Trial

District Attorney Claims He Will Prove Commission Wrong in Conspiracy Case

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NEW ORLEANS—Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison's opening statement at the Clay L. Shaw trial Thursday made it abundantly clear that Shaw has a codefendant: the Warren Commission.

Then, Garrison produced a quick succession of witnesses from rural Louisiana to support his attempt to convict both man and commission by proving President John F. Kennedy was the victim of a conspiracy.

Their testimony, when strung together, placed Shaw, David W. Ferrie and Lee Harvey Oswald together in a tiny Louisiana town in the late summer of 1963, two months before the assassination in Dallas.

Oswald is the man the commission found was the sole assassin, Ferrie is the man Garrison claims plotted the killing with Shaw and Oswald. Of the three, only Shaw is still living.

The strongest testimony came from Corrie L. Collins, a Congress of Racial Equality leader in 1963 in the hamlet of Clinton, 120 miles north of New Orleans.

While conducting a voter registration drive for Negroes there in either "late August or early September," Collins said he saw a black Cadillac pull up near the registrar of voters' office. It contained three men, one in the back seat and a driver and a passenger in front, he added.

Collins claimed he saw Oswald in back get out of the car and join a long line of Negroes waiting to register. Collins pointed to Shaw when asked by Asst. Dist. Atty. Andrew Sciambra whether he saw the driver of the car in the courtroom. Then he identified the passenger in front as Ferrie.

An earlier witness was Edwin Lee McGehee, a barber in the village of

Jackson, 13 miles from Clinton, the site of the Jackson State Hospital.

McGehee said that the man he identified as Oswald had entered his shop a few days before the vote drive in Clinton and that he had cut the stranger's hair. The man asked about the possibility of a job at the Jackson Hospital and McGehee said he referred him to Reeves Morgan, then a state representative and a guard at the hospital.

He said, though he recognized a picture of Oswald after the assassination, he had never reported the incident to a federal agency because: "They never asked me."

Morgan testified that "a fellow appeared at my home and introduced himself to me as Oswald. I didn't know him more but as Lee Oswald . . . I told him I could not help him get a job. He was not one of my constituents."

Morgan said he had suggested "procedures" by which his visitor might get a hospital job, including registering as a voter in the parish (county).

Another witness, John Manchester, Clinton town marshal, testified that at the request of the registrar of voters he had "checked out" one of several "strange" cars in town on a day in late August or early September: a black Cadillac.

The Cadillac's driver, he said, identified himself as a "representative of the International Trade Mart in New Orleans." Shaw formerly was director of the Mart.

"Do you see that man in the room today?" Sciambra asked him.

"Yes, sir," Manchester

Negroes. Later he identified the second white man as Oswald.

Sometime after 3 p.m. he said, Oswald finally moved along the registration line into his office and produced a U.S. Navy I.D. card bearing the name "Lee H. Oswald" and a New Orleans address.

Palmer could not positively identify Shaw as the driver, but did identify the man in the front passenger seat as Ferrie.

Morgan said that after the assassination he called the FBI about seeing Oswald, but never heard again from the agency. Manchester and Palmer said they reported what they had experienced to a state police lieutenant.

Garrison's opening

statement lasted 45 minutes and he delivered it in a quiet but emphatic baritone. He spoke calmly and deliberately into a microphone.

Underlining his determination to indict the Warren Commission Report, he said:

"We will offer evidence concerning the assassination in Dealey Plaza in Dallas because it confirms the existence of a conspiracy and because it confirms the significance and relevance of planning which occurred in New Orleans."

In outlining what the state intends to prove, Garrison said he would establish that "the President's fatal shot was received from the front, that he was thrown backward not forward from the force of this fatal shot."

The Warren Commission held the shots which killed Kennedy and wounded former Texas Gov. John Connally were fired by Oswald from behind the presidential limousine, from a window in the Texas Book Depository.

Garrison also said the state would establish that the shooting came from a number of directions and, that, therefore, the President was murdered, not by a lone individual behind him but as a result of a conspiracy to kill him."

said pointing toward Shaw.

When Shaw's chief counsel, F. Irwin Dymond, asked Manchester how he could recall so clearly after more than five years, Manchester replied: "In my job, I don't forget faces."

Henry E. Palmer of Jackson, registrar of voters for East Feliciana Parish, testified that on the same day he saw a black Cadillac parked near his office.

He said when he went out for a coffee break at midmorning he passed one of two white men waiting to register in a long line of



BEFORE COURT SESSION—New Orleans Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison relaxing in his office. He gave opening statement Thursday in trial of Clay L. Shaw, charged with conspiracy in death of John F. Kennedy.
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