

Shaw Trial at Stage of Closing Arguments

Jury Deliberations Next; Expert Links
Signatures of Defendant and 'Bertrand'

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Clay L. Shaw's trial on a charge of conspiring to assassinate President John F. Kennedy reached the closing argument stage Friday, the final step before the 12-man jury begins deliberating.

The 66th and last witness in the trial's 33rd day was a handwriting expert who said it was "highly probable" that Shaw signed the name Clay Bertrand in a guest register.

Shaw, a 55-year-old retired New Orleans businessman, took the stand Thursday and swore he was innocent.

Conviction would mean 1-to-20 years in prison for Shaw, who was arrested and charged exactly two years ago—March 1, 1967. Under Louisiana law, the jury's verdict, either to acquit or convict must be by at least a 9-3 margin.

Signatures Compared

Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison, who showed up only a few other times in the courtroom, questioned the handwriting expert, Elizabeth McCarthy of Boston.

She testified that she had compared Shaw's signature with the signature "Clay Bertrand," which the state contends was Shaw's alias in conspiring with Lee Harvey Oswald and David W. Ferrie, both now dead. The Warren Commission said Oswald

was the lone assassin and there was no credible evidence of conspiracy.

Garrison asked Mrs. McCarthy if she had reached a conclusion. She said, "Yes."

Question. Would you state your conclusion?

Answer. It's my opinion that it is highly probable that Clay Shaw signed the name Clay Bertrand.

Testimony Clashes

Her testimony clashed with that of a defense witness, an FBI expert, who had testified that Shaw positively did not sign the "Bertrand" name in a New Orleans airport VIP guest register in 1967.

Two other rebuttal witnesses testified for the state Friday.

Dr. John M. Nichols, a University of Kansas pathologist, said it would have been impossible for a bullet to pass through Mr. Kennedy's neck, as a defense witness said, without fracturing a bone.

Army pathologist Col. Pierre A. Finck, a member of the autopsy team, had said X rays showed no bones were hit by the bullet, one of two that struck Mr. Kennedy.

Nichols also challenged the autopsy team's failure to dissect the throat tract to ascertain the path of the bullet. He said this should have been done.