

WAFH
3/2/69

Garrison May Face Trial Probe

From Herald-Examiner Wire Services

NEW ORLEANS — Clay L. Shaw, freed from what he called a "horrifying nightmare-like experience," said Saturday Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison used him as a pawn for two years as a way to attack the Warren Commission report.

The 12-man jury declared Shaw, 55, not guilty of charges of plotting the death of President John F. Kennedy after only 54 minutes of deliberation early Saturday. The trial lasted 34 days.

The 6-foot-4, white-haired defendant, said his arrest two years ago and his long trial had financially ruined him and would force him to end his retirement and seek some kind of work. He was formerly head of the International Trade Mart in New Orleans.

Though they would not say so specifically, Shaw and his attorneys hinted at lawsuits against some of the persons who brought the assassination charge against him.

"This is by no means the end of the matter," Shaw said.

Edward Wegmann, one of Shaw's attorneys, when asked about possible suits, said "we have it under consideration."

In Detroit, meanwhile, the president of the American Bar Association (ABA) said Saturday the association would recommend a probe of Garrison and the Clay Shaw conspiracy trial, the Detroit News reported.

William T. Gossett of Detroit was quoted in the Sunday editions of the News as saying the ABA will ask the Louisiana Bar Association (LBA) to consider disciplinary action against Garrison as a result of the trial in which Shaw was found innocent of charges he plotted to kill President Kennedy.

But later Gossett said he was under the impression his remarks to News staff reporter Doug Bradford were off-the-record. He said the ABA board would have to vote as a group

on the matter. Gossett pointed out that lawyers of diverse backgrounds and opinions are members of the ABA and unanimous agreement would probably be impossible.

Garrison's motives in bringing Shaw to trial must be investigated by the LBA, Gossett told the News. The ABA president said he was sure there was "a feeling of outrage" among people in Louisiana over what appeared to be an unjustified attack on Shaw.

"I'm sure that attorneys there question whether the indictment was properly founded. My personal opinion is that they will be compelled to investigate," Gossett said.

Gossett said trials such as Shaw's "tend to create doubt about our judicial process ... our system of jurisprudence."

"I don't know what led Garrison to act in the Shaw case," Gossett commented. He may have had unreliable information.

"Certainly his principal witness seemed to be wholly unreliable," said Gossett referring to Perry Russo.

The ABA head said Shaw could sue for damages: "He has had to pay attorney fees, he has lost two years of his life preparing for his trial ... he has had to endure the anxiety."

Shaw said that he "feels



Clay Shaw

wonderful, of course, but this was not unexpected."

"Two years ago today I was arrested. Two years ago tomorrow I said I would be vindicated," he said.

Shaw said his case proved that the district attorney has an awesome amount of power which can be at times abused. He said he wondered many times since his arrest how a person with fewer friends and less money would be able to fight such a charge.

"The thought of this was rarely absent from my mind," Shaw said.

Garrison had charged Shaw with conspiring here with Lee Harvey Oswald and David W.

Ferrie to assassinate President Kennedy.

Shaw said he had to agree with Garrison's warnings about the danger of extreme power. The district attorney in his closing statement to the jury late Friday accused the federal government of using its power to cover up the truth about the Kennedy assassination.

"Much of what he said is quite true but justice has not just happened," Shaw said. "He (Garrison) mixed up the cast of characters."

He also expressed concern about a group of New Orleans businessmen who contributed to the prosecution's financial fund. Shaw said this added to the imbalance of power between the prosecution and the defense.

Shaw said he still agrees with the Warren Commission report in general but added there are "bound to be some loose ends" in such a huge undertaking.

Shaw said he intended to do some writing, "quite possibly" —based on his experiences.

"I'm just going to go back and try to pick up the strings of my life," Shaw said.

He said he was confident of acquittal through his two-year ordeal but admitted to some anxious moments. END