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showers
today &
tomorrow, 40s.

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SUNRISE
TOMORROW: 4:07 AM

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New Orleans's Mystery Witness:

'I HEARD THEM PLOTTING TO KILL KENNEDY'

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Witness Links

By **CARL J. PELLECK**

New York Post Correspondent

New Orleans, March 14—District Attorney Garrison today produced his mystery witness—a 25-year-old insurance man who said he attended a meeting in which the assassination of President Kennedy was plotted.

The witness, Perry Raymond Russo, a good-looking black-haired resident of nearby Baton Rouge, La., said that Clay L. Shaw was one of the three men who participated in the plotting.

Russo is a former law student now employed by the Equitable Life Insurance Co.

He said he had known David Ferrie since 1960. Russo said after a party in Ferrie's home in September, 1963, he remained behind with two other guests whom he described as Leon Oswald—he identified him as Lee Harvey Oswald from photographs—and Shaw, who he identified dramatically in court when Garrison directed him to place his hand over the head of the man who was present at the meeting.

Russo said Shaw was introduced to him as Clem Bertrand.

He said after the party, which was attended by eight to 10 people, had ended, the three named by Russo and himself remained behind.

"David Ferrie took the initiative of the conversation. Something was said about my being present," he said, "He (Ferrie) spoke to both Mr. Bertrand and Mr. Oswald. He said the assassination attempt would have to use diversionary tactics."

Russo then formed a triangle with his hands to explain the diversionary technique, saying that one or two men would fire diversionary shots and the third would shoot the "direct shot."

"If there were three people, one would have to be sacrificed," Russo testified.

Russo described Ferrie as the pilot in the plot. He quoted the former airlines pilot as saying they would go to Mexico and refuel "and on to Brazil and then to Cuba."

Russo said Bertrand interrupted to say that as soon as the shot was fired, "the world would know about it," and they would not be able to get a plane out of Cuba.

Russo said he first met Ferrie—who was found dead in bed Feb. 22—and had known him "all the way to 1964."

Garrison asked Russo to tell the court the background of the assassination.

"I had occasion to have a friend who was in the Civil Air Patrol," Russo said.

At this point, Shaw's attor-

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neys objected on grounds the testimony was hearsay.

A long legal debate followed.

Russo testified that he knew Bertrand as "Clem Bertrand," not Clay Bertrand. Garrison had alleged that Clay Bertrand was an alias used by Shaw.

A New Orleans lawyer, Dean Andrews Jr., told the Warren Commission that a "Clay Bertrand" telephoned him after the assassination and asked him to represent Oswald, named by the commission as the lone assassin of Kennedy.

Ferrie offered an alternative plan in which, according to Russo, "Mr. Ferrie and Mr. Bertrand would have to be in the public eye on the day of the assassination."

Garrison's appearance today was the first time he had participated in the court proceedings, calling out his questions in a booming voice.

Russo, 5-feet-8, with an Ivy League haircut and wearing a dark suit, was called after a morning recess ended.

Garrison told him to relax, speak clearly and give his background.

Russo said he was with Equitable, had received a bachelor's degree from Loyola University and then attended Tulane Uni-

Pair to Oswald



Associated Press Wirephoto

Clay Shaw (l) arrives at New Orleans Court house today with his attorney, Edward Wegmann.

iversity Law School. He didn't graduate from the latter. He said he was a New Orleans native.

Russo said in 1960 a friend of his who had had family trouble got him to intercode, and through this friend he met Ferrie.

As a result of the meeting with Ferrie, Russo said he went to a Civil Air Patrol meeting in the Kenner area north of New Orleans International Airport.

After a CAP meeting, Ferrie gave a demonstration of his hypnotic ability in his apartment near Kenner, Russo testified.

"He hypnotized one of the boys, then took a pin and stuck it in the boy's hand," Russo said. "I went over and felt the tendon. There was movement, but afterward the boy remembered what happened but he had no recollection of pain."

Russo said he later alienated his friend from Ferrie.

"Another time, we met Dave

(Ferrie) on Bourbon St. and he was in pursuit of the boy. We convinced the boy not to have anything to do with Dave," said Russo. "Dave got very angry."

Russo said he saw Ferrie from time to time, exchanged visits from house to house in parts of 1962 and 1963.

Each would bring friends on some of the visits, Russo said.

"Dave Ferrie and I had an arrangement to come to each other's house," said Russo.

As the hearing opened, the prosecution announced it would call five witnesses to testify at the inquiry into murder-conspiracy charges brought against Clay L. Shaw, a wealthy retired local businessman who was arrested March 1.

Yet Shaw's name was never mentioned in court during all the time the first three witnesses were on the stand, neither by the witnesses themselves, two New Orleans policemen and a coroner's photographer, nor by any of the attorneys present.

Most of the testimony centered on photographs produced by both prosecution and defense staffs. Garrison's office entered nine photographs, three of them showing Lee Harvey Oswald on a main street on Aug. 9, 1963.

The defense introduced 15 photos and one sketch, all of Ferrie's apartment.

Sheriff Heyd said 25 deputies were assigned to protecting Shaw, and electronic devices would scan those entering the courtroom for recording devices and guns.

All newspapers covering the hearings have been accredited in advance, reporters photographed and reserved seats assigned.

As several hundred spectators lined courthouse corridors and the street outside today awaiting the start of the hearing, Heyd said:

"We don't want a Jack Ruby case happening here. We have had no rumbles but we aren't taking any chances."