

'Plot' Witness Had Psychiatric Care

By CARL J. PELLECK

New York Post Correspondent

New Orleans, March 15—District Attorney Garrison's star "assassination plot" witness admitted today that he had been under psychiatric care for 1½ to 2 years.

But the witness, Perry Raymond Russo, testified that he had not regularly seen a psychiatrist since 1960, though he had made occasional visits to one since then.

Russo was questioned by defense attorney Irvin Dymond on his testimony yesterday that he had heard Lee Oswald, David W. Ferrie and Clay K. Shaw discuss in September, 1963 a plot to kill President Kennedy.

Shaw, the only one of the three still living, has been accused by Garrison of conspiracy in the murder plot.

Russo, a life insurance agent, took the stand amid the strictest of security precautions. Detectives searched all males entering the hearing and a police-woman looked in the purses of the women visitors.

'Believe in God?'

Dymond's first question caught the witness by surprise.

"Russo, do you believe in God?" the attorney asked.

"Sir?" the witness replied.

The question was repeated and Russo said his answer "would depend on the definition."

"I define God as the entity of the universe," he added.

Changed Story

Russo was reported to have told an entirely different story three weeks ago from the one he related on the witness stand yesterday. In the earlier version, he denied ever having seen Oswald.

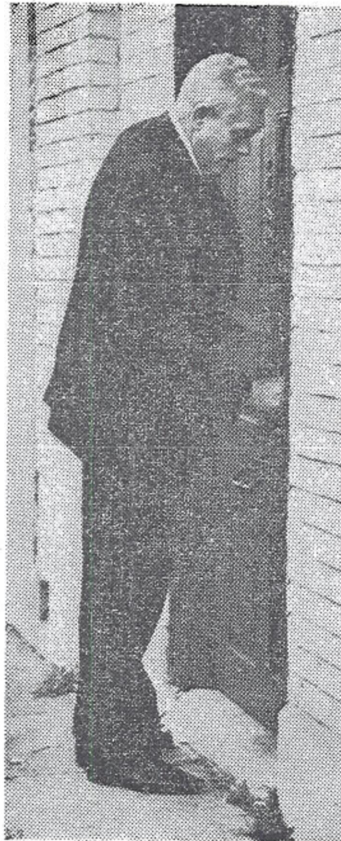
Dymond began his cross-examination with an attempt to shake Russo's credibility. The witness evaded a series of questions on whether he considered it a sin to lie, but at one point said: "I promise evrybody I'm telling the truth."

Questioned further about his beliefs, he said: "I don't know that mine are any more peculiar than anyone else's."

Russo said he had been under psychiatric care for 18 months to two years starting about the middle of 1959, and had since had irregular consultations, including one in 1963 when his mother died.

He said he visited a psychiatrist "when I needed to talk to someone."

"The last time I can remem-



Associated Press Wirephotos

Clay Shaw, charged with conspiracy in the assassination of President Kennedy, stops by his New Orleans apartment to pick up the mail before heading for court where the hearing resumed today.

ber going was around October or September of 1965," he said. "I'm guessing at that."

Dymond asked him if he could state positively that he had not consulted a psychiatrist this year. The witness replied: "I've talked with many doctors at [Louisiana State University] and we talked about social things and we talked about personal things."

Threat Arrest

Russo appeared much calmer than yesterday when he related details of the alleged conspiracy. Shaw sat erect as usual, his jaws clenched.

Eight plainclothes officers were stationed about the court-

room for security purposes.

The augmented guard was ordered after an ex-convict from Michigan was arrested and charged with making threatening phone calls about the case, and after a loaded .22 revolver was found behind the wheel of a truck in a parking lot across the street. There was no apparent connection between the two incidents.

The ex-convict **James R. Liscombe** attracted the attention of police yesterday when he was shoving people and creating a disturbance on the courthouse steps.

Sheriff Louis Heyd said Liscombe was found to have made calls to Michigan State Prison authorities under whom he had served time telling them that he "intended to make national headlines in New Orleans."

Liscombe now is a musician in a Bourbon St. nightclub.

The loaded revolver was found in the parking lot used by Shaw and his attorneys. It apparently had been carefully concealed there, and not merely thrown into the trunk, police said.

Dymond was cut off after his opening questions about Russo's belief in God by Judge Bernard J. Bagert, who told him, "This is not a catechism class." The attorney then began questioning the witness about his family and background.

Asked About Granny

When the prosecution objected vigorously to a long series of questions about Russo's 90-year-old grandmother, Dymond said: "We're in a position here to furnish to the court contradictory statements made by the witness . . . and certainly the credibility of the witness is vital to this defense."

The witness testified he had met Ferrie "around 1960." He said a friend of his, Al Landry, had run away from home and moved in with Ferrie and that Landry's mother had asked him to persuade him to return.

"If anyone can alienate Al from Dave, I could," Russo said.

N.Y. Post
3/15/67