

STATEMENTS OF 2 ON 'PLOT' DOUBTED

N.B.C. Says Lie Detectors Weaken Garrison's Case

By ROBERT E. DALLOS

The National Broadcasting Company said last night it had learned that lie-detector tests had cast grave doubt on the testimony of two key witnesses in District Attorney Jim Garrison's investigation into the assassination of President Kennedy.

The two witnesses, Vernon Bundy, a 29-year-old narcotics addict, and Perry Raymond Russo, 26, an insurance salesman, had testified to a three-judge panel that Clay L. Shaw, using the name Clay Bertrand, had conspired to assassinate President Kennedy.

It was on this testimony that the judges decided that there was sufficient evidence to try the retired New Orleans businessman.

The Warren Commission found that Lee Harvey Oswald, acting alone, killed Mr. Kennedy.

'Bundy was Lying'

On an N.B.C. program, entitled "The J.F.K. Conspiracy: The Case of Jim Garrison," Frank McGee, a network reporter, said the lie-detector test on Mr. Bundy before his testimony "indicated that Bundy was lying."

According to Mr. McGee, "Assistant District Attorney Charles Ward was informed of this." Then, he continued:

"Ward went to Garrison. He told Garrison that in view of the outcome of the lie-detector test, the indication that Bundy was lying, Bundy should not be allowed to testify.

"Despite this, Bundy was put on the witness stand by Garrison. He testified against Shaw. Partly as a result of that testimony, Shaw was held for trial."

Mr. McGee also said that Mr. Garrison had based his case on proving Clay Shaw is Clay, or Clem, Bertrand.

"Clay, or Clem, Bertrand does exist," he said. But, he said, "Clem Bertrand is not his real name. It is a pseudonym used by a homosexual in New Orleans. For his protection we will not disclose the real name of the man known as Clem Bertrand. His real name has

been given to the Department of Justice. He is not Clay Shaw."

Mr. McGee called Russo's testimony even more important than Bundy's. "He was in fact, vital to Garrison's case," he said.

Mr. McGee declared:

"Russo's answers to a series of questions indicate, in the language of the polygraph operator, deception-criteria. He was asked if he knew Lee Harvey Oswald. His 'yes' answer to both of these questions indicated deception-criteria."

"Russo's general reaction to this series of questions led the polygraph operator to suspect a psychopathic personality. At least one investigator and one assistant district attorney in Garrison's office was present. The list of questions was taken away from the polygraph operator. He was told not to say anything."

Mr. McGee said that despite this Russo was put on the stand six days later as the chief witness against Clay Shaw.

"The core of his testimony was his description of a party sometime in September, 1963," Mr. McGee noted. "He said [David W.] Ferrie, Oswald and Shaw were there."

In a statement issued last night Mr. Garrison lashed out at the network for what he called its "effort to torpedo the state's case." He also said an N.B.C. reporter had offered to pay Russo's expenses to leave Louisiana.

"Although the guise of news coverage has been used as the basis for the initial contact," Mr. Garrison charged, "the National Broadcasting Company's agents have made no secret of the fact that the objective is to bring an end to the investigation into the facts of the assassination."

TV Reporter Named

Mr. Garrison charged that Walter Sheridan, an N. B. C. reporter, suggested to Russo, "an important eyewitness for the State of Louisiana," that if he wanted to move to California before the trial N. B. C. would pay all of his expenses.

"Mr. Sheridan told Russo, according to the district attorney, 'that the National Broadcasting Company would guarantee to protect him from an attempt by our office to extradite him from California back to Louisiana.'"

William R. McAndrew, president of N. B. C. news, vehemently denied the Garrison charges last night.

"Sheridan had no authority to do that," he said. "It had never been suggested."

Mr. McAndrew added that N.B.C. was "not interjecting itself into the legal proceedings," as Mr. Garrison had

charged.

"We are doing a definitive reporting job," he declared.

The program also carried statements by Miguel Torres, a one-time heroin addict, and John Cancler, a convicted burglar, that Bundy told them he had lied. Both Torres and Cancler are now in jail.

Torres said Bundy had told him that he had been promised a reduction of a five-year probation sentence if he testified that he saw Mr. Shaw talking to Oswald on the shore of Lake Pontchartrain in the summer of 1963.