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Says He Overheard Plot on JFK

Witness Faces Grilling

NEW ORLEANS, March 15 (UPI) — An insurance salesman who linked a prominent business executive with a plot to kill President Kennedy today faced cross-examination by defense attorneys.

Perry R. Russo, of Baton Rouge, La., testified during a preliminary hearing yesterday that he heard Clay L. Shaw, Lee Harvey Oswald and pilot David W. Ferrie conspire to kill the President.

The testimony came on the opening day of a hearing to determine if Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison has sufficient evidence to hold and try Mr. Shaw on the conspiracy charge.

'INFORMER'

Mr. Russo apparently was the "confidential informer" Mr. Garrison said sat in on the purported assassination plot late in the summer of 1963 in New Orleans.

He said he learned of the plot after a party in Mr. Ferrie's apartment in mid-September, 1963.

At the time of the alleged assassination plot, he said, he was a college student in New Orleans. He said he met Mr. Ferrie in 1960 and visited him several times in New Orleans.

Defense Attorney F. Irvin Dymond asked the three-judge panel presiding over the hearing to subpoena personal and academic records relating to Mr. Russo.

Records from Tulane and Loyola Universities and Equitable Life Assurance Society, where Mr. Russo worked, were asked for about mid-afternoon yesterday. The court then recessed until today so the records could be obtained.

Mr. Russo testified he saw Oswald, Mr. Ferrie and Mr. Shaw, whom he said he knew as "Clem Bertrand," on one occasion — the party at which Mr. Ferrie discussed assassination. He also said he saw Oswald once in Mr. Ferrie's apartment cleaning a bolt action rifle.

On the subject of the party and what was discussed, Mr. Russo testified:

• Eight or 10 persons were there, but later in the night it narrowed down to Russo, Ferrie, Oswald and "Clem



Mr. Shaw, after the hearing.

Bertrand." He pointed out Shaw in the courtroom as "Bertrand."

• Ferrie told Shaw and Oswald that an attempt on the President's life should involve two or three persons, one or two of them to create a diversion, and the third "a good shot."

• Ferrie said one of the assassins would have to be sacrificed and the others should be "in the public eye" on the day of the assassination.

• Ferrie pointed out he was a pilot and it might be possible to escape to Mexico and then to Brazil or even Cuba after the shooting.

• Ferrie discussed "triangulation of cross-fire" and similar ballistics subjects in detail.

Mr. Russo said Mr. Ferrie was generally considered the leader of the group and was obsessed with President Kennedy.

"At his (Mr. Ferrie's) apartment, I saw clippings of the President and his picture," Mr. Russo said. "There was always much talk and deliberation."

Only Mr. Shaw, of the alleged conspirators, is still alive. Oswald was killed by Jack Ruby two days after the assassination and Mr. Ferrie died in New Orleans of a brain hemorrhage Feb. 22.

Mr. Shaw's lawyers objected



—UPI Photo
Witness Perry Russo, above, yesterday identified Clay Shaw as one of the three men he heard plotting to kill President John Kennedy.

to the testimony on the grounds it was all hearsay.

Mr. Russo also said he saw Oswald, whom he knew as "Leon Oswald," four times in New Orleans in the months before Mr. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas Nov. 22, 1963.

"He did not take a liking to me," Russo said. "The first time I was introduced to Leon

Oswald, he made a crack about not wanting me to be there."

Last night, however, a New Orleans TV station broadcast an interview with Russo made just before Ferrie's death.

"I never heard of Oswald . . . until the assassination," Mr. Russo said in the interview. He also said that Ferrie never mentioned Oswald's name.