

NBC Report On Russo Is Disputed

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An investigator for New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison contended yesterday that a "lie detector" test given their star witness was merely inconclusive.

The National Broadcasting Co. said in an hour-long television documentary Monday on the Garrison probe into the Kennedy assassination that the test administered to the witness, Perry Russo, indicated "deception criteria." Russo's reactions, NBC added, led the polygraph operator "to suspect a psychopathic personality."

In New Orleans, the Associated Press reported Garrison's office took this as a charge that Russo failed the test. Investigator Leonard Gurchich said this was untrue. He said the test foundered because Russo was "highly nervous."

Both versions, it appeared, were accurate as far as they went. Russo told The Washington Post last week that he had started to take a polygraph test, but said it was cut short because the operator "couldn't establish a norm" for his answers.

"I don't know why," Russo said. "Maybe it was my fault."

In any event, it was learned, the polygraph operator reported to Garrison's men that Russo's responses were tracing an erratic pattern—or "deception criteria"—on the machine. The examiner said he could not conclude whether Russo was telling the truth without questioning him about the reasons

for the emotional responses the machine was recording.

Garrison's aides never let the test get that far. Russo said he thought another attempt would be made later, but none was. Garrison's office did not explain why.

The abortive test was given Russo on March 8, six days

before he took the witness stand at a preliminary hearing and testified that he heard retired businessman Clay L. Shaw plotting to assassinate the President with now-dead pilot David W. Ferrie and Lee Harvey Oswald, who the Warren Commission said was the lone assassin.