WITNESS DETAILS 'PLOT' ON KENNEDY

Says He Heard Oswald and 3 Plan Assassination

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NEW ORLEANS, March 14—A life insurance agent who once denied that he had ever met Lee Harvy Oswald prior to the assassination of President Kennedy testified today that he had heard Oswald and two New Orleans men plot the assassination.

Then the witness, Perry Raymond Russo, an agent for the Equitable Life Assurance Society, left his chair in court and held his hand above the head of Clay L. Shaw to point him out as one of the participants in the alleged conspiracy.

Mr. Shaw, a retired New Orleans business executive, was arrested by District Attorney Jim Harrison on March 1 and accused of—but not formally charged with—helping to plot Mr. Kennedy's assassination.

A third conspirator, according to Mr. Russo, was David W. Ferrie, a former airline pilot who was found dead in bed here on Feb. 22.

Mr. Russo said he saw Mr. Shaw and Oswald together at Mr. Ferrie's apartment in New Orleans on three occasions in September of 1963. He said that on one occasion they carried on a detailed discussion of plans and alternate plans for assassinating President Kennedy.

They talked, he said, of "using diversionary tactics," of an "escape" route by airplane, of "selecting a kind of scapegoat" to draw attention from the real assassins and of "triangulation" —shots from three directions.

Interviewed by TV Man

On Feb. 24 Mr. Russo had said in a recorded interview with Al Crouch, news director of television station WBRZ-TV in Baton Rouge, that he had never met Oswald. The tapes of the interview are in the possession of the television station.

In the interview he said he met Mr. Ferrie in 1962 through a mutual friend, Al Landry.

"Did he [Ferrie] ever say [that] he knew Lee Harvey Oswald?" Mr. Crouch asked.

"No," Mr. Russo replied.

"Had you ever heard of Lee Harvey Oswald before the assassination?"

"No," Mr. Russo said.

In an interview with The Morning Advocate in Baton Rouge on Feb. 24, Mr. Russo did not mention Oswald but said he had once heard Mr. Ferrie say that "we will get him [President Kennedy] and it won't be long.

He also told the paper, according to its news article, that he first met Mr. Ferrie 18 months before the Kennedy assassination, which would have been in mid-1962.

In court today he said he first met Mr. Ferrie about 1960.

'Some Sort of Party'

District Attorney Garrison, making his third official appearance in a courtroom since assuming office five years ago, called Mr. Russo to testify before a three-judge panel today. He questioned the witness for more than three hours.

Mr. Russo gave his age as 25 and said he had graduated from high school and from Loyola University in New Orleans and had completed a year of law school.

Then he told how he visited Mr. Ferrie's apartment on Louisiana Avenue Parkway here one night in September, 1963, and found "some sort of party in progress."

The party, with about eight people, was soon over, he said, and he, Mr. Ferrie, a man he had met previously and knew as "Leon Oswald" and another man who called himself "Clem Bertrand" were left behind in the apartment.

At Mr. Garrison's request, Mr. Russo then identified Lee Harvey Oswald from a photograph as "Leon Oswald" and pointed out Mr. Shaw in the courtroom as the man he said he had known as "Clem Bertrand."

He said the three men began talking over plans and alternate plans for killing President Kennedy.

"Dave Ferrie," he testified, "took the initiative in the conversation. He paced back and forth and was talking.

"He said the assassination would have to use diversionary tactics.

"He said three people, at the very least two, would have to be there and another man would have to be a kind of scapegoat.

"If there were only two people," he continued, "then definitely one would have to be the scapegoat."

"Did he mention the phrase triangulation of cross-fire?" Mr. Garrison asked.

Mr. Russo said he did.

Tells of 2 Proposals

Mr. Russo said Mr. Ferrie had made it clear that he had "worked up two proposals" for escaping soon after the assassination.

One involved flying to Mexico and Brazil and then perhaps to Cuba, he said, and the other involved going directly to Cuba.

According to Mr. Russo, Mr. Ferrie thought there might be danger in both plans—that they could be shot down going directly into Cuba, and that they might be picked up by Mexican authorities if they stopped in Mexico to refuel.

"Bertrand," Mr. Russo said, "offered an alternate solution on the day of the assassination —making sure they [the conspirators] had been at a certain place at a certain time."

At one point in the discussion, Mr. Russo said, Oswald told Bertrand to "shut up and leave him [Ferrie] alone—he knows what he's talking about, he's been a pilot."

"But Bertrand said as far as he was concerned Dave [Mr. Ferrie] was a washed-up pilot," Mr. Russo continued.

Later in the month of September, Mr. Russo said, he visited Mr. Ferrie's apartment again and found him "wearing baggy pants and a general's hat" and Oswald "half-shaved—there was three or four days' growth [of beard]."

He said Oswald was cleaning a rifle, which appeared to have a "bolt action" and a "hunting sight."

At this point, Mr. Garrison introduced a rifle that he identified only as "Exhibit S-14" and asked Mr. Russo to tell him how it differed from the rifle Oswald was cleaning.

Mr. Russo said Oswald's rifle appeared to have a "straight" telescopic sight, whereas the rifle Mr. Garrison exhibited was

Associated Press Wirephoto

TELLS OF PLOT: Perry Raymond Russo outside hearing room. He said he heard three men plot to kill President Kennedy.

bulbous at one end.

Near the end of his testimony, Mr. Russo said Mr. Garrison's investigators took him to Mr. Shaw's apartment on Dauphine Street one night in late February and had him wait outside in a car for about two hours to get a look at Mr. Shaw if he came out of the house and determine whether he was "Clem Bertrand."

Mr. Russo testified that Mr. Shaw came out of the house briefly and that he immediately recognized him.

"I said he was the man—I am sure of it," he said.

"I asked," he went on, "if I could go to his [Mr. Shaw's] house and impersonate a Mutual of Omaha [insurance] man, which I did with the help of a member of your [Mr. Garrison's] staff."

"He said he was covered adequately as far as he thought. I was absolutely sure I had seen him before at Dave Ferrie's apartment."