Russo Could Fool Truth Drug—Doc

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New Orleans, March 17—A doctor testified he knew the state's star witness in the Kennedy assassination 'plot' hearings for only an hour before giving him truth serum —and conceded that a subject's background must be well known for the test to be valid.

"It's quite possible for these people to fake this test," said New Orleans coroner Dr. Nicholas Chetta, who gave the drug to Perry Raymond Russo. "It's possible for them to lie," and "allude to fantasy."

Then Dr. Chetta, pressed by Irving Dymond, attorney for Clay Shaw, said he had known Russo for only an hour before administering the drug, sodium pentathol.

Russo, 25, has testified he heard Shaw and David Ferrie, now dead, plot with Lee Harvey Oswald to kill Kennedy.

Dr. Chetta's testimony came before the three-judge panel in a preliminary hearing into murder-conspiracy charges against Shaw, a retired business executive.

Doctor's Role

He said it was "up to the operator, the person who administers the test, to separate fact from fantasy" when using truth serum.

Later, he told Dymond: "I agree with you, I won't quibble with you. I only spent an hour with him, not a week or a month."

Dr. Chetta said he was present also when Russo was hypnotized by Esmond Fatter, a physician, on Feb. 28, March 2 and 12.

Dr. Fatter, who says he has a "family doctor's practice," testified only to the induction of Russo's hypnotic state.

"I helped him reach the trance state," said Dr. Fatter, later calling it a "regression. . . and in my opinion he regressed beautifully."

New Orleans DA Garrison yesterday decided not to place Russo back on the stand for re-direct examination, apparently ending his testimony.

The man who first mentioned "Clay Bertrand"—which Garrison says is an alias for Shaw—was indicted for perjury, meantime, by a grand jury also investigating the alleged assassination plot.

He is Dean Adams Andrews Jr., pudgy Asst. DA from nearby Jefferson Parish, who mentioned "Bertrand" in testimony before the Warren Commission.

Shaw has denied ever having known Oswald or Ferrie, a pilot who died by his own hand Feb. 22.

Russo's testimony that Oswald met with "co-plotters" in New Orleans in the "beginning of October," 1963, also brought a flat contradiction yesterday from Joseph A. Ball, former Warren Commission counsel.

"There's no question Oswald left New Orleans on Sept. 25 and never went back," Ball said in Los Angeles. "We can trace him day by day from then right up to the time of the assassination."

The charge against Andrews here yesterday apparently is based in part on his testimony before the Warren Commission on July 21, 1964.

He said he was in a hospital here recuperating from pneumonia when he received a call from "a voice I recognized as Clay Bertrand's."

Andrews testified that Bertrand "asked me if I would go to Dallas and Houston—I think —Dallas, I guess, wherever it was" to defend Oswald on the charge of killing Kennedy.

When the commission asked him further to identify Bertrand, he replied:

"I had seen Clay Bertrand once some time ago, probably a couple of years. He's the one who calls in behalf of gay kids normally, either to obtain bond or parole for them. I would assume he was the one that originally sent Oswald and the gay kids, these Mexicanos, to the office because I had never seen those people before at all. They were just walk-ins."

Andrews also testified that Oswald had visited his office from three to five times during the summer of 1963, mainly for the purpose of getting his Marine Corps discharge changed.

Asked if he had a picture in his mind of Bertrand Andrews answered:

"Oh, I ran up on that rat about six weeks ago and he spooked, ran in the street. I would have beat him with a chain if I had caught him."

He described Bertrand as 5-foot 8, weighing about 170 pounds with sandy hair, blue eyes and a ruddy complexion.

But the Warren Commission noted that an FBI report of an earlier interview with Andrews described Bertrand as being 6-foot 2.

The Warren Commission noted that the FBI, after continued discussions with Andrews, "came to the conclusion that Clay Bertrand was a figment of your imagination."

DEAN ANDREWS JR.
He named Bertrand.