RUSSO LINKS 2 AS ROOMMATES

Balto Sun - 3/16/67

Says Oswald, Ferrie Shared Room In September, '63

New Orleans, March 15 (AP)—The star witness in the assassination conspiracy case against Clay L. Shaw, testified today that Lee Harvey Oswald and David W. Ferrie were roommates at the time he heard them plotting with Shaw to kill President Kennedy.

Perry Raymond Russo, a 25-year-old Baton Rouge salesman, said he heard Oswald, Shaw and Ferrie conspiring in Ferrie's apartment in mid-September of 1963 about how to kill the President and make a getaway.

Under close cross-examination by F. Irving Dymond, one of Shaw's attorneys, Russo said he could not remember the exact date the alleged plotting took place.

Dymond asked if a man named Leyton Martens was Ferrie's roommate at the time.

"No, sir," Russo answered.

Q. What was the name of the roommate?

A. The roommate at the Louisiana avenue parkway apartment was Leon Oswald.

In earlier testimony, Russo identified pictures of Lee Harvey Oswald as those of the man he knew as Leon Oswald.

Russo said he saw Oswald at the apartment three or four times. Asked the last time he saw him there, Russo said, "in the middle of October or late September."

"Are you aware it is a documented fact that Oswald left New Orleans September 25 (1963) and in fact never returned?" Dymond said.

Charles Ward, an assistant to Jim Garrison, district attorney, shouted: "That has never been

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RUSSO SAYS 2 SHARED ROOM

Testifies That Oswald And Ferrie Lived Together

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proven in this court, your honor."

At that point, Dymond stood up with a book in his hand.

Presiding Judge Bernard J. Bagert exclaimed: "You're not going to introduce the Warren Commission report in this court at this time are you?"

"That's right, I am," Dymond said.

"You are wrong," Bagert said. "You are overruled."

The preliminary hearing, which began yesterday, is to determine if Garrison has sufficient evidence against Shaw to warrant a trial. Today's session adjourned late in the afternoon until 10 A.M. tomorrow.

In questioning aimed at impugning Russo's credibility as a witness, the defense established that Russo once was under psychiatric treatment.

Careful Probing

Probing carefully, F. Irving Dymond, one of Shaw's attorneys, drew from Russo testimony that he had consulted a psychiatrist for about two years, starting in 1959 when he was 18 years old.

"Whenever you were under great stress . . . you went to a psychiatrist. Is that correct?" Dymond asked.

"No sir. I wouldn't evaluate it that way," Russo replied.

"How would you evaluate it then?"

"Well, whenever I felt I wanted to talk about my past life."

Little Nervousness

Displaying little of his first day nervousness, Russo was questioned at length about his belief in God before presiding Judge Bernard Bagert cut off the questioning.

"This is not a catechism class," Bagert said. "Let's get on with the case."

The crossexamination brought several sharp exchanges between Dymond and the judges.

"Am I restricted in my examination of this witness as to credibility?" Dymond once exclaimed.

At another point, Dymond said: "We're entitled to know all about this man. We didn't even know he was going to be a witness until he was called into court. We have a right to find out about him."

Dymond entered legal exceptions when overruled by the court, laying the groundwork for a possible appeal at a later date.

Courtroom Jammed

The courtroom was again jammed with newsmen and spectators. Security precautions were tightened. All men entering were searched from shoe top to shoulder by sheriff's deputies. Women were only required to open their pocketbooks.

Shaw sat erect during the proceedings. He wore the same dark brown suit he had on yesterday when the hearing opened.

Dymon asked Russo if he was a student at Tulane at the time he met Ferrie.

A. I don't remember. It was either the first or second year, about 1960.

Q. How did you meet him?

A. Through Al Landry.

Russo explained that Landry had left home. Russo said he talked to Landry's parents and told them that if there was "anyone who can alienate Dave and Al, I felt I could."

Russo was asked if it was true that Ferrie once had threatened his life, as a result of "intervening with a friend."

A.—He wanted to talk to Al alone. I said no. Ferrie said, 'I'm going to get you.'

Q.—How do you interpret that remark now?

A.—Now I interpret it was not a threat on my life.

Q.—At the beginning of 1965 how did you feel?

A.—I no longer took it as a threat.

Dymond then asked if Russo had told television newsman Jim Kemp on February 24 that Ferrie threatened his life.

A.—Yes, I told him something to that effect.

Q.—Why did you tell Kemp that it was a threat against your life, if you now don't take it as a threat?

Q.—I took it as a threat at that time.

Seemed Confused

Russo blinked his eyes rapidly as he talked. Often he appeared not to understand the questions. The judge several times ordered him to give direct answers.

Dymond quizzed Russo about the party which the witness said took place the night he heard Ferrie, Oswald and Shaw plot to kill Kennedy.

Russo said the party took place in mid-September but he could not remember the exact date.

At one point he said he was taken to the party by a friend. Later he named a Sandra Moffett as "the girl I brought."

In his testimony yesterday, Russo had described what Ferrie, Shaw and Oswald were wearing. Dymond asked today:

"You were able to remember how they dressed. Can you explain why you can describe the dress of people at the party and can not even tell us who went there with you or at what time?"

S.—Because of the very nature of Dave Ferrie.

Q.—Please expalin.

A.—Dave Ferrie, to say the least, was a very interesting personality, prone to the spectacular. When I met his friends they were not normally dressed.

Q.—Do you consider a white shirt and a maroon sports jacket spectacular?

(When Russo was questioned by Garrison yesterday, he said Shaw—wom he said he knew as Clem Bertrand—wore a white shirt and a maroon jacket.)

A.—Dave Ferrie's apartment was in shambles, ashtrays cluttered with cigarettes. The scene was of chaos. This man (Shaw) dressed differently. He just didn't belong there by dress.