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NOT UNSHAVEN, BEATNIK TYPE

Oswald 'Plot' Probe Image Mystifies Ex-Acquaintances

By NEIL SANDERS

New Orleanians who knew Lee Harvey Oswald when he last lived here are mystified by the ill-kempt, unshaven picture drawn of him by witnesses in the Garrison investigation.

They remember the accused assassin of President John F. Kennedy as a neat dresser who was always clean shaven.

Perry Russo, Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison's star witness in the preliminary hearing for Clay Shaw, testified "Leon" Oswald was dirty and had a heavy beard when he saw him in David Ferrie's apartment in mid-September, 1963. At the time, Russo claims, Oswald, Shaw and Ferrie were plotting to kill the President. Ferrie died Feb. 22 and Shaw has been charged with conspiracy to murder Kennedy.

RUSSO SAID HE RECOGNIZED OSWALD as the man in Ferrie's apartment only after the district attorney's office touched up photographs of him by adding a five-day beard and disheveled hair.

But Oswald's landlady, Mrs. J. J. Garner of 4911 Magazine, said she saw Oswald several times during September and he was always clean shaven and neatly dressed.

"I never remember him needing a shave," she said. "He was always neat, certainly not sloppy."

Oswald, his wife, Marina, and their baby daughter June

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lived in Mrs. Garner's apartment at 4905 Magazine from early May to late September, 1963.

Mrs. Garner said the last time she saw Oswald was Sept. 22, three days before he left for Mexico City. As usual, she said, Oswald was tidy and well shaven.

"ALL OF THOSE PICTURES they had in the papers don't do him justice," she said. "In person, he was a nice looking guy."

Another state witness, Vernon Bundy, an admitted narcotics addict, testified that Oswald looked like a beatnik when he said he saw him talking with Shaw on the lakefront sometime in June or July, 1966.

"He was in pretty nasty shape, to tell you the truth," Bundy said. "He needed a shave . . . he needed a haircut."

But the owner of a garage next door to the coffee plant where Oswald worked said he saw him nearly every day during June and more than half of July and he never needed a shave.

"As a rule, he wore a clean T-shirt and khaki pants with creases like razor blades," said Adrian Thomas Alba, operator of the Crescent City Garage, 618 Magazine.

"I don't think he did enough work to get dirty. And he had such a light growth of hair on his face I don't honestly think he could grow a heavy beard."

OSWALD SPENT MANY WORKING HOURS in the garage talking with Alba about guns and reading hunting and fishing magazines. He spent so much time, in fact, that he was fired from his job at the coffee plant.

John R. Rachal, placement interviewer for the Louisiana Division of Employment Security, talked to Oswald on two occasions during 1963. His impressions:

"I recall that Oswald was neatly dressed with a suit, dress shirt and tie on the occasion of our initial interview (April 26). On July 22, 1963, he was more casually dressed."

Could it be that Garrison's witnesses and the landlady, garageman and interviewer are not talking about the same man?

(A five-part series detailing the life of Lee Harvey Oswald during his stay in New Orleans between April and September, 1963, will begin Monday in the States-Item.)

BEARDED "LEON" OSWALD

LEE HARVEY OSWALD