Sodium Pentothal Is Termed Unreliable in Truth Tests

A professor of psychiatry at the Tulane Medical School said today that sodium pentothal injections are "quite unreliable" as a method of determining the truth of a person's statements.

Dr. Donald Gallant said sodium pentothal is not a truth serum, and "there is no such thing as a truth serum."

In a warrant used by Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison's staff to search the home of Clay L. Shaw, Shaw was accused of participating in "an agreement and combination . . . to kill John F. Kennedy."

The document said that "one of the sources of information of the affiant is a confidential informant who was present at these meetings and saw the conspirators and heard the plans.

"The confidential informant saw David W. Ferrie and Clay Shaw, alias Clay Bertrand, and Lee Harvey Oswald and others and this confidential informant heard these subjects agree to kill John F. Kennedy and heard these subjects discuss the means and maner of carrying out this agreement," the document said.

THE WARRANT went on to say the "informant" voluntarily submitted to sodium pentothal, "commonly called truth serum, which was administered under the care and control and supervision of the coroner for the Parish of Orleans, a medical doctor. That the same confidential informant, while under sodium pentothal, verified, corroborated and reaffirmed his earlier statements."

Dr. Gallant said today that a person can lie while under the influence of sodium pentathol, a barbiturate which can be given intravenously, just as he can lie without it.

He said that a lie detector test, although not infallible, is more reliable than sodium pentathol.

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