

Key Witness Tells Court of Kennedy 'Plot'

News 3/4/67
25-Year-Old
Describes Party,
Lists Conspirators

BULLETIN

NEW ORLEANS — Perry Raymond Russo, a witness for Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison, testified at a preliminary hearing today that Clay L. Shaw was one of the three men he heard plotting to kill President John F. Kennedy.

Russo, a 25-year-old insurance salesman from Baton Rouge, said he heard the conversation in the apartment of David W. Ferrie in September 1963. Russo's testimony stamped him as the "confidential informant" cited by Garrison as the source who "saw the conspirators and heard the plans."

Russo described the scene in Ferrie's apartment this way: "There seemed to be some sort of party in progress. They were drinking and talking." The party died out, Russo said, and the only ones left were himself, Ferrie, "Leon Oswald" and "Clem Bertrand." Clay Shaw has also been identified as Clay Bertrand.

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — A showdown hearing in Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison's controversial Kennedy assassination probe opened today before an unusual three-judge Criminal District Court panel which will determine if retired executive Clay Shaw should go to trial.

The first witness for the district attorney was Police Det. Frank Hayward, who testified he arrested Lee Harvey Oswald after a brawl on Canal Street on Aug. 9, 1963.

Shaw, well-tailored and rugged-looking at age 54, looked haggard as he pushed past a throng of newsmen to enter the courtroom. He was accompanied by three attorneys.

Purpose of the preliminary

hearing was to decide if Shaw, former managing director of the International Trade Mart here, should be held for trial. Garrison has accused Shaw of conspiring with Oswald and others to kill President John F. Kennedy.

Garrison's Arrival

A deeply suntanned Garrison, flanked by seven assistants, entered the courtroom just before the hearing began. It was Garrison's first public appearance in 10 days.

Fifty deputy sheriffs stood guard around the court room and building.

Bill Gurvich, the district attorney's chief investigator, carried a 4-foot-long bundle wrapped in brown paper. Sources in Garrison's office said the package contained a high powered rifle with telescopic sight—presumably evidence in Garrison's case.

Charles Ward, first assistant district attorney, told presiding Judge Bernard Bagert the state had five witnesses ready to testify. Ward named them as

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PROBE

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Hayward; Coroner Dr. Nicholas Chetta; Dr. Esmond A. Fatter from the coroner's office; Peter Schuster, a photographer from the coroner's office, and John Reilly, a police photographer.

An officer — with a portable mine detector — inspected all persons entering the courtroom.

Tells of Photos

Schuster was the second witness. He testified that he took pictures of David W. Ferrie's apartment on Feb. 22, 1967 — the day Ferrie was found dead. Garrison has alleged that Shaw, Oswald and Ferrie met in Ferrie's apartment in September 1963 to discuss killing Kennedy.

Reilly took the stand next. A photographer from the Police Department, he testified also about photographing Ferrie's apartment on Feb. 22.

A total of nine photographs were introduced by the state, some of Ferrie's body, some of Ferrie's apartment, and some of Oswald.

An attorney for Shaw, Irving Dymond, showed Schuster a picture which he said was

a sketch of Ferrie's apartment and asked if he recognized it. "No sir, I don't," Schuster said.

The defense for Shaw introduced 16 photographs of Ferrie's apartment which were taken last weekend with court approval. Schuster was asked several questions pertaining to details of the apartment and its layout.

Schuster identified 15 of the 16 photos as showing various locations within Ferrie's apartment. Of the 16th photo, he said: "I don't familiarize myself with that photo."

The Warren Commission named Oswald, a former New Orleans resident, as the man who assassinated President John F. Kennedy. The commission said there was no credible evidence that a conspiracy was involved.