

Shaw Held For Trial in Plot on JFK

Post 3/18/67
3-Judge Panel

Rules After Hearing Garrison's Case

NEW ORLEANS, March 17 (AP)—Clay L. Shaw, a wealthy retired business executive, was ordered to stand trial today on a charge of conspiring to murder President John F. Kennedy. The ruling followed a four-day preliminary hearing requested by District Attorney Jim Garrison.

A three-judge criminal district court panel ruled unanimously that Garrison presented sufficient evidence to warrant a trial for Shaw.

The highlight of the hearing was Perry R. Russo's testimony that he heard Shaw, Lee Harvey Oswald and David W. Ferrie plotting in September 1963 to assassinate Kennedy.

The Warren Commission Report, which said Oswald acted alone in the assassination of Kennedy, was not admitted as evidence after Judge Bernard Bagert said it was "fraught with hearsay."

Shaw, 54, sat smoking impassively when the decision was announced. His lined face was haggard.

\$10,000 Bond Continues

Judge Bagert said Garrison had presented sufficient evidence "to justify bringing into play further steps of the criminal court."

Shaw remains free on \$10,000 bond. Garrison arrested him on murder conspiracy charges March 1. A decorated World War II Army major, Shaw retired in October 1955 as managing director of the International Trade Mart here.

Today's decision came exactly one month after the first disclosure that Garrison was probing the Kennedy assassination. The prosecutor said he began the investigation

last October.

Shaw called Garrison's charge "fantastic," and denied knowing Oswald or having any part in a conspiracy. United States Attorney General Ramsay Clark said the FBI had cleared Shaw of any link to the Kennedy assassination.

Defense Attorney William Wegmann asked the judges today to take their time in issuing a ruling on the final arguments.

"What they've put in, what they've got at this hearing, it might warrant future investigation by competent authorities," he continued, "but it doesn't warrant holding this man."

In rebuttal, Assistant District Attorney James Alcock said only: "... the State of Louisiana has put forth before the court enough evidence to tip the scales, enough evidence to hold this man."

Garrison's star witness was Russo, a 25-year-old insurance salesman from Baton Rouge. He told the Court that he was present in Ferrie's New Orleans apartment in mid-September 1963 and heard Oswald and Ferrie plotting to assassinate the President.

Russo said the plan involved "triangulation of crossfire,"

diversionary shooting, a possible flight to Mexico and Cuba, and the sacrificing of one man as a scapegoat to permit the others to escape.

Shaw is the only one of the alleged conspirators still alive.

Garrison still must file a bill of information—the formal charge—before an actual trial can be held. Garrison had no comment after the ruling today, but scheduled a news conference for 10 a.m. tomorrow.

"We won," exclaimed Bill Gurvich, Garrison's chief investigator. "If we had needed more goods we would have brought them in."

Bagert had asked the other two judges to sit with him because of the importance of the case.

The final prosecution witness today was a man who said he saw two men—whom he now can identify as Oswald and Shaw—in conversation near Lake Pontchartrain here in 1963.

Identified Shaw

Vernon Bundy, 29, who said he was a onetime heroin addict, walked over to Shaw in court, put his hand over Shaw's head, and identified him as the man he saw with Oswald at the lakefront.

Bundy said one of the men he saw was young, the other much older. He said he heard the "young guy" ask the older man plaintively, "What am I going to tell her?"

Bundy said the older man replied: "Don't worry about it. I told you I was going to take care of her."

The witness then said the older man handed over "a roll of money, or it appeared to be. The young guy put his hand in his right pocket where he had a bunch of pamphlets."

When the defense claimed Bundy's testimony was hearsay, Garrison—handling the interrogation of a witness for the first time since Tuesday—asked Bundy to identify two pictures.

Bundy said one was of Oswald, the other of "the Shaw who has been in the papers lately." Bundy said the pictures were of the same men he saw at the lakefront in 1963. Then he pointed out Shaw as one of them.