

Tension Charges Courtroom

By ROSEMARY JAMES

The courtroom itself looked like hundreds of others—the real kind and the ones you see in the movies. It was typically stuffy, somber.

BUT INSIDE was anything but typical. There were three judges instead of one. A large battery of defense and prosecution lawyers jammed every available space in the area reserved for them.

And everyone was deadly serious. There was no idle chatter. Until the court crier forbade it, people smoked nervously.

Newsmen crowded every seat allotted to them after clearing an electronic detector to make sure they weren't smuggling any kind of "bug" into the courtroom.

OUTSIDE, women in shorts, some of them carrying babies, stood on the steps, hoping for some word from inside. A hawkker was selling multi-colored rabbit balloons in front of the building. Everyone waited, and the waiting was long.

The two central figures in District Attorney Jim Garrison's hearing on the presidential assassination probe both appeared calm, but little gestures and signs betrayed the

extreme tension they have endured.

Clay Shaw, the respected, retired New Orleans businessman accused of conspiring to kill President Kennedy, was the same tall, stoic Clay Shaw. Dressed nattily in a brown suit, brown vest and brown tie, he smoked continuously from the moment he stepped out of a car in front of the Criminal Courts build-

ing and walked with his attorneys to the courtroom, mobbed by scores of newsmen and photographers hoping for one word, any word. They got none.

INSIDE the courtroom, he remained silent as he was handed a large, yellow, legal-sized pad and conferred quietly with his lawyers. Occasionally he glanced at the newsmen and the favored few spectators who managed to get seats for the proceedings.

Garrison, on the other hand, was all confidence.

He was deeply tanned and his nose was peeling. His only words were, "I can make no comment." Six assistants and two investigative aides flanked him as the giant prosecutor (he's six-foot-six) entered the courtroom.

Concession stands inside the building were doing a brisk business on this hot, Spring morning. Both bystanders and newsmen were quenching their thirst.

GARRISON had arrived so swiftly and so unexpectedly that the usual sharp photographers missed him entering the White st. side of the building to park his car in the basement.

There were murmurs from newsmen and spectators when Garrison's investigator, William Gurvich, carried into the courtroom a four-foot brown package which was said to be a rifle with a telescope.

Not all the newsmen who showed up this morning were able to get into the small courtroom. Some of them had failed to get their credentials in time. Others were just late. There was no room left in the courtroom.

As each newsman entered the court, he was tested with an electronic detector. Any concealed electronic device, whether turned "on" or "off" would have been detected by this equipment, which resembles a small walkie-talkie.

IF THERE were little excitement inside the courtroom prior to the opening of the hearing, there was some outside as Mrs. Nina Sulzer, secretary to Criminal Sheriff Louis A. Heyd, dealt with reporters attempting to gain entrance. Heyd and his staff was charged with maintaining security guidelines set down

by the three judges.

Some who had not received credentials stood about in the rather fruitless hope that some reporter might give up his seat.

Other reporters with alternate credentials waited anxiously to rush in should there be a break in the proceedings.

Senior Judge Bernard J. Bagert let it be known from the opening of the hearing that he would tolerate no infraction of the rules the court had set down for newsmen and spectators.

WHEN HE complained about the noise in the courtroom, the court crier immediately warned the audience that no talking or mumbling would be tolerated.

A young woman from the NBC White Paper team was taken out of the courtroom when she seemed about to faint.

As she was being removed, she appeared to be on the verge of collapse.