



—United Press International

Clay Shaw leaves the New Orleans courthouse.

Shaw Is Acquitted Of JFK Death Plot

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—A jury's unanimous verdict of not guilty today cleared Clay L. Shaw, 55, of a charge of conspiring to assassinate President John F. Kennedy.

Read to a packed, heavily guarded Criminal District Court at 1:02 a.m., the verdict triggered a moment of bedlam. There was an earsplitting concerted shriek from the women spectators.

The 12-man jury rejected both the state case and Dist. Atty.

Jim Garrison's plea that a conviction would strike a blow at "excessive government power."

"Garrison has a right to his opinion about the government and the Warren Commission," said juror David I. Powe shortly after court adjourned. "But I just don't feel his opinion is enough to convict a man."

Shaw, a 6-foot-4 retired New Orleans businessman with tanned and craggy features, stood in a protective circle of deputies as the verdict was read.

"Do you wish the jury polled?" asked Judge Edward A. Haggerty.

Asst. Dist. Atty. James L. Al-

cock, who headed Garrison's team of prosecutors, slumped low in his chair. He shook his head wearily, side to side.

Powe, a juror who grew a goatee while sequestered during the 34-day trial, said the verdict was unanimous and was reached on the first ballot.

Deliberation took about 50 minutes. Under Louisiana law, it took at least a 9-3 vote for a decision. Shaw was cleared two years to the day from the date he was arrested.

The state charged Shaw with conspiring with Lee Harvey Oswald and others to murder Ken-

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SHAW

Defendant Cleared Of Plotting Killing

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nedy, who was slain in Dallas
Nov. 22, 1963. The Warren Com-
mission named Oswald as the
assassin.

Much of the prosecution case
concentrated on attacking the
commission's conclusion that
Oswald, a former New Orleans
resident, was alone and unaided
in the assassination.

"We were trying Shaw, not the
Warren Commission," said
Powe. "But I felt two or three
times that I didn't know who we
were trying — the FBI, the federal
government, the Secret
Service..."

Garrison Absent

Garrison, up for re-election in
six months, was not in the court-
room when the verdict was read.
He appeared rarely during the
trial, leaving the case to four
assistants.

In final arguments, he left the
oratory on legal detail and testi-
mony to the assistants — but
made an emotional appeal in the
final minutes, attacking the
Warren Commission.

"The government handling of
the investigation of the assassi-
nation of President Kennedy was
a fraud," he said, "probably the
greatest fraud perpetrated in
the history of mankind."

The Warren Commission, he
said, was a group of "men of
high position and prestige sitting
on a board and telling you what
happened but withholding the
evidence..."

"You can cause justice to hap-
pen in this case for the first time
in five years," he concluded,
"and if you do that, nothing you
have ever done will have been
more important."

Shaw Called a "Patsy"

In summing up, the state said
it had proved — with photo-
graphs, arithmetic and witness-
es — that Kennedy came under
fire from three guns, not just
one, as the Warren Commission
said.

Defense lawyer F. Irvin Dy-
mond said Shaw was "a patsy
picked ... to provide a forum

for an attack on the Warren
Commission."

Nothing had been proven, he
said, since the state's entire
case rested on the testimony of
Perry Raymond Russo; and he
said the defense had shown
"Perry Raymond Russon is a
liar."

The state put up a parade of
unfit witnesses, Dymond added.
He named Russo, a New Orleans
book salesman, and Charles I.
Spiesel of New York, a small,
balding accountant.

Russo said he attended a
party in September 1963 and
overheard Shaw, Oswald and
David W. Ferrie, a one-time air-
line pilot, plotting.

Testimony Attacked

Spiesel, described by Dymond
as "the most obvious paranoid
case I've ever seen in my life,"
said he met Ferrie at a bar
during a visit here in 1963 and
Ferrie took him to a party, in-
troducing the host as Clay Shaw.

"What kind of a good faith
prosecution, what kind of a legiti-
mate prosecution would get up
here and try to con you gentle-
men into accepting the testimo-
ny of a man like that?" Dymond
said.

Dymond examined the state's
case step by step, applying what
he called plain logic. "It just
doesn't add up," he said.

After the verdict was read,
confusion and noise erupted
from the spectators and it took a
few moments to restore order.

Some members of the crowd
screamed, "No! No!"

Haggerty held the court in
session until the jurors got out.
Shaw stood, smiling broadly and
shook each juror's hand as they
filed past.

Shaw was hustled out the back
door of the courtroom and left in
a car, with a line of deputies
pushing newsmen and specta-
tors away from the garage exit.
Garrison had left earlier.

"It certainly has been an in-
teresting case, hasn't it," he
said. "No matter how this thing
ends, I will not hold a news con-
ference. I'm tired of being
called flamboyant. Everybody
knows I am not flamboyant."