

32 C

Clay Shaw Is Dead at 60; Freed in Kennedy 'Plot'

8/16/74
**New Orleans Businessman
Was Accused of Planning
President's Assassination**

By DAVID BIRD

Clay L. Shaw, the businessman who was acquitted of plotting to assassinate President Kennedy after one of the nation's more sensational trials, died yesterday of cancer in his New Orleans home. He was 60 years old.

A tall, imposing, silver-haired bachelor who made a hobby of restoring homes in the New Orleans French Quarter, Mr. Shaw was arrested in March, 1967, on charges brought by District Attorney Jim Garrison that he helped plan the killing of President Kennedy with alleged accomplices in New Orleans.

The trial, which began in 1969, took five weeks. The main evidence against Mr. Shaw came from a 25-year-old Baton Rouge insurance salesman, whose memory had to be jogged three times by hypnosis before he could take the stand, and a 29-year-old heroin addict who had begun using drugs at the age of 13.

One man appeared to testify dressed in a toga and solemnly told the court that he was a reincarnation of Julius Caesar.

A "mystery witness" from New York who said he overheard Mr. Shaw plotting at a party turned out to be a man who once fingerprinted his own daughter before allowing her into the house because his "enemies" had often impersonated his relatives in their efforts to destroy him.

Doubts Are Cited

Mr. Garrison was one of many who expressed concern about the doubts that remained after the Kennedy assassination on Nov. 22, 1963, but Mr. Shaw was the only suspect ever tried for the killing.

Mr. Shaw, who came out of World War II as a decorated Army major, went on to become prominent in New Orleans business circles and retired in 1965 as managing director of the International Trade Mart there.

Every effort was made in the



Associated Press
Clay L. Shaw

trial to undermine Mr. Shaw's position, but he never showed signs of despondency. He chain-smoked filter cigarettes impassively at the defense table as prosecution witnesses described him as a flamboyant homosexual.

Mr. Garrison had set the stage for such descriptions when, after Mr. Shaw's arrest in 1967, the District Attorney's office released a list of articles, including five leather whips, confiscated at Mr. Shaw's apartment. The whips, Mr. Shaw explained, had been used as props for Mardi Gras costumes.

Mr. Shaw steadfastly denied that he had any part in any conspiracy or that he even knew the two persons he was accused of conspiring with.

Both 'Plotters' Dead

Both of the alleged co-conspirators were dead when Mr. Shaw was arrested. One was Lee Harvey Oswald, the man the Warren Commission determined acted alone in killing President Kennedy. Oswald was killed by Jack Ruby two days after the assassination. The other man was a pilot named

David Ferrie, who had died of a brain hemorrhage.

Despite Mr. Garrison's repeated contentions that he had "solved" the murder of the President, the jury was unconvinced. It took the 12 men only 50 minutes to reach a verdict of not guilty just two months to the day after Mr. Shaw was arrested.

Mr. Garrison kept after Mr. Shaw, trying then to prosecute him on a charge of perjury. But the Federal courts ruled against the District Attorney.

Later Mr. Shaw said his reputation had been tarnished and his personal fortune depleted by the trial. To pay his bills he had to sell his home, which was the first in the French Quarter to have a private swimming pool.

"I often wonder what would have happened to me had I been penniless and without friends," Mr. Shaw said. "Justice can be a costly process." He called his trial "one of the seediest and shabbiest episodes in American judicial history."

Speech to Students

"I was arrested and charged with what must surely be the most shocking crime of the century, of which I had absolutely no knowledge whatsoever," Mr. Shaw said in a speech to college students two years after his acquittal. "It doesn't matter what happened to me personally, terrible things happen to everybody. But what I'm talking about tonight could happen to anybody within the sound of my voice. You think that's impossible. I assure you it's not."

There was agreement with Mr. Shaw's assessment of the trial.

The New Orleans States-Item called for Mr. Garrison's resignation. "He abused the vast powers of his office," the paper said in a Page One editorial. "He has perverted the law rather than prosecuted it."

At his death Mr. Shaw had been pressing a \$5-million lawsuit against Mr. Garrison and several wealthy businessmen who had helped finance the District Attorney's investigation. Hearings on the suit had been scheduled to begin next month in Federal court.

Mr. Garrison was defeated for re-election last year and is now a candidate for the Louisiana Supreme Court.

Mr. Shaw was born in 1914 in Kentwood La., a community in Tangipahoa Parish (county) about 100 miles north of New Orleans, where his grandfather and namesake had been town marshal around the turn of the century.

Clay L. Shaw Dies at Home; Was Cleared in JFK Death

NEW ORLEANS, Aug. 15 (AP)—Clay L. Shaw died today at his home, 5½ years after a state court jury acquitted him of a charge that he conspired in the murder of President John F. Kennedy in 1963.

Mr. Shaw, 60, former director of the International Trade Mart in New Orleans, had been ill since February, when he was stricken while driving his car and underwent surgery for removal of a blood clot.

Although Mr. Shaw retired in 1965, with plans to travel and rest, he had to go back to work when his legal fight against District Attorney Jim Garrison's charges used up his modest fortune.

He resigned May 31 as manager of the renovation of the French Quarter's French Market, a tourist mecca project he had guided from its start in 1971 to actual construction.

Mr. Shaw was summoned to Garrison's office on March 1, 1967, and charged with conspiring with Lee Harvey Oswald and others



CLAY L. SHAW

in the presidential assassination.

Gaps and conflicts eventually tarnished the Garrison investigation.

"After a couple of months it became quite clear that the case had no real relationship to the assassination," Mr. Shaw said.

On March 1, 1969, he was acquitted. The jury deliber-

ated less than an hour after a trial that lasted a month.

Garrison also tried to bring Mr. Shaw to trial on perjury charges after he was acquitted of the conspiracy allegation, but U.S. District Judge Hebert W. Christenberry ruled that the perjury charges had been filed in bad faith and dismissed them.

"I often wonder what would have happened to me had I been penniless and without friends," Mr. Shaw said. "Justice can be a costly process."

At the time of his death, Mr. Shaw had a \$5 million U.S. District Court damage suit pending against Garrison and a group of men who had financed the investigation.

In World War II Mr. Shaw was an Army major, deputy chief of staff to Brig. Gen. C. O. Thrasher during the battle of France.

In New Orleans, he was so active at his hobby of restoring French Quarter homes that he was called a "one-man restoration society."