

W.S.T. 3/24/63

Latest Plot Probe Figure Denies Knowing Oswald

NEW ORLEANS, March 24, (UPI)—The latest figure thrust into Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison's Kennedy assassination investigation maintains that he never heard the name Lee Harvey Oswald until Nov. 22, 1963.

Layton Martens, 24, a former roommate of one of the alleged plotters against President Kennedy, openly challenges statements made by Garrison's star witness, Perry R. Russo.

Russo, 25, a Baton Rouge, La., insurance salesman, testified at the preliminary hearing that he heard Clay Shaw, the late David W. Ferrie and Oswald plot to kill Kennedy. Shaw was subsequently indicated for conspiracy.

But Martens, commenting in a taped interview released last night after he was subpoenaed to appear before the Orleans Parish Grand Jury next week, said he shared an apartment with Ferrie and he had never heard of Oswald until the assassination.

It was this same apartment in which Russo allegedly heard the plotters. Russo had testified he did not know Martens.

But in the television interview, taped two weeks ago by WDSU-TV, Martens said he knew Russo and that the latter had a personal grudge against Ferrie.

Martens was asked whether it was possible for Ferrie to have known both Shaw and Oswald without his (Martens') knowledge.

"I doubt it," he replied, "I pretty well knew everyone, but I never heard him mention them."

Records at the New Orleans Police Department show that Martens, and Alvin Roland Beaubout and Ferrie were arrested at Ferrie's apartment two days after the assassination.

All three were held briefly under investigation of subversive activities by the FBI and Secret Service, according to the records.