

New Witness Alleges That He Was Offered Money

By ROBERT E. DALLOS

A man who once operated a Turkish bath in New Orleans says that District Attorney Jim Garrison and his representatives offered him money if he could remember that Clay L. Shaw also used the name Clay Bertrand and that Mr. Shaw frequented his establishment with a young man named "Lee."

The man, Fred Leemans, who now lives in Slidell, La., near New Orleans, says he told the district attorney and his investigators that he would need \$2,500 to lease a building in New Orleans to "make a fine night club and a private club."

He says he was told they were sure he "would get it . . . people that helped him [Mr. Garrison] he took care of."

Mr. Leemans made his statements in a filmed interview for a program by the National Broadcasting Company.

On TV Tonight

The one-hour program, entitled "The J.F.K. Conspiracy: The Case of Jim Garrison," is scheduled to be shown on the network at 8 o'clock tonight.

Mr. Garrison contends that the assassination of President Kennedy was the result of a conspiracy. He has declared that Mr. Shaw, a retired New Orleans businessman, using the name Clay Bertrand, met with Lee Harvey Oswald and others to plot the murder. The Warren Commission said Oswald killed President Kennedy alone.

In the N.B.C. film Oswald is never referred to by his full name—only as Lee.

Mr. Leemans is the fourth man to say Mr. Garrison or his staff had offered concessions in return for aid in the investigation of the assassination.

Two of them, Miguel Torres and John Canler, are convicted burglars now in jail.

Last month, another Louisiana man, Alvin Beauboef, charged that an investigator for Mr. Garrison had offered him \$3,000 and an airlines job if he would "help substantiate" the alleged conspiracy.

Reached by telephone last night at the Stardust Lounge, a bar he now owns in Slidell, Mr. Leemans declined to discuss his N.B.C. interview. He said that this was because he had promised The Associated Press an exclusive story. "After all I have to get something out of all of this," he said.

He emphatically denied, however, that he had been offered money by Mr. Shaw's lawyers.

Asked why he had changed



Fred Leemans

the story he had told to Mr. Garrison, he said, "I got to thinking about it and I decided it was a lousy thing to do. No amount of money is worth playing that way with a man's life."

He added that he never would "have gotten into this mess if it had not been for the debts that had piled up because of my wife's illness."

Mr. Garrison could not be reached yesterday to comment on the Leemans statement. N.B.C. said that it had not offered the district attorney a chance to answer on tonight's program.

Mr. Garrison, angered by the broadcasting company's intervention in his investigation, complained yesterday to the Federal Communications Commission. He said that N.B.C. had the "calculated objective" of the destruction of his case.

In a six-page letter to the chairman of the F.C.C., Rosel H. Hyde, Mr. Garrison charged that the network "has been so aggressive in attacking the State of Louisiana's case [against Mr. Shaw] prior to trial as to have gone far beyond the pretense of merely gathering and disseminating news." He asked that N.B.C. not be allowed "to use the public airwaves to accomplish such mean ends."

In Washington, a spokesman for the F.C.C. said late yesterday that the letter had not yet been received. In any event, the spokesman said, the commission "does not practice censorship" and is prohibited by law from determining the content of television programs.

He said that Mr. Garrison

could demand an opportunity to respond to the program under the so-called fairness doctrine. Under this, the commission would determine whether Mr. Garrison should receive time from the network to give his views.

William R. McAndrew, the president of N.B.C. News, said the network expected Mr. Garrison to demand equal time and was "prepared for it." He said the N.B.C. program would be telecast tonight under any circumstances.

As quoted in a transcript of his interview with N.B.C. Mr. Leemans said that he had received a call from "a man who identified himself as Mr. Robert E. Lee with the district attorney's office in New Orleans."

A spokesman in Mr. Garrison's office confirmed last night that there was an assistant district attorney with that name.

"He said he would like to talk to me, but not on the phone, and wanted to know when it would be convenient for me to come to the office," Mr. Leemans said on the television interview, continuing:

"He said, did I know Clay Shaw? And I said, well I knew him. He said, he used to come to your place and I said, well, some of the times, yes.

"And he said did he use the name Clay Bertrand, and I told him that I couldn't swear that he used that name because I didn't remember names too good, or dates.

"And he said it would be very helpful to them if I could remember any of that. And I said, well, I don't want to get involved in anything like this. I said I'm trying to get a lease on a building in New Orleans now, if I could raise the money for it."

"And he said, well, I'm sure that if you help us that we can help you, and you can get the place that you want. So then he asked me questions about, couldn't I remember that Clay Shaw used the name of Clay Bertrand when he came to the baths?"

"And er, the way he asked that I figured he wanted a yes, so I told him yes. And er, he asked me was there any other people Clay Shaw — he kept saying Clay Bertrand — came up with, and I said there's one young fellow, and he said would his name have been Lee? Mr. Lee said that would be very helpful, too. So I said yes, there's one man that he called Lee."

Mr. Leemans then said that,

he was told to wait while Mr. Lee summoned Mr. Garrison. He continued:

"So he brought Mr. Garrison in and he introduced him to me, and he asked couldn't this young fellow, he say, couldn't you remember that he had a goatee, or a little beatnik type of beard?"

"And I said yes, I can remember that and then I told Mr. Garrison right out what my plans were in trying to raise money for this club that would be a private club here in New Orleans. And he said he was sure that I would

to Aid Garrison in Investigation of Assassination

get it, and he said anyway at all that he could help he would. People that helped him he took care of."

\$2,500 Is Mentioned

The N.B.C. reporter asked Mr. Leemans then if any amount of money was mentioned?

"Yes, I told him I needed \$2,500," Mr. Leemans answered.

"What did he say about that?" the N.B.C. reporter asked.

"He said he was sure I wouldn't have any trouble getting that money," Mr. Leemans said.

Mr. Leemans said he was told that Mr. Garrison wanted "to get this all down in a statement," which was dictated to a stenographer.

According to Mr. Leemans, he signed the statement, but did not swear to it.

Mr. Leemans said that the last time he was at the district attorney's office, "Mr. Lee told me, he said, Fred, I'm sure Mr. Garrison is going to do something for you because he always helps people who always help him."

"But he said anything that

has to do with money matters, in giving you any money, can not be done in front of anybody else . . . because that wouldn't look good . . . so you're just going to have to just talk to him person to person, cause that way there are no witnesses to it, whatever deal you two make."

Mr. Leemans said that Mr. Shaw had come to his baths, on Canal Street in New Orleans, but that to the best of his knowledge "he never came with anyone."

Mr. Leemans also said he was

told that his signed statement was now in Mr. Garrison's safe.

Asked if he were giving his statement to the network "freely and voluntarily," he said:

"Freely and voluntarily. In fact, I have hinted to you [N.B.C.] that I could use some help, and you've told me frankly that there's no way, shape or form that you could give me any monetary assistance."

Fred Freed, the program's producer, said that seven investigative reporters had spent several weeks in New Orleans in the inquiry.