

Courtroom Grows Silent; Eyes Lock on Garrison

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District Attorney Begins
Outlining His Case

The courtroom became absolutely silent.

The newsmen who had come to New Orleans from throughout the world readied their pads and pencils. The jurors locked their eyes on the speaker and the spectators sat strained and erect.

Jim Garrison, the district attorney who had shocked the world a little less than two years ago, was beginning his opening statement in the conspiracy trial of Clay L. Shaw.

Garrison, looking fresh and at ease, read from a prepared statement for 42 minutes, laying out for the jurors and the world the conspiracy he claims to have discovered and the case he will attempt to prove.

Wearing a dark suit, he had arrived with his corps of aides at the courtroom of Judge Edward A. Haggerty only a few minutes before the awaited starting hour of 10 a. m. He

shook hands with reporters he knew and occasionally spoke personally to those he knew along the aisle.

Shaw, the New Orleans businessman whom Garrison has accused of conspiring to kill President John F. Kennedy, had entered the Criminal Courts Building only moments earlier. As he walked into the courtroom with his attorneys, he was smoking and wore a smile.

'YOUR CHEERING SQUAD?

The accused man approached a group of reporters and spoke to them. All seemed to be well acquainted after the many months of news coverage. From the crowd, someone called over to Shaw, "What's this—your cheering squad?" "Yes," said Shaw with a smile.

Shaw and Garrison were the principals, but also in the courtroom were a goodly number of spectators, all of whom had waited in long lines for their seats, and the twelve jurors, who had been selected after more than two weeks of questioning. They and two alternates

would be isolated from the outside world for the unpredictable duration of the trial.

The crowd seemed uncomfortable in the unexpected morning heat, but as Garrison prepared to speak the slight discomfort turned to rigid attention.

Two defense motions had been argued on briefly, but as the district attorney carefully and deliberately adjusted the microphone to his six-foot, six-inch height and began his statement, the main event was at hand.

Garrison first apologized to the jurors for the length of what he would say, but the faces of those who listened reflected far more anticipation than tolerance.

At one point, Garrison told the jurors that the state would show that President Kennedy was shot from the front. This

was vital, and in direct conflict with the Warren report. He stopped, and repeated, "shot from the front, by a number of persons."

DEFENDANT ATTENTIVE

Throughout the statement, Shaw sat powerfully attentive and at times jotted on a pad on the table before him.

When he concluded, the look on Garrison's face was that of a man who had finally reached the event he had dreamed of. He seemed pleased, and when Judge Haggerty ordered a recess, he immediately walked from the courtroom. Newsmen and court employes crowded about the towering DA, many congratulating him on his presentation.

Judge Haggerty, who had been pressed with obviously far too many requests for spectator seats, had installed three benches inside the railing for those particularly interested in the case. Among those so seated were famed criminal attorney Melvin Belli, Mrs. Garrison, and Mrs. F. Irvin Dymond, wife of the chief defense attorney.

Author Mark Lane, who has aided Garrison in the case, was one of those originally seated in the spectator area, but he was asked to leave the courtroom because he was a prospective witness.