

Witnesses Link Shaw, Oswald

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NEW ORLEANS — Whatever may come legally of Jim Garrison's Kennedy conspiracy case, it is likely the findings of the Warren Commission will be forever clouded by this trial.

Garrison is challenging the basic conclusions of the commission's report, that only one man, Lee Harvey Oswald, fired the fatal shots that killed John F. Kennedy; that a conspiracy did not exist; that the President was killed by a shot from the rear; that Texas Gov. John Connally was hit by the same bullet that entered Kennedy's body; that Oswald had no contact with others who might have plotted the crime.

While F. Irvin Dymond, chief counsel for Clay Shaw, who is on trial here on a conspiracy charge, maintains that the findings of the Warren Commission are irrelevant ("we are not here to defend the findings of the Warren Commission"), he has been forced to deal with the report and to try and defend or explain what Garrison contends are omissions from it.

Contention Contradicted

One of Dymond's major contentions—that Shaw neither knew nor ever had laid eyes on Oswald or David W. Ferrie, the third alleged conspirator, was contradicted by the testimony of the first witnesses called by the state yesterday.

They were an unlikely group: A Negro civil rights worker who had led a voting registration drive in the small Louisiana town of Clinton; the tall, lean white town marshal whom the Negro regarded then as "the enemy," the white registrar of voters.

The Negro, Corrie Collins, testified that he saw Oswald, Shaw and Ferrie drive into Clinton about 9:30 one morning in late August or early September 1963, in a black Cadillac. Oswald, he said, was in the back seat of the car. He



—Associated Press

JIM GARRISON

then got out and stood in line waiting to register as a voter. Collins identified Shaw as the driver of the car, and Ferrie as the companion on the passenger side of the front seat.

Identifies Oswald, Shaw

"This is the man who did get out of the car," he said, when handed a picture.

When asked who that was, he answered:

"He's Lee Harvey Oswald."

Then he was asked:

"Do you see the man who was behind the wheel in this courtroom today?"

"Yes," he said, and pointed to Clay Shaw sitting at the bench in front of him.

A few minutes before, John Manchester, the town marshal, testified he had interrogated the driver of that black Cadillac while the car was parked on the street in Clinton.

"Easy-Talkin' Man"

"I walked over and talked to the man behind the wheel of this car," he said. When asked to describe him, he said: "Yes sir. He was a big man. Gray hair. Ruddy complexion—uh an easy talkin' man."

When he was asked if he saw that man in the courtroom he answered quietly, "Yes, sir." He, too, pointed to Clay Shaw.

The voting registrar, Henry Earl Palmer, testified that Lee Oswald waited in the registration line that day while the car was parked on the street, and finally appeared before him. Oswald, he said, produced a Navy identification card with his name, and gave a New Orleans address. He said he was there because he was seeking a job at the East Louisiana State Hospital and had been told he might have a better chance if he were a registered voter.

None of this kind of eyewitness description of Oswald and companions had appeared in the Warren report, it was quickly brought out by both sides.

Not Quizzed by FBI

Shaw's attorney, Dymond, reacted with some exasperation to the testimony.

"Have you ever been questioned by the FBI in regard to this matter?" Collins, the civil rights worker, was asked.

"No," he replied.

When Dymond asked him whether he ever had reported any of that information to the FBI or the Warren Commission, Collins answered, "no." Under further questioning, he said that "No one asked me."

Manchester the marshal, gave similar testimony. After Dymond asked him if he had reported his contact with Oswald in Clinton, he said, "No, sir. I feel if they wanted it they could come and ask for it."

Dymond's sharp retort ("Could you tell us how they were supposed to know about you if nobody told them?") brought a non-responsive answer.

Palmer, the registrar, also said he had never been questioned by the FBI about his experience with Oswald that day.

Another witness from a nearby town, Reeves Morgan, then a member of the Louisiana state legislature, said he also had talked with Oswald about the hospital job. After the assassination he recognized Oswald's picture and called the FBI. He testified he was never questioned by government agents.

It is precisely that kind of sworn testimony that is bound to confuse further the nature of the government's investigation into Kennedy's murder.

Long after the Shaw trial has taken its place in contemporary history, that type of testimony is certain to surface in the continuing speculation and writing about the death of Kennedy.