

# Russo Explains Shaw 'Plot' Doubts

NEW ORLEANS (UPI) — The principal state witness in the conspiracy trial of Clay L. Shaw has implied in his testimony there was no firm agreement to kill President John F. Kennedy and no plot of consequence.

Four times in cross-examination, Perry Raymond Russo indicated his doubt about an agreement to kill, three times he said Shaw was "shooting the breeze" with the other alleged conspirators and once he said he did not know whether to take the talk as a serious threat or "shooting the breeze."

Shaw, 55, is charged with conspiring in September 1963, with Lee Harvey Oswald and David W. Ferrie to kill Kennedy, and the state has said it will "overprove" its case by showing the actual assassination in Dallas confirms the relevance of a plot hatched here.

Russo, 27, a book salesman, ended two days of testimony shortly before court adjourned yesterday on the same note he had struck several times in cross-examination.

"I Never Said . . ."

"You say you sat in on a conspiracy meeting, in which Oswald participated, and then saw his picture on television after the assassination and didn't say

anything about it?" asked defense attorney F. Irvin Dymond. "No," said Russo, "I never said anything about a conspiracy. I didn't sit in on any conspiracy."

He had testified for the state that he was present part of the time during a session in Ferrie's apartment here in which the three men discussed ways of killing Kennedy and setting up alibis.

Most of the talk was done, he said, by Ferrie, 49, a bizarre and brilliant flying instructor who said "we'll kill him." He said Ferrie also talked of killing Fidel Castro.

But when asked by Dymond, he said he never heard Shaw or Oswald agree to kill Kennedy. He said the three seemed to agree "where certain things were concerned" but "they never all three said they would do it and would do it this (certain) way."

He told Dymond he had never used the word "conspirator" about Shaw or the others.

"... Threatening Me"

Dymond asked him about a conversation he had with Edward O'Donnel, a police lieutenant, in June 1967, while not under test. Shaw had been arrested the previous March,

and Russo had testified in a hearing about the murder talk.

Russo told Dymond he had stated to O'Donnel he was under heavy pressures from reporters and authorities about his tale.

Dymond asked whether he had replied, when O'Donnel asked if Shaw had been at the plotting party: "Do you want the truth? . . . I don't know if he was or not."

Russo, who now says he is "100 percent sure" Shaw is the man introduced to him as "Clem Bertrand" at the party, said the explanation for the answer was "the pressures at the time, with all those people threatening me."

"Did you tell O'Donnel that if you had to give a yes or no answer you'd have to say Shaw was not there?" Dymond asked.

"In essence," replied Russo. "But it was this pressure again."

"Is it not the fact that he asked you whether the conversation at Ferrie's apartment sounded like a legitimate plot to assassinate Kennedy, and you state it did not?"

"Yes—with an explanation: O'Donnel and I talked a great deal about Ferrie being prone toward the fantastic, the spectacular."

"Did you," asked Dymond,

"volunteer to him the information that it appeared to you 'like another bull session, like they always have.'"

"That's acceptable," replied Russo. "I used the words 'shooting the breeze.' I don't use 'bull session.' But again it's with the same explanation—you didn't know Ferrie and some of the things he would claim. The same as I told you yesterday, he was a paradox as a man."

## Hypnosis an Issue

Russo was hypnotized twice by a state doctor before he testified about the plot in March 1967, and Dymond had the transcripts of the hypnotic sessions marked for later entering as exhibits to lay the groundwork for testimony by a defense psychiatric and hypnosis expert "of national repute."

Dymond said the expert would testify the sessions destroyed Russo's credibility as a witness "by implanting in his mind what the questioner wanted to, and what the questioner suggested to him."

Dymond drew from Russo testimony that he had been under psychiatric treatment for "12 to 18 months" starting with his first year in college, 1959, and had had telephone consultations with the psychiatrist in 1963 and 1965.