

# Shaw Witness Concedes Plot Had Air of a 'Bull Session'

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By Don McKee

NEW ORLEANS, Feb. 10 (AP)—Star prosecution witness Perry Raymond Russo testified today that a 1963 conversation, which forms the core of the State's conspiracy case against Clay Shaw, could easily have been "an inconsequential bull session."

Russo said under cross-examination that he had told several persons the discussion he heard involving Shaw and Lee Harvey Oswald might not have been serious.

It had "every characteristic" of a bull session, he said. Russo, 27, a dark-haired six-footer, told of attending a party in September 1963 at which he said Shaw joined with Oswald and David W. Ferrie, a former airline pilot, in discussing how to kill President Kennedy by crossfire after a diversionary shot.

The 55-year-old Shaw, retired managing director of the International Trade Mart in New Orleans, is on trial on a charge of conspiring to assassinate Kennedy. Shaw's lawyer says the defendant never knew Oswald or Ferrie.



Associated Press

Perry Raymond Russo, star witness in Shaw case.

See SHAW, A8, Col. 4



United Press International

Clay Shaw waves as he arrives for fourth week of his New Orleans conspiracy trial.

# Witness Tells of 'Bull Session,' JFK Plot

SHAW, From A1

On direct examination, Russo said Shaw, Oswald and Ferrie talked about crossfire, diversionary shots, escape by airplane and alibis.

He said on cross-examination that he did not know whether to take the matter seriously and did nothing about it until Ferrie died in February, 1967.

Russo testified that Ferrie was obsessed with assassinations, and had mentioned former President Eisenhower, the president of Mexico and later, Kennedy. He said he thought Ferrie was "a little crazy."

Chief defense counsel F. Irvin Dymond pressed Russo. There were these exchanges:

Q. Isn't it a fact you didn't really take this seriously?

A. Initially, you couldn't believe Ferrie and you couldn't not believe him.

Q. Didn't this have all the characteristics of a bull session?

A. Every characteristic.

Russo said he did not mention any assassination conspiracy in his first contact with District Attorney Jim Garrison's office in February, 1967. Neither did he mention it when subsequently interviewed in the same month by

Andrew Sciambra, an assistant district attorney, he said.

"I didn't make that all clear to Mr. Sciambra," Russo said. "All I told him was that there was a meeting at which a bunch of people were running around saying they were going to shoot Kennedy."

After listening to the assassination talk in 1963, Russo testified, no one swore him to secrecy or threatened him if he didn't keep quiet.

Russo said he had great difficulty in identifying a photograph of Oswald as the man known as Ferrie's roommate at the party. Russo said the roommate had whiskers and several days' growth of beard. He said repeated attempts by an artist to make an Oswald photo into a perfect likeness failed.

But he said Oswald, Ferrie and Shaw were the participants in the 1963 meeting at Ferrie's apartment.

Russo, repeating testimony he gave at a 1967 hearing after hypnosis "refreshed" his mem-

ory, said Shaw was using the name "Clem Bertrand." In the courtroom, Russo pointed to Shaw as the man called Bertrand.

The meeting, Russo said, took place in Ferrie's New Orleans apartment about three months before Kennedy was shot of death. The Warren Commission in its official investigation concluded that Oswald alone was the assassin. Assistant District Attorney James Alcock questioned Russo:

Q. What conversation took place in the presence of the defendant?

A. Well, Ferrie carried around a bunch of clippings with him . . . I could see Kennedy's name on them. . . .

Q. And what was David Ferrie saying?

A. Well, he paced back and forth on the floor. He carried the clippings . . . There was some kind of Latin, or Spanish, recording playing . . . He was walking up and down and telling how this projected assassination team would carry

out the assassination of Kennedy. He told them about triangulation of crossfire. (Russo demonstrated, holding up three fingers.)

"He (Ferie) said perhaps there would be a diversionary shot . . . and the other two would shoot for the kill or the direct hit," Russo said.

"He said the diversionary shot if fired would be fired to attract attention," Russo added.

Q. And the last two shots. They were to be fired simultaneously?

A. They were. (Russo testified that Ferrie suggested escaping to Brazil by way of Mexico.)

Q. Did the defendant say anything?

A. At that time, the defendant objected to that. He said it wouldn't be possible to fly out of the area.

Q. Well, then was anything said?

A. Oswald told him—Bertrand—to shut up. He said,

"Ferie knows what he's talking about. He's a pilot."

Russo said the three talked about alibis. He said Shaw talked of "going to the coast." Russo identified both Oswald and Ferrie from photographs put into evidence by the prosecution.

The witness said that when he first met Oswald at Ferrie's apartment, Oswald had "light whiskers . . . perhaps three or four days' growth." He said the first time he saw Oswald, introduced as "Ferie's roommate," Oswald was cleaning or polishing a rifle with a telescopic sight. Handed a rifle by the prosecution, Russo said it was similar to the one Oswald had.

Russo testified that a few days after the apartment meeting, he visited Ferrie again and Oswald was there. "He was leaving town, had his stuff all packed up. Ferrie said, or Oswald said, or it was mentioned, that Oswald was going to Houston," Russo said