

'Plot to Kill JFK Is Hatched Near End of Drinking Party'

NEW ORLEANS — (AP) — The Kennedy assassination plot was hatched at the end of a party where there was "drinking and talking."

So testified Perry Russo, alleged undercover informant who, according to District Attorney Jim Garrison, started all of the furor.

Speaking so rapidly and indistinctly that court reporters asked him to slow down, Russo told his story with his eyes fixed on Garrison.

He said Lee Harvey Oswald was introduced to him as "Leon Oswald," and Clay Shaw gave his name as "Clem Bertrand."

SLOPPY DRESS

Under Garrison's questioning, Russo described the meeting this way:

"The party dwindled away . . . Dave Ferrie began the conversation, pacing back and forth and talking to Bertrand and Oswald . . ."

Ferrie wore baggy pants. Oswald was dirty, as usual, and half shaven. He wore a pullover shirt that was not a T shirt.

"Bertrand was the only one dressed what I'd call decent. He wore a maroon jacket."

This is Russo's account in court, basically in his own words:

Ferrie began the conversation, pacing back and forth and talking to Bertrand and Oswald.

The discussion centered around an assassination of President Kennedy and how it would have to use diversionary tactics. There would be two to three people involved.

'SCAPEGOAT'

One person would shoot the diversionary shot and the other would shoot the "good shot." One man would have to be the "scapegoat." Ferrie talked of "triangulation of crossfire."

Bertrand listened during this phase.

Ferrie talked about the availability of exits. He had two proposals — one man sacrificed would give enough time for the others to escape.

Ferrie was the pilot. He said they would go to Mexico and on to Brazil and then on to Cuba. Or they would go direct to Cuba.

Bertrand interrupted to say as soon as the shot was fired the world would know about it and they could not get a plane out of Mexico.

Bertrand said he and Ferrie would have to be in the public eye on the day of the assassination.

SHAW FINGERED

Ferrie then said he would make a speech at Southeastern Louisiana State College in Hammond. Bertrand said he would go to the West Coast for his company on business.

It was here, after Garrison had built Russo's testimony to a high pitch, that he asked Russo to step down, walk to the man he knew as Bertrand and place his hand over that man's head.

Russo strode firmly around the defense table, stopped behind Clay Shaw and placed his hand palm downward about eight inches over Shaw's head.

Shaw, holding a cigaret, gazed straight at the judges' bench. He was slumped in the chair, but rigid.

The court then recessed.

'WASHED UP'

After the three-judge panel of judges reconvened, Russo continued his story, backtracking under Garrison's questions:

Ferrie was talking about where and what stops would be made on the way to Brazil or Cuba . . . Bertrand said they couldn't leave the country because the world would know of the assassination.

Oswald said, "Oh, shut up. Leave him (Ferrie) alone. He knows what he's talking about. He's the pilot."

Bertrand answered, "As far as I'm concerned, he's a washed-up pilot."

Ferrie offered a solution that the people involved should be in the public eye and be around a lot of people who could testify later they were at such and such a place at such and such a time.

Bertrand said he would be on the West Coast. Oswald said nothing else.

'OSWALD UPSET'

Garrison stopped this testimony to ask whether Russo ever saw Oswald again. Russo said he saw Oswald twice more.

"The first time we met," Russo said, "Oswald made a crack about not wanting me up there (during the conspiracy discussion). He seemed disturbed about the fact I was there . . ."

"The first occasion I saw Oswald (after the meeting in Ferrie's apartment), he was wiping or cleaning a rifle — bolt action. It had a sight on it — for hunting it looked like."

Garrison stopped Russo, drew a rifle from beneath the prosecution table, and placed it on the table before Shaw's attorneys, F. Irving Dymond, William Wegmann and Edward Wegmann.

The lawyers inspected the weapon.

WIPE TROUBLE

"Tell us whatever similarities you may or may not see between this rifle and the one Oswald was holding," Garrison asked Russo.

"The difference to my mind," said Russo, "is one end of the sight (on Oswald's gun) was not nearly so bubble-shaped as this gun. It had the same bolt mechanism. This is a polished brown stock and Oswald's gun was a dull brown."

Russo said the last time he saw Oswald, he walked into Ferrie's apartment and Os-

wald was telling Ferrie about some trouble with Oswald's wife.

"Ferrie was telling Oswald, 'Don't worry, I'll handle it.' And I excused myself and left."

3 SUBPENAES

The hearing recessed after the defense filed three motions for writs of subpoena.

Those subpoenaed are the registrar at Tulane University, where Russo did some undergraduate study; the registrar at Loyola University, from which Russo received his bachelor's degree and studied law for a year; and the personnel manager for Equitable Life Assurance Co., Russo's employer.