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By LAURA FOREMAN  
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NEW ORLEANS AP - A witness in Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison's Kennedy assassination probe said Tuesday that members of a National Broadcasting Co. news team sought his help "to wreck the Garrison investigation."

Perry R. Russo, meeting with newsmen in Garrison's office, said the NBC team alternated promises and threats in repeated efforts to enlist his cooperation.

The team tried to persuade him to appear on Monday night's NBC television special about the Garrison probe, Russo added.

The network denied Russo's detailed accusations.

In its program, NBC said, "Russo's answers to a series of questions indicate, in the language of the polygraph operator, deception-criteria," and the network said Garrison knew this.

Leonard Gurvich, a private investigator who said he supervised the test, stated that Russo did not flunk. Gurvich said the polygraph operator was unable to get specific readings because Russo "was highly nervous" during the two test attempts.

Shaw, 54, a wealthy retired New Orleans businessman, is under

indictment on charges of conspiracy to murder President John F. Kennedy, who was assassinated in Dallas Nov. 22, 1963.

The indictment was based largely on Russo's grand jury testimony.

Russo, 25, an insurance salesman, told the grand jury he attended a party in September, 1963 at the home of onetime airline pilot David W. Ferrie. After the party, Russo said, he heard Ferrie, Lee Harvey Oswald and Shaw plot Kennedy's death.

Ferrie and Oswald are now dead. Shaw is free under \$10,000 bond, awaiting trial.

The Warren Commission found that Oswald acted alone in killing Kennedy. Garrison

has said the commission is <sup>WRONG</sup> that Kennedy died as a result of a conspiracy hatched in New Orleans.

Garrison appeared briefly at the start of Russo's news conference. He had little to say about the NBC program. Earlier, he accused NBC of using "the big lie" in an attempt to wreck his investigation.

"I think the lie could have been handled much more effectively by the Justice Department," he said. "But, of course, there is more experience there."

Russo told newsmen that Walter Sheridan of the NBC news staff offered to "set me up in California" if he cooperated. He said: "Sheridan offered to set me up in California, protect my job and guarantee that Garrison would never get me extradited back to Louisiana." Russo said Sheridan made the promises if he would "side with NBC and the defense."

Russo identified two other persons he said contacted him on behalf of NBC as Richard Townley of WDSU-TV here and writer James Phelan of the Saturday Evening Post.

He said Townley told him the team had been "working closely with the defense" and had been swapping information with Shaw's attorneys. Russo said Townley threatened to wreck his personal reputation unless he cooperated.

"He said that Mr. Dymond (defense lawyer F. Irvin Dymond) was going to tear me apart on the stand, and that after the trial was over I would be discredited in everyone's eyes," Russo said.

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Flag bill correction

WASHINGTON-Flag bill NL A043WX to remove "burning" sub for 3rd graf; to 16.

The measure would set maximum penalties of a year in prison and a \$1,000 fine for casting contempt on the flag by defacing, defiling, mutilating or trampling on it or any representation of it.

Similar etc. 4th graf  
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In New York, an NBC spokesman said Townley had talked with Russo on several occasions, but "denied telling him he was working closely with the defense or threatening to ruin Russo's reputation."

"On the contrary," the spokesman continued, "Townley says it was Russo who brought up the subject of reputation and says Russo admitted the defense could 'tear him apart.'"

"Russo suggested to Townley that Townley should act as a go-between between Russo and the defense lawyers," the spokesman said. "Russo said if defense lawyers ask him the right questions at the trial, then he would voice his doubts about identifying Clay Shaw."

Townley issued a blanket denial of any CIA complicity, the spokesman said, adding that Russo expressed doubts to Sheridan, Townley and Phelan on separate occasions that his pretrial testimony was entirely true. He said Russo asked the NBC team on separate occasions to "find a way out" for him.

"This is the same man who told Townley it was now difficult for him to distinguish between reality and fantasy," the spokesman said.

He added that there is "absolutely no truth" to Russo's statements about Sheridan.

Ed Planer, news director of WDSU-TV, said here that Russo's "versions of his conversations with Richard Townley are not the same as the dated and timed memorandum that Richard Townley wrote concerning their conversations." WDSU-TV is the NBC affiliate in New Orleans.

Russo said he was told that nothing "would be held against me" if he cooperated.

Russo said he was told by members of the NBC team that both the network and the Central Intelligence Agency were "out to wreck the Garrison investigation."

The CIA was mentioned repeatedly during his talks with Sheridan, a former Justice Department investigator, he added.

Garrison claims that Kennedy was killed by anti-Castro Latin Americans who once worked for the CIA.

The district attorney contends the CIA covered up the circumstances of the assassination because its former personnel were involved.

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