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JFK 'Death Plot' Dispute Thickens

NEW ORLEANS, La. (AP) — Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison's presidential assassination investigation found itself in more controversy today after a star witness provided a denial to statements aired by the National Broadcasting Co.

Perry Russo told newsmen yesterday members of an NBC news team sought his help "to wreck the Garrison investigation."

He added that the NBC team alternated promises and threats in repeated efforts to enlist his cooperation.

In New York, the network denied Russo's detailed accusations.

In its Monday night televised program NBC said Garrison placed Russo on the witness stand during the preliminary hearing for Clay L. Shaw knowing that the witness had failed a lie detector test relevant to his testimony.

"Russo's answers to a series of questions indicate, in the language of the polygraph operator, 'deception criteria,'" NBC said.

Leonard Gurvich, a private investigator who supervised the test, denied Russo flunked and said the polygraph operator was unable to get specific readings because Russo was "highly nervous."

Shaw, 54, a wealthy retired

New Orleans businessman, has been indicted on charges of conspiracy to murder President John F. Kennedy who was assassinated in Dallas, Tex., Nov. 22, 1963. The indictment was based largely on Russo's grand jury testimony.

Russo, 25, a Baton Rouge insurance salesman, told the grand jury he attended a party in September 1963, at the home of David W. Ferrie. Russo said it was there he heard Shaw, Lee Harvey Oswald and Ferrie plot to kill the President.

The Warren Commission said it found no credible evidence that Oswald was aided in the assassination of Kennedy.

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

Garrison appeared briefly at the start of Russo's news conference in his office.

Russo told newsmen, Walter Sheridan of the NBC news staff offered "to set me up in California, protect my job and guarantee Garrison would never get me extradited back to Louisiana" if he cooperated.