

# Witness Tells 'Plot' on JFK

Compiled from AP and UPI

NEW ORLEANS — Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison's "mystery witness" told a court hearing today that he heard Clay L. Shaw, Lee Harvey Oswald and David W. Ferrie plot to kill President Kennedy.

Perry Russo, a former associate of Ferrie's, testified at a preliminary hearing on Garrison's accusations of conspiracy against Shaw that he heard the murder of Kennedy being discussed at a party in Ferrie's apartment.

Russo's testimony stamped him as the "confidential informant" cited by Garrison as the source who "saw the conspirators and heard the plans."

Russo, a former student and now a Baton Rouge, La., insurance man, said Ferrie urged Shaw and Oswald to use "diversionary tactics" in any assassination attempt.

The hearing by three district judges was held to determine whether Garrison has the evidence to hold Shaw, 54-year-old former managing director of the New Orleans International Trade Mart, for trial.

Russo said Ferrie told Shaw and Oswald that either two or three persons should be involved in an attempt on the President's life — one or two to create a diversion. The third man should be a "good shot," Russo quoted Ferrie.

Russo described the scene

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in Ferrie's apartment this way:

"There seemed to be some sort of party in progress. They were drinking and talking."

The party died out Russo said, and the only ones left were himself, Ferrie, "Leon Oswald" and "Clem Bertrand."

On the direction of Garrison, Russo walked behind the

chair of Clay L. Shaw in the courtroom. Asked to point out the man he was introduced to as Clay Bertrand, Russo held his hand over Shaw's head.

Shaw looked straight ahead, impassive. He has denied any part in an assassination conspiracy. He was arrested by Garrison on March 1 and released on \$10,000 bond. Today's hearing was only to determine if sufficient evidence exists to hold him for trial.

Russo described the talk in Ferrie's apartment in these words:

"David Ferrie began the conversation after some excuse for my being there. He began pacing back and forth and talking to Bertrand and Oswald."

"These discussions centered around how the assassination of Kennedy would have to use diversionary tactics."

Under questioning from Garrison, Russo said that Shaw had said he would go to San Francisco the day of the planned assassination. Ferrie planned to be at the Southeastern Louisiana College in Hammond.

Ferrie, a former airline pilot, was found dead of a brain hemorrhage in his New Orleans apartment Feb. 22, a few days after Garrison mentioned him as a "major figure" in his probe.

Oswald, named by the Warren Commission as the assassin of President Kennedy in Dallas Nov. 22, 1963, was later shot to death by Dallas nightclub owner Jack Ruby.

Russo said Ferrie told the meeting, which Russo said occurred in "mid-September" of 1963, that one of the conspirators would have to be sacrificed.

Russo testified that he knew Bertrand as "Clem Bertrand," not Clay Bertrand.

Garrison had alleged that Clay Bertrand was an alias used by Shaw.

A New Orleans lawyer, Dean Andrews Jr., told the Warren Commission that a "Clay Bertrand" telephoned him after the assassination and asked him to represent Oswald, named by the com-

Russo graduated in 1964 from Loyola University of the South in New Orleans, with a degree in political science. He is around 5 feet 9 inches tall, and was dressed in a brown Ivy League style suit for today's hearing. He wore a tie with diagonal stripes.

Russo originally met Ferrie at a Civil Air Patrol meeting in Kenner, La.

Russo said he was impressed by Ferrie's "demonstrations" at the meeting.

Asked what the demonstrations consisted of, Russo said: "He put on a demonstration of hypnotic ability," using some of those present at the meeting.

Ferrie listed himself in the city directory as a psychologist.



PERRY RAYMOND RUSSO  
Star witness

mission as the lone assassin of Kennedy.

Under questioning from Garrison, Russo said Shaw listened to Ferrie's explanation during the first part of the discussion.

Russo said Ferrie reminded the group that he was a pilot and he thought it would be possible, in an escape, to fly to Mexico, refuel and fly on to Brazil or even Cuba.

However, Russo said Ferrie acknowledged there was risk in flying to Cuba because of possible hostile fire that might greet a strange incoming aircraft.

Russo said Shaw said, that once a shot was fired at the President the whole world would know about it and it might be dangerous to land in Mexico.

Russo's testimony dropped a bombshell into the proceedings, which previously had been concerned with routine testimony from policemen who had once arrested Oswald, or had photographed Ferrie's apartment.

Shaw's lawyers objected to the testimony on the grounds it was all hearsay.

When the objections were turned down, defense attorney William Wegmann said:

"The court is saying the preliminary hearing may be used by the state for going on a fishing expedition."