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Court Hearing

An Informer's Story of the 'Kennedy Plot'

United Press

New Orleans

District Attorney James Garrison yesterday revealed his "confidential informant" as a 25-year-old insurance salesman who said he heard Lee Harvey Oswald, Clay Shaw and David W. Ferrie plotting the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963.

Perry R. Russo, an insurance salesman of Baton Rouge, La., testified at a preliminary hearing for Shaw, the 54-year-old former managing director of the New Orleans International Trade Mart.

Garrison has booked Shaw for "conspiracy to commit murder" and accused him in affidavits with conspiring to kill Mr. Kennedy.

Russo said he looked on as the three men argued about escape routes, and discussed "triangulation of cross-fire," at a party in Ferrie's apartment.

Russo pointed out Shaw in the courtroom as the man he met at the party as "Clem Bertrand." He identified Oswald and Ferrie from photographs.

DAY

Russo's testimony took up much of the first day of a preliminary hearing to determine whether Garrison has enough evidence to try Shaw for conspiracy.

Russo said he saw Oswald four times in New Orleans, in the months before Kennedy was assassinated November 22, 1963. He knew him as "Leon Oswald," he said.

He described Oswald as a dirty, half-shaven and unpleasant figure who sharply disagreed at the meeting on the best methods and once told "Bertrand" to "shut up and leave him (Ferrie) alone. He knows what he's doing."



AP Wirephoto

RAYMOND RUSSO
A story of murder

NAME

Russo's name does not appear in the national archives in Washington among the hundreds of persons questioned by the Warren Commission, which concluded that Oswald was the lone assassin of Mr. Kennedy. The FBI declined comment on

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whether it had ever questioned Russo.

But in a newspaper interview on February 24 in Louisiana, Russo said he once heard Ferrie threaten to "get" President Kennedy.

DEAD

Both Oswald and Ferrie are dead. Oswald was shot two days after the assassination by Dallas nightclub owner Jack Ruby.

Ferrie died of a brain hemorrhage in his New Orleans apartment February 22, a few days after Garrison called him a "major figure" in his probe of the assassination.

Russo said that Ferrie advised Shaw and Oswald that three persons should be involved, one a "good shot"; and that one might have to be sacrificed and the others should be in the "public eye" on the day of the killing. Shaw was in San Francisco at a business luncheon the day of the assassination.

Russo said such technical ballistic subjects as "triangulation of cross-fire" were discussed and Ferrie, a pilot, explored the possibilities of escaping to Cuba by plane.

Russo's revelation came before a three-judge district court panel in a packed room in New Orleans criminal court building.

INTERVIEW

In the February 24 interview with the Baton Rouge State Times, Russo did not mention anything about the 1963 meeting. He said he saw Ferrie's picture in the newspaper in connection with Garrison's investigation and wrote Garrison about a conversation he once had in which Ferrie allegedly told that "we will get him (Kennedy) and it won't be long."

Russo said then he had forgotten the statement until he saw Ferrie's picture. Yesterday he talked about the September, 1963, meeting for what was apparently the first time.

Shaw's lawyers objected to Russo's testimony on the grounds it was all hearsay, but the objections were turned down.