

'PLAYED ALONG WITH SCHEME'

NBC Offered 'Deal' to Ruin DA's Case, Russo Claims

Star witness Perry R. Russo said today he "played along" with a National Broadcasting Co. team whose members told him they were out to wreck Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison's Kennedy death plot investigation.

Russo met the press in the DA's office shortly before 2 p. m. and told newsmen an NBC representative offered to "set me up in California" if he cooperated with the network's attack on Garrison.

The witness's press conference came in response to an NBC special report last night which questioned the authenticity of his evidence against Clay L. Shaw.

THE PROGRAM, quoted Russo as saying he had not told the truth when he accused Shaw of conspiring with the late David W. Ferrie and Lee Harvey Oswald to kill President John F. Kennedy.

Today, Russo said he had never made that statement.

He identified the three persons who contacted him on behalf of NBC as Walter Sheridan of the NBC news staff, Richard Townley of WDSU-TV at New Orleans and Saturday Evening Post writer James Phelan.

HE SAID TOWNLEY told him the group had been "working closely with the de-

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fense" and had been swapping information with Shaw's attorneys.

Russo indicated that Townley threatened him with wrecking his personal reputation unless he cooperated with the NBC staff and its program.

"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."

HOWEVER, THE witness said he was told nothing "would be held against me"

if he cooperated in the anti-Garrison program.

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

Russo said the CIA was mentioned "repeatedly" during his conversations with Sheridan. He quoted Sheridan as saying that a number of persons involved in the investigation were present or former CIA employees.

GARRISON HAS charged that Kennedy was murdered by anti-Castro Latins who once worked for the CIA. He said the powerful intelligence service covered up the circumstances of Kennedy's death because its former personnel was involved.

Russo said he was in constant contact with the DA's office while Townley, Phelan and Sheridan made repeated visits to attempt to persuade him to appear on last night's program.

"Sheridan offered to set me up in California, protect my job and guarantee that Garrison would never get me extradited back to Louisiana," he said.

RUSSO SAID Sheridan made the promises if the witness would "side with NBC and the defense."

Russo quoted Phelan as warning him that Garrison would "leave me standing in the cold all alone and that I would be the only one who would get hurt."

Garrison appeared briefly at the start of the news conference, but said he had nothing more to say about NBC and its critical presentation.

EARLIER, HE charged that NBC is using "the big lie" as its "main weapon" to destroy the Kennedy inquiry.

"There really should not be much question left about where NBC's orders are coming from," he declared.

The NBC documentary, "The JFK Conspiracy: The Case of Jim Garrison," declared that Garrison used testimony which "did not pass a lie detector test" to hold Shaw for trial on charges that he

conspired to kill John F. Kennedy.

FURTHERMORE, THE network commentary said Garrison ordered the polygraph test and knew his witness did not pass.

The DA jumped the gun on NBC Saturday by filing an official complaint with the Federal Communications Commission "for activities interfering with the prosecution of an open case."

The network used Alvin Beauboeuf, Dean A. Andrews Jr., convicted burglar John "John the Baptist" Cancler, Saturday Evening Post writer James Phelan, Layton Patrick Martens, a Yale psychology professor and a New York code expert in its attack on the Garrison investigation.

NBC commentator Frank McGee summed up the program by asserting:

"We cannot say that the murder of John F. Kennedy did not happen the way Jim Garrison says it did. We cannot say he does not have the evidence to prove it."

"We can say this: The case he has built against Clay Shaw is based on testimony that did not pass a lie detector test Garrison ordered — Garrison knew it. One prospective witness admitted he was going to lie."

The DA, responding to questions this morning, said he did not watch the NBC program last night.

"I had more important things to do," he said, "and the program does not justify comment."

He said he might have something further to say today or tomorrow.

Meanwhile, the man who was in charge of giving a lie detector test to star Garrison witness Perry R. Russo said Russo proved incapable of taking a polygraph examination.

LEONARD GURVICH, a partner in Gurvich Brothers Detective Agency, said Russo was "highly nervous" when a polygraph test was attempted several months ago.

The test was halted, Gurvich said, and he and Asst. DA Andrew Sciambra attempted to calm Russo by talking with him.

"After this short pause," the detective said, "a second attempt was made and again the polygraph operator advised he was unable to get specific readings."

Gurvich said he is not aware that any further attempts were made.

Garrison contends Kennedy was murdered at Dallas in 1963 by "Latin adventurers" and others who were angry with Kennedy over his handling of the Bay of Pigs invasion and the Cuban missile crisis.

Beauboeuf, a former roommate of the late David Ferrie, said two Garrison investigators tried to bribe him to give false testimony in the case.

Beauboeuf's charge repeated earlier charges which the New Orleans police department has said were not true. Asst. Police Supt. P. J. Troclair announced last week that an "intensive investigation" by his department had cleared both Dets. Lynn Loisel and Louis Ivon of the accusations that they attempted to bribe or intimidate Beauboeuf.

ANDREWS, A SUSPENDED DA's assistant in Jefferson Parish, said he could not identify Clay Shaw as the mysterious "Clay Bertrand."

The hip-talking lawyer, wearing his inevitable sunglasses, told the television audience:

"I wouldn't know Clay Shaw if I fell over him on the street dead."

ANDREWS TOLD THE Warren Commission a man he knew as Bertrand asked him to represent Lee Harvey Oswald after the president was killed.

Garrison has charged that Bertrand and Shaw are the same man, and the Orleans Parish Grand Jury has indicted Andrews for refusing to connect the two.

Last night, however, NBC commentator McGee said NBC knows who Clay Bertrand is and that he is not Clay Shaw. The network identified Bertrand as a homosexual and said it was withholding his real identity to save him embarrassment.

McGee said the information about Bertrand has been turned over to the U.S. Justice Department in Washington.

"JOHN THE BAPTIST" Cancler said Garrison investi-

gators Loisel and Ivon attempted to persuade him to enter Shaw's apartment on Dauphine st. and place something in it.

Cancler, a convicted burglar serving time in Parish Prison, said the attempt was made before Shaw was arrested March 1, the same day his home was searched by DA's men who seized five boxes full of papers and personal belongings.

The same charge was printed last week in The New York Times. Cancler several times talked with reporters here who attempted to have him sign a sworn statement backing up his story. Cancler refused.

Phelan, the magazine writer whose story in The Saturday Evening Post, kicked up a small storm of controversy last month, repeated the charges he made in the article.

He said he was given conflicting reports on Russo by the DA's office. Russo is the witness who testified in the preliminary hearing for Shaw.

HE SAID HE overheard Shaw, Ferrie and Oswald plotting Kennedy's murder following a party at Ferrie's Louisiana ave. pkwy. apartment during September, 1963.

Ferrie, a one-time airline pilot, died Feb. 22—five days after the Garrison investigation became public. Oswald, whom the Warren Commission holds responsible for Kennedy's murder, was shot to death by Dallas nightclub owner Jack Ruby two days after the President was killed.

Garrison has contended that Ruby was a party to the conspiracy. In formal pleadings, the DA has charged that Ruby and Oswald met with Shaw at Baton Rouge during the fall of 1963 to plot the President's slaying.

PHELAN SAID AN original report given Garrison by one of his assistants failed to note any testimony about a conspiracy from Russo. He said Russo delivered his courtroom story only after it was suggested to him under the influence of sodium pentathol.

Martens, another Ferrie roommate under indictment for perjury in connection with what Garrison claims was a burglary of munitions at Houma, said he was never aware that Ferrie had a roommate named Lee Harvey Oswald.

He said James Lewallen of New Orleans had roomed with Ferrie and on occasion was called "Lew" or "Lee." The Martens statement was an obvious reference to Russo's testimony at the preliminary hearing.

WHEN HE WAS here during the spring and summer of 1963, Oswald lived with his wife and child in the 4900 block of Magazine st.

The Warren Commission branded Oswald a confused, Communist-oriented youth who killed Kennedy out of sense of frustration and a desire for public attention.

Garrison has said Oswald was a dupe of the conspirators who used him as a diversion while other men shot the President from a grassy knoll overlooking Elm st. in Dallas.

The DA has claimed that Oswald was no Communist—but a federal undercover agent working on behalf of anti-Castro Cuban groups here. He said Oswald's pro-Castro activity was a blind for his true activities.

AN ASSOCIATE professor of law and clinical psychology at Yale University, Dr. Jay Katz, reviewed two manuscripts of what the network said was Russo's tests under truth serum.

Katz said subjects under hypnosis and truth serum

frequently have difficulty determining the difference between facts and fantasy. He gave the opinion that Russo was asked "very leading" questions under the influence of the drug and hypnosis.

A New York cryptographer, Irvin Mann, said he had analyzed the code which Garrison announced he had found in the notebooks of Oswald and Shaw.

MANN SAID IT was "not necessarily" a code and that the deciphering method used by Garrison might have turned up any one of several numbers.

Garrison said his office had deciphered two identical numbers found in the Shaw and Oswald address books. The result, he told Criminal District Court in an official pleading, was the unlisted 1963 Dallas telephone number of Jack Ruby.

The witness who NBC commentator McGee said failed a lie detector test was Vernon Bundy, an admitted dope addict serving time at Parish Prison. Bundy told judges at Shaw's preliminary hearing that he saw Shaw and Oswald together on the New Orleans lakefront in the fall of 1963. He said he saw Shaw give Oswald money.

M'GEE SAID Garrison was told Bundy failed a polygraph test and added:

"Despite this, Bundy was put on the witness stand by Garrison."

Judge Edward A. Haggerty Jr., who had issued stiff guidelines concerning public comment on the Shaw case, declined to comment.