

## Witness Relates Doubts on Shaw's Conspiracy Case

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NEW ORLEANS, Feb. 11 — The state's chief witness testified today that he had told many persons that he had doubts that Clay L. Shaw, New Orleans businessman, was the man he said he had heard conspiring in 1963 to murder President John F. Kennedy.

Perry Raymond Russo said at one time that he had even told a New Orleans police sergeant who had given him a lie detector test that if were forced to say "yes" or "no" to the question whether Mr. Shaw was at a party where he heard the assassination "conspiracy" discussed, "I would have to say no."

Mr. Russo, a 27-year-old encyclopedia salesman, said he had told Sgt. Edward O'Donnell that he had identified Mr. Shaw positively at a preliminary hearing in March, 1967, because Mr. Shaw's chief defense attorney, F. Irvin Dymond, "had gone for the jugular" on cross-examination at that hearing.

The conversation with Sergeant O'Donnell took place in either June or July, 1967, after Mr. Shaw had been ordered to stand trial largely on a basis of Mr. Russo's testimony.

### Denies Hearing Agreement

Mr. Shaw is being tried for conspiring to murder, a charge punishable by one to 20 years in prison in Louisiana.

Mr. Russo, who appeared tired and edgy after almost two days of testifying, said also that he had never heard Mr. Shaw agree to any plot to kill President Kennedy.

The only person he said he heard mention murdering Mr. Kennedy was David W. Ferrie, a former airline pilot and hypnotist who died shortly after Jim Garrison, New Orleans District Attorney, began an investigation of the assassination.

"We're going to get him," Mr. Russo testified he heard Mr. Ferrie say.

Neither Mr. Shaw nor Lee Harvey Oswald, the others placed at the meeting by Mr. Russo, said anything about killing Mr. Kennedy, the witness testified.

Although Mr. Garrison's assertions that the Kennedy assassination had been planned in New Orleans appeared to be collapsing from lack of substance, the District Attorney's staff was preparing to intro-

duce evidence from spectators who were on the murder scene in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963.

### Told of His Doubts

Mr. Russo testified, under a dogged cross-examination by Mr. Dymond, that he had told several reporters that he had doubts that Mr. Shaw was the man he said he had seen in Mr. Ferrie's apartment in September, 1963.

He said he had made such statements to James Phelan, a freelance reporter who was writing an article for The Saturday Evening Post, George Lardner of The Washington Post, Richard Townley from a New Orleans television station and Walter Sheridan, an investigative reporter for the National Broadcasting Company.

But he said he had been "leading them on" at the request of Mr. Garrison, that the District Attorney wanted to "see how far they would go."

Mr. Garrison bugged his home and his telephone, Mr. Russo testified, and told him to indicate to the reporters that he was wavering in his identification of Mr. Shaw.

Daily, an assistant district attorney or a staff member from the district attorney's office would come by and collect the tapes of such conversations, he testified.

### Charged With Bribery

Mr. Townley and Mr. Sheridan were later charged with bribery after they had agreed to help Mr. Russo establish himself in another state and to find him a job if he would "come clean" about the assassination investigation.

"They're scum," Mr. Russo testified about Mr. Townley and Mr. Sheridan. "I would like to see them in jail."

The state objected to a request by the defense that the tape recordings of conversa-

tions between Mr. Russo and the reporters be played to the jury.

"They might be full of hearsay," said James L. Alcock, Assistant District Attorney.

Criminal District Judge Edward A. Haggerty Jr. refused to order the District Attorney to produce the recordings.

Mr. Russo attempted to reconcile his statements to Sergeant O'Donnell that he was not sure of his identification of Mr. Shaw.

"I was under terrible stress," he said.

### Says He Was Hounded

Reporters were hounding him daily, proclaiming that Mr. Shaw was innocent and warning him that Mr. Garrison would "turn on me" in the end, he said. At one point, he said, he told Mr. Phelan, "I do not know the difference between reality and fantasy."

The young book salesman said that before he testified before a preliminary hearing on the Shaw charges in March, 1967, he was hypnotized three times.

At the first two sessions, a transcript of questions and answers was made, he said.

Mr. Dymond said the defense would call a nationally honored psychiatrist and hypnotist to testify that the questions asked at the first hypnotic sugges-

tion were such that the whole idea of a conspiracy and Mr. Shaw's alleged involvement could have been "implanted" in Mr. Russo's mind.

Judge Haggerty denied a defense motion for a mistrial after Mr. Dymond accused him of commenting on the testimony.

It was the second such motion in the trial, which began Jan. 21.

Today's hearing adjourned in a dispute over the admissibility of testimony given by the late Nicholas Chetta, Orleans Parish coroner, who had questioned Mr. Russo while the witness was under the influence of sodium pentothal, a re-

laxant sometimes referred to as truth serum.

Mr. Chetta's testimony had been allowed at Mr. Shaw's preliminary hearing in March, 1967, but Mr. Dymond said the questions and answers propounded by the coroner and related to a three-judge panel contained hearsay evidence.

Judge Haggerty said he would study the preliminary hearing transcript and decide tomorrow.