

CRIMINAL DISTRICT COURT
PARISH OF ORLEANS
STATE OF LOUISIANA

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STATE OF LOUISIANA	.	198-059
VERSUS	.	1426 (30)
CLAY L. SHAW	.	SECTION "C"

.....

EXCERPT OF
PROCEEDINGS IN OPEN COURT
FEBRUARY 25, 1969 - P.M.

TESTIMONY OF
ARTHUR JEFFERSON BIDDISON

28 pages

BEFORE: THE HONORABLE EDWARD A. HAGGERTY, JR.,
JUDGE, SECTION "C"

Dietrich & Pickett, Inc.
Stenotypists

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NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA 70130-522-3111

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ARTHUR JEFFERSON BIDDISON,

having been first duly sworn, was examined and testified as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

BY MR. DYMOND:

Q For the record, would you kindly state your full name, sir?

A Arthur Jefferson Biddison.

Q Where do you reside?

A 1414 Chartres Street, New Orleans.

Q How long have you lived there, sir?

A Since 1957.

Q What is your occupation, Mr. Biddison?

A I am a real estate man.

Q How long have you been in the real estate business?

A Eight or nine years.

1 Q Mr. Biddison, do you know Clay Shaw, the
2 Defendant in this case?

3 A Yes, I do.

4 Q How long have you known him approximately?

5 A Approximately twenty-three years.

6 Q Mr. Biddison, referring back to the year 1963,
7 did you own an automobile at that time?

8 A Yes, I did.

9 Q Can you tell us what kind of automobile it was?

10 A It was a 1960 black Cadillac sedan.

11 Q I show you a photograph which has been intro-
12 duced in evidence and marked for identi-
13 fication as State-2, and ask you whether
14 you are able to identify this either as
15 your automobile or one which was similar
16 in appearance to your automobile?

17 A Yes.

18 Q As which can you identify it, yours or a simi-
19 lar car?

20 A I can identify it as my automobile.

21 Q How do you do that?

22 A By the house in the background belonging to
23 the man I sold it to.

24 Q Would his name be Hyatt?

25 A Yes.

1 Q Mr. Biddison, from your previous testimony as
2 to how long you have known Mr. Shaw, I
3 would gather you did know him then in 1963,
4 is that correct, sir?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Was he a close friend of yours at that time?

7 A Yes.

8 Q During the year 1963, Mr. Biddison, did you
9 ever have occasion to lend this automomo-
10 bile to Mr. Shaw?

11 A No.

12 Q Could you tell us how you are able to be so
13 positive in that answer, sir?

14 A This car was used by me in my business and
15 Mr. Shaw had a car of his own at that
16 time.

17 Q Do you recall what kind of car he had at that
18 time?

19 A A black Thunderbird I believe.

20 Q Did you ever lend this automobile to anyone
21 else that you remember?

22 A No, this was my personal company car.

23 Q More particularly, did you ever lend this
24 automobile to anyone for a sufficient
25 period for them to be able to take a

1 trip out of town?

2 A Not in 1963.

3 Q When, if ever, did you?

4 A In 1966 when I had two cars. In the summer
5 and fall of 1966.

6 Q Now, Mr. Biddison, during the years you have
7 known Mr. Clay Shaw, have you ever known
8 him to go under any name other than Clay
9 Shaw or Clay L. Shaw?

10 A No.

11 Q In other words, have you ever known him to use
12 an alias?

13 A No.

14 Q Have you ever known any individual by the name
15 of Clay Bertrand?

16 A Never.

17 Q Have you ever known any individual by the name
18 of Clem Bertrand?

19 A Never.

20 Q Mr. Biddison, during the years you have known
21 Mr. Shaw were you reasonably familiar
22 with his circle of friends?

23 A Yes.

24 Q Did you ever know, or hear of, a man by the
25 name of Leon Oswald or Lee Harvey Oswald?

1 A No, not until the assassination.

2 Q Since the assassination have you seen photo-
3 graphs of Oswald?

4 A Yes.

5 Q Do you know Mr. Shaw to be acquainted with
6 anyone by the name of Leon Oswald or
7 Lee Harvey Oswald?

8 A No.

9 Q Have you heard him mention that name?

10 A Never.

11 Q Have you ever known a man by the name of
12 David W. Ferrie?

13 A No.

14 Q Do you know if Mr. Shaw ever knew him?

15 A No.

16 Q Did you hear Mr. Shaw mention David W. Ferrie
17 or Dave Ferrie before being charged in
18 this case?

19 A Never.

20 Q I show you State-1, propoting to be a photo-
21 graph of Lee Harvey Oswald, and ask you
22 if you have ever seen that man in person?

23 A No, I have never seen this man in person.

24 Q Have you ever seen that man in the company of
25 the Defendant, Clay Shaw?

1 A Never.

2 Q I show you another photograph which has been
3 marked for identification as State-3,
4 and introduced into evidence, purporting
5 to be a photograph of the late David W.
6 Ferrie, and ask you to examine that
7 photograph and tell me whether you have
8 ever seen that man in person?

9 A Never.

10 Q Have you ever seen that man in the company of
11 the Defendant, Clay L. Shaw?

12 A Never.

13 Q Now, Mr. Biddison, I show you a photograph
14 which has been marked for identification
15 as State-19, and offered into evidence,
16 purporting to be a photograph of Lee
17 Harvey Oswald with a beard drawn in in
18 pencil, or some other material. I ask
19 you to examine that photograph and ask
20 if you have ever to your knowledge seen
21 the man depicted in that photograph?

22 A Never.

23 Q Have you ever seen the man depicted in this
24 photograph or one similar to him in
25 appearance, in the company of Clay Shaw?

1 A Never.

2 Q During the years you have known or been ac-
3 quainted with Clay L. Shaw, have you be-
4 come acquainted with his manner of dress?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Have you ever known him to wear tight pants?

7 A Never.

8 Q Have you ever known him to wear a hat?

9 A Never.

10 Q Have you ever known him to own a hat other
11 than in military service?

12 A No.

13 Q Mr. Biddison, do you recall when Mr. Clay Shaw
14 took a trip to Europe back in 1966?

15 A Yes, I do.

16 Q What, if anything, particularly recalls to
17 your mind that event?

18 A I drove him to the ship, we went to lunch and
19 to the ship when he boarded the ship.
20 I had leased his home to Mr. and Mrs.
21 A. Rosada for the period he was supposed
22 to be away.

23 Q Do you have a copy of that lease with you?

24 A Yes, I do.

25 MR. ALCOCK:

1 May we see that if you are going to
2 question him about it?

3 MR. DYMOND:

4 Yes.

5 (Whereupon it was marked for identi-
6 fication as Defense Exhibit 53.)

7 BY MR. DYMOND:

8 Q Mr. Biddison, I show you the document which
9 you have just presented to me and which
10 I have marked for identification as
11 D-53, and ask you if you can tell us
12 what this particular document represents?

13 A It represents a lease between Mr. Clay Shaw
14 and Mr. Alberto Fowler, the son-in-law
15 of Mr. and Mrs. Rosada, who leased
16 through my office Mr. Shaw's home for --

17 Q What address is that?

18 A 1313 Dauphine Street, for an initial period
19 of three months commencing on the 4th
20 day of May 1966 to the 3rd day of August
21 1966.

22 Q You say you negotiated this lease as a real
23 estate agent?

24 A As a real estate agent, agent to Mr. Shaw.

25 MR. DYMOND:

1 In connection with the testimony of this
2 witness we would like to offer, file
3 and produce in evidence the document
4 marked as D-53.

5 MR. ALCOCK:

6 No objection.

7 THE COURT:

8 Let it be received in evidence.
9 (Whereupon, the document offered by
10 Counsel was received into evidence.)

11 BY MR. DYMOND:

12 Q To your knowledge, Mr. Biddison, was this lease
13 ever extended from its initial period?

14 A Yes, it was.

15 Q For what period of time, if you know?

16 A For two periods of time, from August 4th to
17 September 3rd and with the approval of
18 Mr. Shaw it was extended again twice
19 through September 20th.

20 Q Even though he was returning prior to that
21 time?

22 A Yes.

23 Q Of what year are you speaking?

24 A 1966. There were two extensions.

25 Q During the time that Mr. Shaw was out of the

1 country did you receive any mail at your
2 home for him?

3 A Not to my knowledge, not at my home.

4 Q Did you receive mail for him from any place
5 else?

6 A Yes, at my office.

7 Q To what name was it addressed?

8 A Mr. Clay Shaw, 900 Royal Street, or care of
9 Marilyn Tate Company, and some mail was
10 brought to our office by Mr. and Mrs.
11 Rosada from his home, and some mail was
12 mailed directly to me at my home knowing
13 I would be forwarding the mail to Mr.
14 Shaw in Europe.

15 Q What did you do with this mail which you re-
16 ceived for Mr. Shaw?

17 A On two occasions what I thought would be mail
18 that didn't need to be deposited in the
19 bank or business affairs and that sort
20 of thing, I put in envelopes on two
21 occasions and mailed to him in Spain and
22 England.

23 Q For the purpose of determining what type of
24 mail this was, Mr. Biddison, whether it
25 consisted of bank deposits and such,

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1 did you have occasion to look individually
2 at each piece of mail received by you for
3 Mr. Shaw?

4 A Yes, I opened all mail because I was not going
5 to mail everything. It was at my discre-
6 tion what I forwarded to him.

7 Q Did you at any time receive any mail either
8 at your office, at your residence or any
9 place else addressed to Clay Bertrand
10 prior to the commencement of the trial
11 of this case?

12 A Never prior to the commencement of the trial
13 of this case.

14 Q How long do you say you have been living at
15 that address?

16 A Since 1957. I restored the building. It was
17 not a post office address prior to that
18 time.

19 Q What year was that, sir?

20 A 1957.

21 Q Could you tell me what type of mailbox you
22 have there, is it a locked mailbox or one
23 that is not locked?

24 A It is a cast-iron post box of probably 1910,
25 1920 vintage, mounted on the side of my

1 garage entrance to my home, which is the
2 main entrance to my home.

3 Q Does it have a locked top on it or not?

4 A No sir.

5 Q Who ordinarily took the mail out of your mail-
6 box at home?

7 A Me.

8 Q Have you ever taken, prior to the commencement
9 of this trial, a letter out of that
10 letterbox addressed to Clay Bertrand?

11 A Never.

12 Q At the address at which you have lived ever
13 since it was a municipal number, Mr.
14 Biddison, has anyone ever lived there by
15 the name of Cliff Boudreaux?

16 A Never.

17 Q Have you ever received any mail at your
18 address addressed to Cliff Boudreaux?

19 A Never.

20 MR. DYMOND:

21 We tender the witness.

22 CROSS-EXAMINATION

23 BY MR. ALCOCK:

24 Q Mr. Biddison, does anyone reside with you at
25 that address now?

1 A No.

2 Q In 1966 did anyone reside with you at that
3 address?

4 A For a short period after he returned from
5 Europe Mr. Shaw stayed at my home until
6 he could get back in his home. This was
7 in September 1966.

8 Q Can you recall approximately when Shaw took
9 up residence in your home, or temporary
10 residence in your home?

11 A It was about five to ten days before the
12 21st of September, at which time he was
13 able to get back into his home.

14 Q He got back in his home on September 21st?

15 A Yes, according to our records, and I believe
16 that is the correct date.

17 Q And he resided in your home approximately one
18 week? Would that be a fair estimate?

19 A Yes.

20 Q At this time who was residing in your home,
21 that is beside yourself and the Defendant?

22 A Just myself.

23 Q Has anyone else ever resided with you at that
24 location?

25 A Yes.

1 Q Who was that?

2 A Mr. Fred Tate.

3 Q When did he reside there?

4 A 1964 and 1965 I believe.

5 Q Anyone else?

6 A Mr. Clifton Gomez.

7 Q G-o-m-e-z?

8 A Yes.

9 Q When did he reside there?

10 A Up until about 1961.

11 Q From what date?

12 A From the time the building was first restored
13 in 1957.

14 Q Is he a relative of yours?

15 A No, he was a business partner in that restora-
16 tion.

17 Q Has anyone else resided at your address at
18 1414 Chartres Street?

19 A No, but I have had many guests in my home, but
20 no permanent residents.

21 Q Going back to the year 1963, how often would
22 you say you saw the Defendant in that
23 year?

24 A I saw Mr. Shaw very seldom in 1963 because we
25 had completed the restoration of the

1 Spanish Stables prior to that and Mr.
2 Shaw was fully involved in his promotion,
3 selling bonds to build the International
4 Trade Mart.

5 Q I take it you saw very little of him in 1963?

6 A 1963, yes.

7 Q How about the summer of 1963?

8 A Particularly in the summer.

9 Q Have you ever lent your Cadillac automobile to
10 the Defendant?

11 A Yes, I have.

12 Q When was that?

13 A In the fall of 1966.

14 Q Was that the same black Cadillac that has been
15 described?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Do you recall if he made any out of town trips
18 in that Cadillac?

19 A I believe he drove to the best of my recollec-
20 tion to see his parents in Hammond,
21 Louisiana, on one occasion.

22 Q How many times did you lend him your automobile
23 during that period?

24 A At the most three times.

25 Q Can you recall on what dates those were?

1 A No, I cannot.

2 Q Is it your testimony, Mr. Biddison, you received
3 to the best of your recollection no mail
4 in the summer of 1966 or the early fall
5 of 1966 at your home for the Defendant?

6 A That's my best recollection.

7 Q Could that be incorrect?

8 A No mail forwarded to Mr. Shaw. There may have
9 been letters addressed directly to him
10 at my home.

11 Q That would necessarily have to be someone who
12 would know you were close acquaintances,
13 would it not?

14 A That's correct.

15 Q Do you know whether or not when the Defendant
16 left on his European trip he executed a
17 change of address?

18 A No, I have no recollection of that. It was my
19 understanding Mr. Shaw's mail was for-
20 warded to my office.

21 Q Having no recollection, would you dispute --

22 A I am still getting mail for Mr. Shaw at my
23 office addressed to him at my office
24 even today.

25 Q Even today?

1 A Yes.

2 Q Mr. Biddison, have you ever executed a change
3 of address form with the Postal Depart-
4 ment?

5 A Have I?

6 Q Yes.

7 A Yes.

8 Q Are you familiar somewhat with the form used?

9 A No, I cannot say that I am.

10 Q I am going to show you what has been marked
11 for the purpose of identification as
12 State-27, and ask you first of all if
13 you are familiar with the form depicted
14 in this exhibit?

15 A Yes, I have seen such a form.

16 Q Have you seen that particular form?

17 A No, I have not.

18 Q Where have you seen a similar form?

19 A I have had them in my office for forwarding
20 clients' mail and mail myself. I believe
21 it is a pink form.

22 Q You are familiar with the form, is that cor-
23 rect?

24 A Yes.

25 Q Having seen this form before and being familiar

1 with it, can you say what this depicts?

2 A It depicts the change of address for Mr. Clay
3 L. Shaw cancelling a forwarding order to
4 1414 Chartres and forwarding the mail to
5 1313 Dauphine Street.

6 Q To your knowledge did the Defendant ever
7 execute such a form?

8 A To my knowledge, no.

9 Q You are testifying then, as you recall it, the
10 Defendant did return to his residence on
11 September 21, 1966, is that correct?

12 A To the best of my recollection, yes.

13 Q Mr. Biddison, do you know who your postman is?

14 A Yes, I do.

15 Q Have you had the same postman for some period
16 of time?

17 A Yes.

18 Q Do you know his name?

19 A I do now.

20 Q What is his name?

21 A James Hardiman.

22 Q Approximately how long has he been your post-
23 man?

24 A As far as I know he has always been my post-
25 man at that address.

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1 Q Have you ever had any difficulty with Mr.
2 Hardiman?

3 A Never.

4 Q Did you have occasion to ask Mr. Hardiman
5 about his testimony in this case?

6 A Yes, I did, when it was published in the news-
7 paper.

8 Q Would that be after he testified?

9 A No, prior to that.

10 Q What was published in the newspaper?

11 A Mr. Garrison's opening statement.

12 Q Did that name anybody in the opening statement?

13 A I beg your pardon?

14 Q Did they name Mr. Hardiman in the opening
15 statement?

16 A No, they named me and my address in the open-
17 ing statement.

18 Q Did you know about Mr. Hardiman prior to the
19 article being published in the newspaper,
20 about his possible testimony in this case?

21 A No.

22 Q Do you know of any reason that may be parti-
23 cular to yourself and Mr. Hardiman, why
24 Mr. Hardiman would say something untrue
25 about delivery of mail to your address?

1 MR. DYMOND:

2 I object to that, if the Court please.

3 THE COURT:

4 I sustain the objection.

5 BY MR. ALCOCK:

6 Q Have you always, as far as you know, found

7 Mr. Hardiman to be a truthful person?

8 MR. DYMOND:

9 We object, Your Honor. This man is not
10 on the stand as a character witness
11 for Hardiman, and even if he were
12 he could only testify as to reputa-
13 tion.

14 THE COURT:

15 Are you trying to prove his character?

16 MR. ALCOCK:

17 I am not trying to prove good character,
18 I am trying to determine whether or
19 not there was any prior relation-
20 ship between this man and Mr. Hardiman
21 which would influence Mr. Hardiman.

22 MR. DYMOND:

23 The nature of the question is such as to
24 try to show truthfulness on the part
25 of Mr. Hardiman, and if the State

1 desires to do that I suggest the
2 only way they can properly do so
3 is by witnesses testifying as to
4 his reputation.

5 THE COURT:

6 I think he has already answered the ques-
7 tion, was there any previous diffi-
8 culty between Mr. Hardiman and the
9 witness. I sustain the objection.

10 BY MR. ALCOCK:

11 Q Do you recall how much mail you received at
12 your office for the Defendant during the
13 period he was in Europe?

14 A What comes to mind is tons of it. I had a
15 great deal of mail for Mr. Shaw that
16 summer.

17 Q Did you open every piece of mail?

18 A Every piece of mail.

19 Q Personal letters as well as --

20 A Personal letters as well as business letters.

21 I have been Mr. Shaw's agent for many
22 years and I have his complete confidence
23 to handle such matters for him.

24 Q Have you and the Defendant resided together on
25 any occasion prior to the fall of 1966?

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1 A Prior to the fall of 1966?

2 Q Yes.

3 A Yes.

4 Q Where and when?

5 A 537 Barracks Street in 1947 to 1948 and at
6 906 Esplanade to 1950.

7 Q Did you own 906 Esplanade?

8 A Mr. Shaw did.

9 Q On any other occasions did you reside with
10 the Defendant?

11 A Subsequent to that time?

12 Q Yes.

13 A No.

14 Q Are you from New Orleans originally?

15 A No sir.

16 Q Where are you from?

17 A Tulsa, Oklahoma.

18 Q Are you a close social friend of Mr. Shaw?

19 A I am a business and social friend of Mr. Shaw.

20 Q Was anyone else residing at 1414 Chartres
21 Street at the time the Defendant was in
22 Europe aside from yourself?

23 A No.

24 Q Have you got mail, Mr. Biddison, for other
25 individuals at your address at 1414 Chartres

1 Street?

2 A Yes.

3 Q Who might they be?

4 A I received mail at my home address last summer
5 for approximately three months for Mr.
6 C. C. Bunker, who was my houseguest. I
7 have received mail this winter in December
8 and January for Mr. Sherman Schroeder,
9 who was a guest of mine and had mail for-
10 warded to my address while he was away
11 from the city here.

12 Q Anyone else?

13 A I have received mail at my home for many people
14 over the years.

15 Q Let us say from 1963 on.

16 A I received all the mail for my invalid mother,
17 Lydia F. Biddison, and I received mail
18 for my deceased father Val Gene Biddison.
19 I receive Social Security checks for my
20 mother, Mrs. Biddison. Other names
21 escape me for the moment. There are
22 others.

23 Q The mail you received at your office for the
24 Defendant, had that been forwarded from
25 1313 or was it mailed directly to your

1 office?

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2 A I had received mail directly at my office at
3 that time, mail brought to my office for
4 the tenant of Mr. Shaw's home that was
5 not redirected. Both types of mail I
6 received at my office.

7 Q Did you actually receive letters that had been
8 forwarded by the Postal Department to
9 900 Royal Street from 1313?

10 A To the best of my recollection that was a
11 business change of address Mr. Shaw used
12 after his retirement, because I got
13 magazines and all sorts of things directed
14 to my office, I even do today.

15 Q I am referring to the mail you got during the
16 summer and fall of 1966.

17 A I was receiving mail at that time too. Mr.
18 Shaw was a licensed salesman at my office
19 after his retirement.

20 Q Did you receive any mail forwarded to you by
21 the Post Office at 900 Royal Street from
22 1313?

23 A No, not by them.

24 Q But you received mail sent to your office?

25 A I did.

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1 Q By the people who lived at his house, tons of
2 it?

3 A Not tons of it, but I received mail that would
4 come to my office for Mr. Shaw usually
5 in large quantities.

6 Q How much mail did you receive from the office
7 at 1313 Dauphine?

8 A I would say two or three letters a week per-
9 haps. They brought them in irregularly
10 to us.

11 Q Do you still own the black Cadillac?

12 A No sir. I was negotiating to sell it in the
13 summer and fall of 1966, and I sold it
14 in the late fall of 1966 to my maintenance
15 man, Mr. Hyatt who still owns the car.

16 Q Do you recognize the exhibit displayed to you
17 by Mr. Dymond as being your former
18 automobile?

19 A Yes, because of the location it was taken.

20 Q That is the way you recognize it, because of
21 the house it was taken in front of?

22 A Yes.

23 Q Do you ever recall lending any of your house-
24 guests your automobile, the houseguests
25 you have named?

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1 A No.

2 Q 1414 Chartres Street became a mailing address
3 in 1957, would that be correct?

4 A Yes.

5 Q Were you subpoenaed to appear here today,
6 Mr. Biddison?

7 A No.

8 Q You came of your own volition?

9 A Yes sir.

10 Q Because of your friendship with the Defendant?

11 A Yes sir.

12 MR. ALCOCK:

13 No further questions.

14 REDIRECT EXAMINATION

15 BY MR. DYMOND:

16 Q Did you testify Mr. Shaw worked as a salesman
17 for you after his retirement?

18 A Yes sir, he is a licensed salesman in my
19 office and actively engaged in the sale
20 of real estate after his retirement from
21 the International Trade Mart.

22 Q Getting back to 1966, when Mr. Shaw was in
23 Europe; you testified you received no
24 letters addressed to Clay Bertrand?

25 A Yes sir.

1 Q Did you receive any letters addressed to Clem

2 Bertrand?

3 A Never.

4 Q At any address?

5 A Never.

6 MR. DYMOND:

7 That is all I have.

8 MR. ALCOCK:

9 No further questions.

10 THE COURT:

11 You are excused.

12 (Whereupon, the witness was excused.)

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