

More 'Suicides' Predicted

JFK Death Is 'Solved,'
New Orleans DA Says

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By George Lardner Jr.
Washington Post Staff Writer

NEW ORLEANS, Feb. 24
District Attorney Jim Garrison
announced to a corridor
jammed with newsmen today
that "we have solved the as-
sassination of President Ken-
nedy beyond any shadow of a
doubt."

Not a conspirator will
escape, Garrison said in the
improptu, belief-boggling
press conference held in the
lobby of the Shell Building in
downtown New Orleans.

"The only way they can get
away from us is by killing
themselves," the District At-
torney declared, "because
we're going to get every one
of them . . . we will arrest
everyone, not just some, but
everyone involved."

Looking tired and admit-
tedly "snappish" after long
hours without sleep, Garrison
predicted that "there will
probably be other suicides" as
a result of his controversial
investigation.

Orleans Parish Coroner
Nicholas Chetta announced
earlier in the day that the
sudden death of David W.
Ferrie, the jack-of-all-trades
once questioned in the as-
sassination, appeared the result
of natural causes.

Garrison was unimpressed.
It was, he insisted, a suicide.

Probe Financed

The hulking, six-foot, seven-
inch prosecutor made his as-
sertions both before and, in
more detail, after a luncheon
with 50 wealthy businessmen
in the exclusive Petroleum
Club.

They formed a group called
"Truth or Consequences" to
help pay for what Garrison
promised would be a relent-
less pursuit. The band's mo-
to, apparently endorsed with
fervor: "Let the chips fall
where they may."

The fund-raising drive, de-
signed to enable Garrison to
conduct his investigation away
from the prying eyes of the
press, is expected to produce
as much as \$50,000 a month
from full-fledged contributors,
its organizers said. Perhaps
not all the money will be
needed, they said, but it will
be the District Attorney's to
spend "as he sees fit."

The setting at Garrison's
press conference verged on
the surrealistic. "We know
what cities were involved, how
it (the assassination) was done
in the essential respects, and
the individuals involved," he
said with conviction.

In an elevator on the way
down from the first-floor Pe-
troleum Club, Garrison puffed
on a cigar and stated: "It's
my personal belief that Os-
wald did not kill anyone that
day" in Dallas. The "plot"
he promised to prosecute, it
also appeared, may not even
have been designed, in its be-
ginnings, to kill Kennedy.

'Several Plots'

Asked whether the conspira-
cy he claims had been hatched
in New Orleans was actually
aimed at the late President
from the start, Garrison re-
plied:

"There were several plots.
A charge of course did occur.
Now that's more than I want-
ed to say."

There have been indications
that the conspiracy theory
Garrison has built began not
with a plot to kill the Presi-
dent but one to assassinate
Cuban Premier Fidel Castro.

How the purported scheme
got turned around, and with-
out Lee Harvey Oswald behind
the trigger, is a secret the
District Attorney is keeping
to himself.

- Tolson _____
- DeLoach _____
- Mohr _____
- Wick _____
- Casper _____
- Callahan _____
- Conrad _____
- Felt _____
- Gale _____
- Rosen _____
- Sullivan _____
- Tavel _____
- Trotter _____
- Tele. Room _____
- Holmes _____
- Gandy _____

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- The Washington Post _____
- Times Herald _____
- The Washington Daily News _____
- The Evening Star (Washington) _____
- The Sunday Star (Washington) _____
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- New York Post _____
- The New York Times _____
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No Arrests 'Imminent'

Garrison said no arrests were "imminent," but he insisted there was "no question that if we wanted to make arrests within the next few days, we could make them stick." At another point, he said facetiously it might take 30 or 40 years to make the arrests. "Let justice be done," he said, "though the heavens fall."

At that point an incredulous reporter said in a stage whisper, "I'm waiting for the heavens to fall."

Garrison, however, was undeviating in his declaration that he already knew just how President Kennedy came under an assassin's bullets.

"There's no question about the motive," he said. "I've been known to be wrong," he allowed. "I was wrong once in the '30s."

Garrison said he was holding off on arrests now only because it might result in the sacrifice of "certain aspects" of his case, and because he wanted a tightly woven chain of evidence that would produce convictions under the criminal court requirements of proof "beyond a reasonable doubt."

Accessories Seen

Garrison said the hometown plot would bring the apprehension not only of conspirators but "accessories after the fact," people who have, as Garrison put it, "substantial knowledge" of what was going on and failed to notify authorities in time to save the late President.

Before Ferrie died early Wednesday morning of a cerebral hemorrhage he told me of his fears that Garrison's investigation would prove no more than a "witchhunt." The 49-year-old Ferrie had been interrogated after the assassination about reports that he might have been the pilot of a "getaway plane" for the assassin and that he knew Oswald. He denied it.

Dr. Chetta, the coroner, said there was no evidence of sul-

cide or murder in Ferrie's death. New Orleans homicide Lt. Cornelius Drumm supported the semi-final assessment.

The coroner has said that autopsy findings indicated Ferrie had died sometime Tuesday night, but later agreed he could have died as late as 6 a.m. Wednesday morning. I left Ferrie's flat, after a rambling, four-hour interview, at approximately 4 a.m. Wednesday.

Tension Blamed

Asked about this apparent time discrepancy again today by reporters, Dr. Chetta said: "I don't think this has any import at all. I think the difference was built up and mushroomed."

"I think he (Ferrie) was under tension . . . his high blood pressure and tension could have resulted" in the hemorrhage.

Outspoken, with a background of arrests on homosexual charges and views on every issue from philosophy to politics, Ferrie had been both publicly and privately critical of President Kennedy for the lack of air cover in the Bay of Pigs invasion by Cuban exiles. He had been quoted as saying that the President "ought to be shot." He was picked up in 1963 after the assassination on rumors supplied by Jack S. Martin, a courthouse hanger-on, but the FBI concluded they were unfounded.

The last press conference of the day was held by the three organizers of "Truth or Con-

sequences" in a New Orleans street near a 16-story building one of them is putting up.

The three — Petroleum executive Joseph M. Rault Jr., automobile distributor Willard E. Robertson and Cecil Shilstone, head of a testing laboratory—said full-fledged members of "Truth or Consequences" would be assessed \$100 a month, but that smaller contributions were encouraged from citizens of New Orleans "and the Nation."

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*AS ACCUSED