

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

CORONER RULES OUT MURDER OF FERRIE

**Toxicology
Tests May
Make Week**
Orleans Parish Coroner Dr. Nicholas Chetta today ruled out murder as a possibility in the death of David William Ferrie, and findings of the autopsy indicate he did not commit suicide.

Ferrie was found dead yesterday in his apartment at 3330 Louisiana ave. pkwy. He was described by Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison as a key figure in the investigation of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Garrison yesterday called the death an apparent suicide. Today, however, Dr. Roland A. Welsh, who performed the autopsy for the coroner's office, told the States-Item Ferrie died of a spontaneous brain hemorrhage.

DR. CHETTA, asked if he thought it possible that Ferrie was murdered, said:

"There is no evidence of any violence. There is no evidence of murder." A cryptic note was found in Ferrie's apartment, which started: "To leave this life is, for me, a sweet prospect. I find nothing in it that is desirable, and on the other hand everything that is loathsome." Dr. Chetta said he could not divulge the rest of the note, which was typewritten on a sheet of legal-sized notepaper.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

Page 1

New Orleans
States-Item

Date: 2-23-67
Edition: Final

Author:
Editor:

Title: ASSASSINATION OF
PRESIDENT JOHN F.
KENNEDY 1/22/63

Character:

Classification: 89-
Submitting Office: N.O.

Being Investigated

62-101500-4
ENCLOSURE

He said the contents "tend to contain information that will have a bearing on the investigation of the Homicide Division."

He did say the contents of the note were "philosophical in nature." He promised that they would be released in full at a later date.

THE CORONER said tests showed that the note was typed on a typewriter found in Ferrie's apartment.

Other developments today

in the Ferrie investigation and Garrison's probe of the Kennedy assassination included:

—Marcel Champon, chief of security for the Orleans Levee Board, was summoned to appear at 11 a.m. tomorrow at Garrison's office to be questioned by John Volz and Douglas Ward, two Garrison aides who have been involved in his investigation. No further explanation was given.

—The current Orleans Parish Grand jury held its last meeting and took no action related to the probe, despite reports that it was to discuss the case. The new grand jury convenes March 1.

—In Washington, Sen. Russell B. Long said New Orleans authorities have a right to find blank spots in the Warren Commission report and to fill them if possible. He said he was satisfied that Garrison feels he will turn up something new.

Long also suggested that a reward of \$100,000 or more be offered for information dealing with the Kennedy assassination.

"This was a very big crime," he said. "I think a reward larger than five figures would bring some important information."

Meanwhile, Dr. Chetta conferred in his office with a reporter of the Washington Post who said he was with Ferrie up until 4 a.m. yesterday. The coroner had previously put the time of death at late Tuesday night.

Dr. Chetta conferred with a reporter of the Washington Post who said he was with Ferrie up until 4 a.m. yesterday. The coroner had previously put the time of death at late Tuesday night.

After talking with the reporter, George Lardner Jr., Dr. Chetta said that although the results of his tests indicated an earlier time of death, "I can't rule out the possibility he might have died as late as 4 a.m."

HE SAID that was absolutely the latest possible time of death, however.

Lardner said he was sure of the time he left the apartment because he looked at his watch at the moment his taxicab arrived. It was a few minutes before 4 a.m. He said his watch was set on Central Standard Time.

Dr. Chetta said he was ruling out the possibility of murder because there was no evidence of tissue damage which would result if the brain hemorrhage which caused the death had been induced by a blow, such as a karate chop.

THE CORONER said the toxicological report which he hopes will shed more light on the death will not be complete for about a week. Police sources said earlier today it would be ready in two or three days.

With murder eliminated as a possibility, the investigation will now seek to determine whether Ferrie's death was a suicide, natural or accidental. The specific cause, Dr. Chetta said, was an aneurysm, specifically a small sacular aneurysm of a cerebral artery.

HE SAID SUCH aneurysms frequently rupture, spilling blood into the brain. He likened this to an inner tube with a weak spot.

A large quantity of pills was found in Ferrie's room, but Dr. Chetta said no overdose of the pills could have caused the aneurysm.

He said, however, that severe reitching could have. He said some matter found on the bedsheet was being analyzed to see if Ferrie was nauseated shortly before the death.

THE CORONER said no one has appeared to claim Ferrie's body. He said relatives are being sought.

David F. Lewis, Continental Trailways baggage superintendent and a sometime private investigator, was interviewed in the district attorney's office this morning but would make no comment upon leaving the office.

Lewis, who said last week he feared for his life because of what he knew, about the JFK probe, was not seen entering the DA's office and when he left he walked alone calmly but the front door.

CORNERED BY reporters gathered outside the office, Lewis said he had gone to the office this morning "for no particular reason."

Lewis answered most questions with "No comment," but said that he has been "cornered" by the district attorney's

office to make no statement to the press from now on until further notice."

At that point a Garrison aide rushed up to Lewis and pulled him into an elevator, warning him, "Don't talk to those people."

Another figure in Garrison's investigation, being held in Parish Prison, has still asked for no increased security and is getting none.

Criminal Sheriff Louis A. Heyd Jr. said he has no plans to increase security for Miguel Torres, a Cuban prisoner reportedly here for questioning about the JFK plot.

Torres, serving a nine-year sentence at Louisiana State Penitentiary, is now locked up at Parish Prison.

Heyd said Torres had asked for no special security and and the DA's office had not asked that any be provided. Torres is being held in a regular tier with other prisoners.

GARRISON SAID yesterday his office was on the verge of arresting Ferrie for involvement in a plot to kill Kennedy, when Ferrie was found dead in his uptown apartment.

Garrison said the decision to move in on Ferrie was made yesterday morning, shortly before Ferrie's nude body was found lying near 15 empty and half-empty medicine bottles.

The district attorney said that "in a meeting in my house this morning, we had reached a decision to arrest him (Ferrie) early next week. Apparently we waited too long."

AS LATE AS Monday, Garrison had stated that, due to premature publicity, no arrests would be made for a period of months in his investigation into a supposed plot to assassinate Kennedy.

In an hour-and-a-half-long press conference at his office yesterday, Garrison unloaded the first real information he has given out since the States-Item disclosed his investigation last Friday. Previously, Garrison had not publicly mentioned Ferrie's name in connection with the investigation and had only spoken of the investigation itself in roundabout terms.

At about 4:30 p.m. yesterday, however, the DA tossed out his first bombshell of the day by beginning:

"The apparent suicide of David Ferrie ends the life of a man who, in my judgment, was one of history's most important individuals. Evidence developed by our office had long since confirmed that he was involved in events culminating in the assassination of President Kennedy."

Garrison added that he has had "for some time enough evidence to make an arrest."

The district attorney spoke only in generalities of Ferrie's association with a supposed plot to kill the President, but at one point he said, "I have no reason to believe that Lee Harvey Oswald killed anybody in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963 (the date of the assassination)."

The 6-foot-6 lawman holed up in his inner office for most of the afternoon with his staff.

WHEN THE conference finally began at 4:30, more than 20 newsmen were led into the office, single file, to face a tired but still energetic-looking Garrison. He answered all questions put to him by the horde of reporters during the session, occasion-

ally punctuating his more positive remarks with a terse "no comment."

The only stipulation the DA made was that no cameras would be allowed in the room in order to "keep it from turning into a circus."

"I can't pose for a photograph when a man has committed suicide," he added. "I'm just not that callous."

Garrison disclosed that members of his staff have been maintaining a nightly stakeout on Ferrie's apartment "for a long period," beginning each evening and ending when Ferrie went to bed. Tuesday night's stakeout, he said, ended at 11, when all the lights in the apartment went out.

HOWEVER, Lardner said he went to Ferrie's residence about midnight to interview him and remained until about 4 a. m.

The reporter said Ferrie appeared to be neither excessively excited nor depressed, and there was no indication that he might be contemplating suicide.

The stakeout on Ferrie's home, Garrison said, had been "for the purpose of gathering information."

Concerning the circumstances surrounding Ferrie's death, Garrison seemed convinced the death was a suicide.

From the stakeout and from other sources of information, Garrison stated, "we noticed he was becoming increasingly nervous. He became unable to go to the airport (where Ferrie was a flying instructor) on a regular basis, and he was constantly calling members of our staff concerning the progress of the case . . ."

THESE AND OTHER observations, said the district attorney, "had caused us to become increasingly concerned, as our investigation progressed, about the possibility of his killing himself."

Garrison said that Ferrie had made "comments to individuals in the last week or two—an individual—about the possibility of killing himself." Later in the press conference he clarified this by saying Ferrie had "indicated it to someone we had working on the case."

Garrison, who repeatedly referred to Ferrie as "an extremely intelligent man," said that the men conducting the stakeout had reported other signs of a mental breakdown on Ferrie's part, such as "increased endless pacing of the floor."

THE NIGHT before his death, the DA recounted, the doomed man spent the entire evening sitting in a chair staring at the front door.

Garrison said he was not ruling out the possibility of murder in the Ferrie case, but "for these reasons and for other reasons we can't go into now, we are assuming it is a suicide."

Ferrie, who would have been 49 on March 28, was born and reared in Cleveland, Ohio. He came south in the early 50s, living first in Miami briefly, then coming to New Orleans, according to the district attorney's records. Garrison identified him as a former pilot for Eastern Air Lines and said he was "known as a remarkably competent pilot."

FERRIE WAS KNOWN here as a flying instructor and a private investigator, but the city directory lists him as a psychologist. He has an arrest record, dating back several years, in both Orleans and Jefferson parishes, primarily on morals charges.

Ferrie called the States-Item last Friday night after the story broke and talked to reporter David Snyder. He told Snyder that the district attorney had become interested in him in connection with the assassination investigation.

"Supposedly," Ferrie said, "I have been pegged as the getaway pilot in an elaborate plot to kill Kennedy."

YESTERDAY, HOWEVER, Garrison said that an airplane did not figure in Ferrie's connection with the supposed assassination plot. Ferrie, he said, did not fly to South Texas, but drove there the night of the assassination with two companions.

Ferrie himself had explained this to the States-Item on Saturday, after earlier reports had said he made the trip by plane.

"The weather at that time between here and Houston and Galveston was so bad that it was impossible to fly," said Garrison.

HE ADDED that the Texas trip had triggered the investigation into Ferrie's affairs. "We felt it was rather peculiar," said the DA, "that a man would suddenly take a trip to South Texas on the evening of the assassination, when everybody else in the country was home watching television."

Garrison stressed that there was no question as to whether Ferrie had been directly involved in the shooting of Kennedy.

"Mr. Ferrie was not in Dallas at the time of the assassination. We have known that for years and that is not the point." What the real point of the Ferrie investigation was, Garrison declined to say. He did reveal that the other two persons on the Texas trip are not suspects.

RELATING THE series of events leading to Ferrie's initial arrest in connection with the assassination, Garrison said that a check of files and other information sources immediately after the

autopsy findings included no evidence of poison.

HE SAID THE possibility that Ferrie attempted to commit suicide with an overdose of pills was extremely remote.

The coroner's office confirmed that no quantity of pills was found in Ferrie's stomach.

It was reported yesterday that a number of bottles of pills were found in Ferrie's apartment.

Dr. Welsh said that it has been his experience in cases of death from this cause that a person, as a rule, does not complain of symptoms which would indicate a rupture until the actual hemorrhage which is accompanied by a violent headache.

There was some question about the time of Ferrie's death because rigor mortis had set in.

DR. WELSH explained that Ferrie had been an active man physically and that in such cases rigor mortis sets in earlier.

He said, too, that a ruptured aneurysm can be accompanied by convulsions. Convulsions also would speed up rigor mortis.

Dr. Welsh also pointed out that there were "no marks of violence whatsoever."