

clutter of a second-floor duplex on, as he said, a diet of "coffee, cigarettes and Jello."

THERE ALSO were pills --bottles and bottles of them. The bottles were clustered, a hodgepodge of shapes, sizes and colors, like some sort of surrealistic centerpiece on a offee table in the middle of is living room.

My first contact with Ferie was a telephone call late riday afternoon following he appearance of the initial tory in The States-Item on new investigation launched y the district attorney into he slaying of President John . Kennedy.

FERRIE'S voice was nasal nd aimost insadible. He said

e was physically sick and sentally tired of remaining lent on the investigation. He anted to talk. He did talk - about every-

ing under the sun - for a an of four and a half hours at night. Until the day of s death he stayed in conct by telephone.

The man investigated on o different occasions by the A's office in connection with e slaying met me at the wastairs to trance to his ariment.

HIS STEPS were feeble as ! we climbed the stairs to the second floor. He apologized for the slowness, but said he was suffering from encephalitis. He assured me that it

was col contagious. He also apologized for the

condition of the apartment. Renovation work was in progress, he said.

The living room was filled with the rank smell of old cigarette butts and the ashtrays were stacked with them.

FURNITURE, greasy with deep-seated dirt rested on a litter-strewn, thread-bare car-

pet. Dirty coffee cups elut-lered the trute tops and a dusty baby grand piano in ODe COrner.

It was the room of a man who had ceased to worry about the niceties of life. Ferrie either propped himself against the arm of a sofa

or reclined full length against two soiled pillows as he re-lated the details of troubles . that had redaced him from

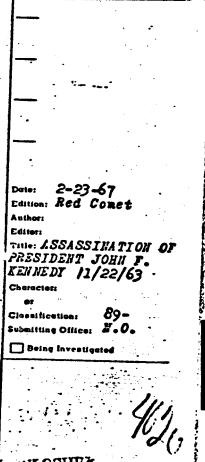


"man of means" to poverty.

FROM TIME to time be broke into the narrative to lash out at the law, at justice and the news media. «-Several times he asked # I

thought he would be arrested in connection with the DA's investigation. He was. to ask this question over and over during telephone conversa-tions over the weekend and almost until the time of his death.

His head covered with a wig that was a rusty shade of red, his shoes off, and a cigarette or cup of coffee constantly in his hand, Eerric tylked almost non-slop.



States-Item

Once he questioned the Warren Commission report on the trajectory of the bullets that crashed into Kennedy's body and head.

HE DRAGGED enormous medical tomes from another room and launched into a medical dissertation on the assassination. He knew the human body like his living room and you caught flashes of brilliance as he tried to explain his theories.

plain his theories. It fascinated him, but, he said, he knew nothing more about it than what he had read.

It was because of his knowledge of science that he had become a part time investigator.

"Ferrie is a pilot," he told me, "but in complex cases involving science several attorneys have found it advantageous to have me investigate for them."

He was proud of his ability, both as a pilot and an investigator.

Ferrie told of winding up a tension-packed case for G. Wray Gill, of the celebration afterwards with friends, and of a spur of the moment decision to take a trip to Texas for some "relaxation."

COINCIDENTALLY, the case in federal court wound up on the same day that Kennedy was shot, and the trip to Texas was in part responsible for Forrie's involvement in the assassination probe, be said. Of the Texas tour by oar, Feirie sand, "I had no idea this would turn out to be a stupid move."

The reason for going to Houston, as Ferrie recounted it, was almost ridiculous in its simplicity.

its simplicity. "One guy remembered there was an ice skating rink in Houston, so we decided to go skating."

Ironically, Ferrie seemed to be in better spirits on the day before his death than on the first day I talked to him.

He had become engrossed in the business of putting together a law suit designed to bring what he considered his tormentors to justice. He had begun to fight back against a society he thought had handed him too many bad breaks.

FERRIE called often to ask about progress in the investigation. He read every scrap in the papers and watched every newscast on television. On the day before his death,

he called with a new theory on how the bullets struck Kennedy, and he wanted me to go to a pathology lab so he could show me what he was talking about with a cadaver.

He wanted me to arrange a lie detector test in case he was arrested.

But the new confidence apparently was window dressing.

ing. The note found by his body expressed feelings he had expressed to me on a number of occasions and different wave.

To leave this life is, for the, a sweet prospect.