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HERALD EXAMINER

EXPRESS

LARGEST EVENING CIRCULATION IN AMERICA

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Business Promises To Finance Case

From Herald-Examiner Wire Services

NEW ORLEANS, Feb. 24—Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison claimed today to have solved the assassination of President Kennedy.

Garrison made the statement on his way to a meeting with a group of local businessmen who said they will finance his investigation of a purported plot hatched in New Orleans to kill the President.

A UPI reporter and a reporter for a New Orleans television station heard Garrison say: "We have solved the assassination and will arrest every individual."

He would not elaborate or give specifics and said arrests might be made in "30 to 40 years."

"I am not saying that to be facetious but we don't want to alert anyone that we are going to arrest, so there might be a repeat of what happened to (David) W. Ferrie," Garrison said.

Promises Arrests

Asked later about the use of the word "solved," Garrison said:

"I thought I had made that explicit before. We know the names of the groups involved. We are going to be able to arrest every human involved—that is, every human involved who is still alive."

The word "solved" was coupled with a report that arrests were imminent. Garrison called this "ridiculous."

"What I've been trying to emphasize is that arrests are not imminent. For them to say the arrests will take place any day is ridiculous. They asked me if it might be in the next few days, I said it might be months—that it might be 30 years."

Garrison revealed less than a week ago he had been investigating the conspiracy for three months. He promised arrests, charges and convictions.

Two days ago, David W. Ferrie—a man Garrison said was deeply involved in the conspiracy—was found in his apartment. Garrison said Ferrie killed

himself and repeated his belief today.

However, Orleans Parish (county) corner Nicholas Chetta said less than an hour earlier it appeared Ferrie died a natural death.

Chetta ruled out violent murder and said there was no evidence of death-dealing chemicals or poisons in Ferrie's body.

A group of businessmen headed by oilman Joseph Rault Jr. and automobile dealer Willard E. Robertson, met at noon to set up a fund to pay for Garrison's probe.

Garrison said earlier in the week he would have to find another method of financing the investigation because records of his spending were public and newspapers were revealing them.

The businessmen who rallied to finance Garrison's campaign were planning to pledge at least \$100 each, and possibly much more.

"If you are going to back up a man, you ought to back him to the hilt," automobile dealer Willard E. Robertson said. "There are no pledges yet, but there will be. This would be my approach."

Ferrie, 49, a sometimes brilliant, always pathetic figure was found dead in his apartment Wednesday with bottles of pills everywhere and a note nearby. He was in bed, nude, with a sheet over his body.

Another figure in the case, David Lewis, 26, dropped out of sight Wednesday after saying Monday he had revealed the names of five men being investigated by Garrison in the case and feared for his life.

But Lewis, who works for a bus company, popped up again yesterday at the district attorney's office and said he did not believe Ferrie was one of those he described as possible members of the plot.

Ferrie had been in his time an airline pilot, a private investigator, had studied

the priesthood in a seminary and had worked on a doctor's degree in psychology.

Strangely disfigured by a lack of hair and eyebrows as a result of an explosion, he wore false ones.

His life paralleled the investigation launched by Garrison, mixed up, out of focus. Garrison called Ferrie "one of history's most important figures" and said after his death he had planned to arrest him in a few days as a figure in a plot to kill the President.

Ferrie's death apparently scared other persons whose names have figured in the probe.

Miguel Torres, a Cuban exile who lived a block from Lee Harvey Oswald's 1963 residence here, was transferred from a jail cell to the Orleans Parish Prison hospital. Reportedly there was a telephone call threatening his life. Torres was returned to New Orleans from the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola last month for questioning by Garrison's investigators. **END**



—Associated Press Wirephoto
NEW ORLEANS DIST. ATTY. JIM GARRISON
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