

Tighter 'Plot' Case Secrecy Sought by DA

District Attorney Jim Garrison threw a cloak of secrecy today around his investigation of what he claims was a New Orleans-based plot that led to the murder of President John F. Kennedy in November, 1963.

Garrison told a press conference that it may be months before his promised arrests and convictions in connection with the alleged plot.

He blamed the duration of the probe on what he considers premature publicity. The DA had made an agreement to break the story in a national magazine, but the States-Item dug out the news on its own and revealed it last Friday.

At an hour-long press conference yesterday afternoon (closed to representatives of the States-Item and The Times-Picayune), Garrison said he is clamping strict secrecy on his investigation. He said he will set up a special fund so he won't have to file public expense vouchers which give a clue to the activities of his investigations.

THE OFFICIAL report by the Warren Commission said Kennedy was shot by Lee Harvey Oswald — a former New Orleans resident — and that it found no credible evidence anyone else was involved.

The press conference was by special invitation to all interested newsmen except representatives of the States-Item and The Times-Picayune.

Representatives of dozens of newspapers, television companies and wire services were called into a small room in Garrison's office a few at a time and told there would be a press conference at the Fontainebleau Motor Hotel.

They were asked not to reveal this information to other newsmen.

ALL PRESS representatives who had been waiting for Garrison since 10 a. m. were asked to sign their names and news affiliations on a

sheet of paper about 1:30 p. m.

All of these persons were called into the room except representatives present from the States-Item and The Times-Picayune.

Private Detective William

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Gurvich, who has been hired by Garrison as a special aid in this investigation, told Mrs. Rosemary James of the States-Item she would be barred.

Other representatives barred from the conference were Bert Hyde of the States-Item, Bob Ussery and Joe Darby of The Times-Picayune and photographers Mike Bates and Robert Steiner.

Garrison said he was displeased with the States-Item for disclosing that he was conducting an investigation.

IN THE hour-long conference he revealed no new information of any significance concerning the investigation. One reporter remarked after the conference that Garrison gave an "hour-long no comment".

Garrison said that the disclosure of his investigation had put the life of one witness in danger and then said this witness was not very important to the case.

Garrison complained that he was short-staffed. When asked by one reporter present at the conference why he doesn't turn his information over to a federal agency to pursue, Garrison's reply was, "What? And wait three years?"

Asked if he thought any foreign country or any official was involved in the alleged conspiracy, Garrison said no. He turned away most questions with "no comment."

GARRISON'S investigation has stirred both interest and skepticism.

In Washington yesterday, Sen. Thomas J. Dodd, D-

Conn., urged that the Warren Commission reopen its investigation.

Detroit attorney for the late Jack Ruby, Sol A. Dann, telegraphed Garrison urging him to arrange for a federal or state grand jury probe. Dann

sent a similar letter to state attorney general Jack P. F. Gremillion requesting that an inquiry be made into "Jim Garrison's information or evidence."

Garrison said he has no intention now of turning over his information to either federal or state officials.

IN BATON Rouge, Gov. John J. McKeithen said he will provide state cooperation if Garrison needs it.

Mrs. Marguerite Oswald of Fort Worth, Tex., mother of Lee Harvey Oswald, offered any help she could give to Garrison in his investigation.

Dean A. Andrews Jr., assistant Jefferson Parish district attorney, said he was contacted by a man named Clay Bertrand shortly after the assassination and asked to defend Oswald. The Warren Commission was unable to locate the man identified as Bertrand.

Bulletin

David W. Ferrie, a central figure in the current probe into the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, was found dead today in his New Orleans apartment.

Police said the death was unclassified—meaning that it was not yet determined whether it was murder, suicide or natural.

The police homicide division was on the scene.

One policeman at the scene said a quantity of pills was found near the body.

Ferrie lived at 3338 Louisiana Ave. pkwy.

He was arrested immediately after the Nov. 22, 1963, slaying of Kennedy and questioned, but was released after the death was blamed on Lee Harvey Oswald.

W. D. Hill Jr.

Sick, Scared Ferrie Felt World Held No Justice

By DAVID SNYDER

The man labeled "one of history's most important individuals" by Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison was also sick, sometimes scared, and bitterly sure that there was no justice for him in this world.

At the end of his life, the mysterious David William Ferrie lived in the 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 coffee table in the middle of his living room.

My first contact with Ferrie was a telephone call late Friday afternoon following the appearance of the initial story in The States-Item on a new investigation launched by the district attorney into the slaying of President John F. Kennedy.

FERRIE'S voice was nasal and almost inaudible. He said

he was physically sick and mentally tired of remaining silent on the investigation. He wanted to talk.

He did talk — about everything under the sun — for a span of four and a half hours that night. Until the day of his death he stayed in contact by telephone.

The man investigated on two different occasions by the DA's office in connection with the slaying met me at the downstairs entrance to his apartment.

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 not 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 carpet. Dirty coffee cups cluttered the table tops and a dusty baby grand piano in one 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 related the details of troubles that had reduced him from a



DAVID W. FERRIE

"man of means" to poverty.

FROM TIME to time he broke into the narrative to lash out at the law, at justice and the news media.

Several times he asked if I

thought he would be arrested in connection with the DA's investigation. He was to ask this question over and over during telephone conversations 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, Ferrie talked almost non-stop.

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 ex-

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 Ken-

to Texas was in part responsible for Ferrie's involvement in the assassination probe, he said.

Of the Texas tour by car, Ferrie said, "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.

"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.

The note found near his body expressed feelings he had expressed to me on a number of occasions and different ways.

"To leave this life is, for me, a sweet prospect" ↙



A POSSIBLE MISSING LINK in the Kennedy assassination is the death of Thomas Henry Killam, who claimed "agents" were trying to get him for special knowledge of the Kennedy slaying. Killam's wife Wanda (in drawing) and his brother have asked for a reopening of an investigation into the death, which was termed variously a suicide and an accident. Escambia County (Fla.) Solicitor **CARL HARPER** said he will confer with New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison on the matter.

—AP WIREPHOTO.

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