

DEATH OF FERRIE CALLED NATURAL

Autopsy Doctor Rules Out Suicide in New Orleans

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By GENE ROBERTS

Special to The New York Times

NEW ORLEANS, Feb. 23—

A pathologist said today that David W. Ferrie, whom District Attorney Jim Garrison had accused of involvement in the assassination of President Kennedy, died of natural causes and not as a result of suicide.

Dr. Ronald A. Welsh, a pathologist at the Louisiana State University School of Medicine, said he reached the conclusion after conducting an autopsy on Mr. Ferrie's body.

Earlier in the day, Dr. Nicholas Chetta, the Orleans Parish coroner, ruled out murder as a possible cause of Mr. Ferrie's death, but he declined to comment on other possibilities until his investigation was complete.

After Mr. Ferrie's body was found in bed yesterday, Mr. Garrison announced that the death was an "apparent suicide."

Mr. Garrison, who is conducting his own investigation into the Kennedy assassination, called Mr. Ferrie "one of history's most important individuals" and said that he would have been arrested next week if he had lived.

Garrison Is Silent

Meanwhile, the District Attorney continued his silence on his reasons for thinking Mr. Ferrie may have been involved in "events culminating in the assassination."

In discussing the autopsy, Dr. Welsh said that the evidence was "clear cut" that Mr. Ferrie, a former airlines pilot, had died of a berry aneurysm, which he described as a ruptured blood vessel at the base of the brain.

The pathologist added that Mr. Ferrie had had a previous hemorrhage and was a victim of high blood pressure and "hypertensive cardiovascular disease."

He declined comment on a note found on a dining room table. Dr. Welsh said his role in the case had been confined to conducting an autopsy and reporting his findings to the coroner.

Dr. Welsh said that his findings did not amount to a formal ruling in the death and that such a finding could come only from the coroner.

Note Is Quoted

The coroner has declined to reveal the full contents of the typewritten note found in Mr. Ferrie's second-floor apartment, but he quoted part of it:

"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 loathesome."

David Snyder of The New Orleans States-Item, one of the last to see Mr. Ferrie alive, described him today as "sick, sometimes scared and bitterly sure that there was no justice for him in this world."

"At the end of his life," Mr. Snyder went on, "the mysterious David William Ferrie lived

in the clutter of a second-floor duplex, as he said, 'on a diet of coffee, cigarettes and Jello.' There also were pills—bottles and bottles of them."

Carlos Bringuier, a leader of anti-Castro Cuban refugees here, described Mr. Ferrie in a news conference as a person who spent the last weeks of his life trying to prove that he was in no way involved in the assassination.

Mr. Bringuier, who once engaged in a television debate with Lee Harvey Oswald, whom the Warren Commission named as the lone assassin of President Kennedy, said he first met Mr. Ferrie in 1961 after learning that Mr. Ferrie was interested in anti-Castro activity.

He said he next saw him last month and then again on Monday of this week. He said that on the last two occasions, Mr. Ferrie wanted to know "the date of the supposed plot here in New Orleans," and the name of a man who was reported to have been in New Orleans in 1961.

Mr. Ferrie also said, Mr. Bringuier continued, that "Mr. Garrison wanted to frame him."

"He told me Garrison was going to run for higher office and wanted the publicity," Mr. Bringuier said.

"I told him this is a free

country, he can't frame you. And he said, 'You don't know what can happen in something like this when they want to frame you.'"

"I began to wonder," said Mr. Bringuier, who thinks there was a plot to kill Mr. Kennedy and that Communists were involved. "If this man had some Communist entanglements."

"In the stomach, it made you feel bad to look at him," said the Cuban. He was referring to the wig, false eyelashes and make-up Mr. Ferrie wore to hide burns he had once suffered.

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ARCHIVES DETAIL FERRIE'S TRAVELS

He Told Agents He Was in
New Orleans Nov. 22

N.T. 2/27/67
By NAN ROBERTSON

WASHINGTON, Feb. 24—Documents in the National Archives added today details to the account of David W. Ferrie's movements during the week of President Kennedy's assassination.

Mr. Ferrie, who was found dead in his bed Wednesday in New Orleans, was a suspect in an investigation by the New Orleans District Attorney, Jim Garrison, of an alleged assassination plot. Mr. Garrison says the plot was hatched in New Orleans and carried out in Dallas.

Secret Service records show that Mr. Ferrie told agents shortly after the assassination that he was "positive" he had been in New Orleans on the day of the murder, Friday, Nov. 22, 1963, and on the preceding day

Secret Service men quoted him as having said he was certain of his whereabouts "because he had been in court in connection with a trial involving Carlos Marcello." The New Orleans city directory lists Mr. Marcello as the owner of the Town and Country Motel.

Weekend in Texas

Mr. Ferrie further testified that he left New Orleans about 9 P.M. the day of the assassination with two male companions and spent the weekend in Houston and Galveston, Tex. Federal Bureau of Investigation documents based on hotel records confirm that the three were in those cities that weekend.

The week after the assassination, Lee Fletcher, a porter at the Alamotel in Houston, showed F.B.I. agents a registration card with the information that D. W. Ferrie, Alvin Beaubouef and Melvin Coffey checked into Room 19, Alamotel, at 4:30 A.M. Nov. 23, 1963.

The Nov. 23, 1963, date on the card was written over a Nov. 22 date. Mr. Fletcher explained to the agents that "this occurred because of the early morning time which the subjects checked in the motel, but he was quite sure the right date was the 23rd."

The record also shows that the men stayed until the following day, Sunday, Nov. 24—but this conflicts with a card shown to the F.B.I. in Galveston.

Hotel in Galveston

Mrs. Mary Doveri, a clerk at

the Driftwood motel in Galveston, presented a registration card with the information that the same three men checked into the Driftwood at 11 P.M. Saturday, Nov. 23. Another clerk, Shirley Dial, testified they left about 10 A.M. the next day, Sunday.

The record cards for both motels stated that Mr. Ferrie and his companions were driving a car with Louisiana license No. 784-895. Mr. Ferrie had told agents that it was a light blue 1961 Comet station wagon (made by Mercury) that he had bought in New Orleans several weeks before. At the Houston motel, it was listed as a "Comet automobile;" at Galveston, as a "Ford station wagon."

The mileage and driving time between New Orleans and Houston are put by the American Automobile Association at 364 miles and eight to nine hours. Houston and Galveston are 50 miles apart, about one hour's drive. Dallas—where President Kennedy was killed—is 243 miles and 5 hours and 15 minutes away from Houston.

Long Distance Calls

While at the Houston motel, Mr. Ferrie made several long distance calls. Hotel records listed one local call and four to New Orleans.

Two of these were to radio stations—WSHO and WDSH. The other two were found today to have been to the Town and Country Motel owned by Mr. Marcello and the Fountainbleu Motel, at which Mr. Beaubouef's widowed mother, Evelyn, worked as a switchboard operator. The latter call was collect.

Mr. Ferrie told the Secret Service in a long statement that he and his companions returned to New Orleans about 9:30 P.M. Sunday, Nov. 24, 1963. He then "telephoned attorney G. Wray Gill [by whom he is employed as an investigator] several times."

At Mr. Gill's suggestion, not explained, Mr. Ferrie said he left New Orleans alone about midnight that night and drove to Hammond, La., where he stayed with a friend at Southeastern Louisiana College.

The friend, Thomas Compton, did research in narcotics addiction, Mr. Ferrie said. Mr. Ferrie

said he started back to New Orleans in the early afternoon of Nov. 25, arriving about 3 P.M. He again talked to Mr. Gill, "who accompanied him to the Orleans Parish District Attorney's office, where he was wanted for questioning in connection with the Oswald case."

The 16 pages of declassified reports on Mr. Ferrie in the National Archives are part of the Warren Commission records relating to the Kennedy assassination. About 40 more pages are still classified by the F.B.I.

The examined pages were declassified in September, 1965. But until this month, they were scattered throughout many thousands of pages of information. Marion Johnson, the archivist in charge of the Warren Commission records, compiled the available records about Mr. Ferrie in response to requests from New Orleans reporters.

There are 1,554 documents used in the Warren inquiry in the archives. Each document is several inches thick. Two-thirds of these have been declassified under guidelines drawn up by the Justice Department and approved by the White House.

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NYT 2/25/67
Jim Garrison

Special to The New York Times

NEW ORLEANS, Feb. 24 —Jim Garrison's style is the "big splash," that of the big man who does things in a big way. And the flamboyant approach of the 6-foot 6-inch District Attorney to the job of enforcing the law in Orleans Parish (County) usually is accompanied by a rash of headlines.

Man He has battled in the Bourbon Street News the businessmen of the garish strip of honky tonks and French restaurants that draw thousands of tourists to New Orleans. He once took on eight judges simultaneously in a running legal and verbal battle.

After these and other Garrison forays few here were surprised that he decided to tackle the Warren Commission and its conclusion that Lee Harvey Oswald assassinated President Kennedy alone and without being a part of a conspiracy.

Pales by Comparison

Even Mr. Garrison's flamboyance pales by comparison with some of the antics that have characterized Louisiana politics in the past. He has yet to match the late Gov. Earl K. Long, self-styled "last of the red-hot poppas." Nor has he equaled in showmanship the Governor's late brother, Senator Huey P. Long, the "kingfish" of "every man a king" fame.

Until five years ago, Mr. Garrison was a relatively obscure assistant city attorney, best known for his habit of bar hopping along Bourbon Street, frequently in a white dinner jacket. Then suddenly he resigned with a headline-making attack on Mayor Victor Hugo Schiro, whom he accused of failing to enforce vigorously the city's laws, and leaped into the race for district attorney against the incumbent, Richard Dowling.

A fiercely independent "reform" candidate, Mr. Garrison, despite his big figure, created a public image for himself as a David against Goliath, a Sir Galahad taking on machine politics single-handedly. But he did it with wit. It was hard even for his opponents not to laugh when he labeled Mr. Dowling as "the great emancipator—he let everybody go free."

Mr. Garrison, married and the father of three children, had the "common touch. Although he was named James C. Garrison at his birth in Dennison, Iowa, on Nov. 20, 1921, he insisted through World War II as a fighter



Associated Press

Witty and enterprising

pilot and his school years at Tulane University that he simply be called Jim. Finally, he took legal action to make Jim his formal name.

He also managed to keep a ruggedly healthy look, practicing isometrics, but not to the extent of neglecting books. He often reads until 3 or 4 A.M.—lately in books that deal with the Kennedy assassination—at his home on Owens Boulevard in a new two-story New Orleans-style home in an area about two miles from Lake Pontchartrain where house prices range from \$40,000 to \$75,000.

Despite all this, Mr. Garrison was decidedly an underdog

in the 1962 district attorney's campaign. However, the "big splash" technique put him over. He hoarded his campaign money until the last, then saturated the television screens here with commercials during the last 24 hours of the campaign.

Mr. Garrison quickly proved that Garrison the campaigner was a dull, sedentary type, compared with Garrison the district attorney. He convicted men on charges that had been dropped under his predecessor, and established a record of never losing a murder case. He also began a clean-up of what he said was prostitution and blackmail on Bourbon Street. And when Mayor Schiro, not to mention many of the city's businessmen, showed little enthusiasm, he buried them in literary and historical allusions.

When eight city judges tried to cut off funds for Mr. Garrison's investigation, he compared them to the "sacred cows of India . . . rushing to the defense of their institutions." The judges sued, succeeded in getting Mr. Garrison fined \$1,000 for defamation of character, but Mr. Garrison appealed to the United States Supreme Court and won.

Angry at Newspaper

Mr. Garrison claims jurisdiction in the Kennedy assassination investigation because Oswald once lived in New Orleans. When The New Orleans States-Item said last week that he had spent \$8,000 on the inquiry, he became angry.

Although Mr. Garrison had previously refused to say anything "on the record" about his investigation, he announced Saturday that he planned to make arrests for what he said was a "conspiracy" and a "plot" that culminated in President Kennedy's death. He seemed taken aback at the worldwide interest in his charges.

Some local political observers are convinced that Mr. Garrison, who was instrumental in electing Gov. John J. McKeithen, is eyeing a Senate seat or possibly even the Vice-Presidency some day.

BUSINESSMEN AID INQUIRY ON 'PLOT'

50 in New Orleans Pledge
\$100 a Month to Garrison

NYT 4-25-76
By GENE ROBERTS

Special to The New York Times

NEW ORLEANS, Feb. 24—A group of at least 50 New Orleans businessmen each pledged \$100 a month today to District Attorney Jim Garrison's investigation into an alleged plot that culminated in the assassination of President Kennedy.

The pledges came after Mr. Garrison declared that his staff "solved" the assassination weeks ago, but might need months or years to "work on details of evidence" necessary for arrest and conviction.

Mr. Garrison sought the private financial support, he said, to prevent public disclosure of the trips his staff is making during the investigation.

Under Louisiana law, the District Attorney's investigations are financed by fines and fees collected by judges, and he must file public vouchers for each expenditure he makes. By using private money, Mr. Garrison can avoid having to file vouchers.

Mr. Garrison contended today that "there were several plots and a change of direction in them did occur."

Although Mr. Garrison declined to elaborate except to say that "the names of the individuals and groups are known," a source within his office said several days ago that Mr. Garrison had a theory that an anti-Castro group, principally Cuban exiles, was plotting first to kill Premier Fidel Castro of Cuba and then later decided to assassinate President Kennedy.

According to the source, another part of the theory is that Lee Harvey Oswald, whom the Warren Commission named as the lone assassin of the president, was to have been the "trigger man" in a "plot" to kill Premier Castro. But this "plan" fell through when the Cuban Government refused to admit Oswald to the country, the theory goes, and another "plot" was hatched, this time to kill President Kennedy.

On his way into a meeting of his backers, who have formed an organization they call "Truth and Consequences," Mr. Garrison had already indicated they would pledge \$100 a month—for a total of \$5,000 monthly—and that it was "possible" that as many as 500 donors might join, raising the monthly total to \$50,000.

The "Truth and Consequences"

fund, he said, is open to anyone who wants to contribute.

In another development today, Dr. Nicholas Chetta the Orleans Parish coroner, said David W. Ferrie, whom Mr. Garrison has accused of being involved in the assassination, had talked of suing Mr. Garrison before his death this week.

Dr. Chetta said Mr. Ferrie's physician, whom he declined to name, had told him that Mr. Ferrie grew increasingly depressed in recent weeks and "talked of suicide and rambled on about suing Mr. Garrison."

Mr. Ferrie was found dead in bed in his second-floor New Or-

son told newsmen today he had "solved" the investigation.

The statement, reported by United Press International, left the impression with other newsmen that arrests were imminent, and they swarmed into the New Orleans Petroleum Club where the meeting was taking place.

The pattern has become familiar here this week. Each day, Mr. Garrison has told reporters that he is making his last public comment on the investigation until arrests are made, and on the next day he has issued a press release or made an off-the-cuff remark that has reawakened reporters' interest.

After the United Press International dispatch was transmitted, Mr. Garrison said he had told the news agency nothing he has not said in the past, except for use of the word "solved."

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

Arrests 'Not Imminent'

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

Then he added that his best estimate was that the arrests would come in "months." He made the same estimate Monday.

Last weekend, he said he might make the arrests within "weeks."

"They," he said after the Petroleum Club meeting, referring to people in general, "have my word of honor [that there will be arrests], but it won't be tomorrow."

He also declared that the solution he has reached is "like through the looking glass—black is white and white is black."

"I don't mean to be cryptic," he went on, "but that is the way

it is."

Later this afternoon, Joseph M. Rault Jr., president of the Rault Petroleum Corporation, said he and other New Orleans businessmen had pledged financial support to Mr. Garrison's investigation "to express our confidence in our District Attorney and to state that we have full confidence in his ability, his integrity and the integrity of his office."

He said that at least 50 business apartment this week, and what appeared to be a suicide note was nearby.

But Dr. Chetta said that an autopsy and toxicological test indicated that Mr. Ferrie had died of natural causes.

He said that the tests showed that Mr. Ferrie had probably died of a brain hemorrhage and that no traces of cyanide, heavy metals, alcohol, barbiturates or organic compounds such as lye had been found in the body. A final report on the cause of Mr. Ferrie's death is to be made next Tuesday, according to Dr. Chetta.

After the death, Mr. Garrison announced that Mr. Ferrie was to have been arrested for involvement in the assassination.

However, members of the Warren Commission staff have said that Mr. Ferrie was investigated at length by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and that the commission concluded

that he was not involved in the Kennedy murder.

In its report made public in late 1964, the Warren Commission said Lee Harvey Oswald killed President Kennedy alone and unaided and without being a part of any conspiracy. *EW*