

Leading Figure In Probe Of JFK Plot Found Dead

*F. Paul
7/23/67*

Ferrie's Death

Held Apparent

Suicide By DA

NEW ORLEANS, La. (AP) — David W. Ferrie, an important and strange figure in Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison's investigation of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, was found dead in bed Wednesday. Garrison said he had planned to arrest Ferrie next week.

"The apparent suicide of David Ferrie ends the life of a man who, in my judgment, was one of history's most important individuals," Garrison told a news conference.

Coroner Nicholas Chetta said Ferrie's death was due to a ruptured blood vessel in the brain, but that further tests were being

made. The district attorney's statement was issued at his office at about the same time that the coroner was talking to newsmen at the morgue.

Garrison said Ferrie, a pilot, had been under continual observation and his information "had caused us to become increasingly concerned about the possibility of his killing himself."

"Evidence developed by our office had long since confirmed that he was involved in events culminating in the assassination of President Kennedy."

"Because of this, at a meeting at my house this morning, we had reached a decision to arrest him early next week. Apparently we waited too long."

Dr. Chetta said a note was found in the dining room of Ferrie's cluttered apartment which said, in part:

"To leave this life is for me, a sweet prospect. I find nothing in it that is desirable and on the
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*CBS INTERVIEW
REPORTED TO EXTREME
RIGHT BY DA*

FOUND DEAD

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other hand everything that is loathsome."

The coroner said Ferrie, about 45, was born with a weakness of one blood vessel at the base of the brain. When this ruptured, it caused massive hemorrhage, he added.

However, because of the circumstances and the note, a full autopsy was ordered to check the possibility of suicide. The body was found nude, with a sheet pulled up to the chest.

Ferrie had told friends he was suffering from encephalitis — sleeping sickness. Dr. Chetta said Ferrie had hypertensive cardiovascular disease — high blood pressure.

Garrison told newsmen the primary reason for the planned arrest of Ferrie was because we felt we had reached a point where we had enough information to move.

Ferrie became "increasingly more and more nervous as the investigation progressed," said

Garrison.

"Although my office has been investigating Ferrie intensively for months, we have not mentioned his name publicly up to this point," Garrison added. "The unique nature of this case now leaves me no other course of action."

Asked if he had any reason to believe anybody but Lee Harvey Oswald took part in the actual assassination, Garrison replied:

"I have no reason to believe at this point that Lee Harvey Oswald killed anybody in Dallas on that day."

Ferrie, who did private investigating and listed himself as a psychologist, had complained that Garrison had him "pegged as the getaway pilot in an elaborate plot to kill Kennedy." He called it a "big joke."

The New Orleans district attorney, in an investigation that started last October, has been trying to prove that a conspiracy was hatched here that "culminated in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy" in Dallas, Tex., on Nov. 22, 1963.

Garrison promised arrests and convictions, but kept details secret.

The probe has stirred an international furor because it backed up critics of the Warren Commission, who claim that the assassination of the president could hardly have been the work of just one man.

The official commission report said Lee Harvey Oswald shot Kennedy — and there was no credible evidence to show anyone else was implicated.

Ferrie was interrogated by Garrison's office last November for the second time in connection with the assassination. The first was in 1963.