



AP Wirephoto

New Orleans detectives confer at scene of Ferrie's death

Inquiries Opened On Deaths Of 2 Tied To Assassination

New Orleans, Feb. 22 (AP)—David W. Ferrie, an "important" figure in the investigation of an alleged plot to assassinate President Kennedy, was found dead in bed today.

Jim Garrison, the New Orleans district attorney who launched the investigation, said: "The apparent suicide of David Ferrie ends the life of a man, who, in my judgment, was one of history's most important individuals."

"Evidence developed by our

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

Coroner's Report

However a coroner's report said that Ferrie was born with a weakness of one blood vessel at the base of the brain, and that this vessel ruptured causing massive hemorrhage and death.

The coroner, Dr. Nicholas

(Continued, Page A 6, Col. 5)

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Deaths Tied To Assassination 'Plot' Probed

(Continued from Page A 1)

Chetta, said Ferrie suffered from high blood pressure.

He disclosed that a note found in the dead man's apartment read, in part: "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 loathsome."

Because of the note, Dr. Chetta said, a full autopsy was being performed to check the possibility of suicide.

Increasingly Nervous

Garrison said Ferrie had become "increasingly more and more nervous as the investigation progressed" and for that reason "we had reached a decision to arrest him early next week. Apparently we waited too long."

Garrison also said the "primary reason for the planned arrest was because we felt we had reached a point where we had enough information to move."

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

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

Another Development

In an odd sideline development, authorities in Pensacola, Fla., were asked today to exhume the body of Thomas H. Killam—who was married to a stripper in Jack Ruby's night club, and who also worked as a house painter with a man who once lived in the same boarding house with Oswald.

Earl Killam, the dead man's brother, said he wanted a special examination made to determine the exact cause of death.

Killam said his brother said

he was visited repeatedly by "agents" and "plotters" while living in Dallas after the assassination. He moved three times to escape them, and told his brother two days before his death, "I'm a dead man. I've run as far as I can run."

He was found dead amid the shattered glass of a department store window on a Pensacola street March 17, 1964. A coroner's report showed only one cut on Killam's body: "a long, 3-inch-deep laceration over the lower left side of the neck."

Ferrie's Statement

The New Orleans victim, Ferrie, who did private investigating and listed himself as a psychologist, had complained that Garrison had him "pegged as the get-away 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, November 22, 1963.

Garrison promised arrests and convictions, but kept details secret.

Commission Report

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 that 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.

"We arrested Ferrie 72 hours after John F. Kennedy was assassinated," said Garrison. "The arrest was on the basis of information supplied out of this office. I turned Ferrie over to the FBI on November 25, 1963. As a matter of record at that time, we suggested the FBI make a detailed statement."

Garrison said he had never seen a copy of the FBI interrogation.

Denied Knowing Oswald

"There are 40 pages relating to the interrogation and report on Ferrie which are in the National Archives in Washington," he said. "Only four of these pages are unclassified."

Ferrie repeatedly denied that he ever knew Oswald, a former New Orleans resident.

Ferrie said he and two companions went to Texas from New Orleans the afternoon of the assassination. He insisted it was a pleasure trip.

"We went to Houston, Galveston and back to Alexandria, La.," he said, adding that he had given a "meticulous" account of the trip during the first interrogation.

Ferrie said it was fruitless to search for an accomplice to Oswald because "my assessment of Oswald is that he would be incapable of any interpersonal relationship, especially anything as delicate as a conspiracy to kill."

A police officer standing outside Ferrie's apartment, shortly after officers arrived today to take away the nude body, pointed to a blond youth with long sideburns and said, "he found him."

The youth was hustled away by police. Before he left, he told

a newsman he didn't find the body, didn't know Ferrie and "just happened to wander in."

Ferrie was an odd looking figure. An explosion several years ago cost him his hair and eyebrows. He wore a shaggy toupee and mascara eyebrows.

Police records showed he was fired as an airline pilot after being arrested in Jefferson parish, which adjoins New Orleans, on a morals charge. The case never went to trial.

Garrison said his investigation has unearthed evidence not available to the Warren Commission. He would not elaborate.

Ferrie, a native of Cleveland, had lived in New Orleans the past fifteen years.

Oswald lived in New Orleans during the summer of 1963.

Ferrie said the FBI first became interested in him when a New Orleans man, identified as Ed Voble, reported he served with Oswald in a Civil Air Patrol unit under Ferrie.

Ferrie said Voble was in the Moisant Squadron and "I was in the Lakefront Squadron."

Told that his connection with the Garrison investigation would make him a national celebrity, Ferrie replied:

"What will being a national celebrity get me? Thirty-five cents and being a national celebrity will get you a hamburger. I want to be left alone to my flying."

Ferrie ran a private flying service from a coffee shop at New Orleans Lakefront Airport.

"He was always very nice and never got out of line," a waitress who declined to give her name recalled today. "He was intelligent and real serious about flying because that's all he ever talked about."