

San Francisco Chronicle

THE VOICE OF THE WEST

EDITION ★★

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1967

The Baffling Aspects of 'Plot' Death

Times-Post Service

New Orleans

The death of a sometime airline pilot involved in the district attorney's investigation of President Kennedy's assassination remained as mysterious yesterday as the inquiry itself.

Whether David W. Ferrie died by suicide or natural cause, his death stands out as a macabre note in an already bizarre situation.

The investigation has produced promises of arrests and convictions from District Attorney Jim Garrison, but so far little in concrete results. Garrison blames the local press for tipping his hand. The FBI clearly expects him to fall on his face.

'SUICIDE'

Yesterday, Garrison mysteriously announced to newsmen that "for reasons I can't go into, there is no question" that Ferrie's death was a suicide.

And in another part of the Criminal Court Building, Orleans parish coroner Nicholas Chetta virtually ruled out the possibility of murder.

The coroner said he could still establish no more than that Ferrie, whom Garrison said he planned to arrest next week, died of a cerebral hemorrhage — a ruptured

blood vessel at the base of the brain.

CONFLICT

While the district attorney blamed the death on "something taken internally," the coroner said that no drugs could have caused the hemorrhage, except perhaps by causing a violent retching reaction that might have ruptured the blood vessel.

In still another odd development, a self-described private eye sud-

See Page 16, Col. 1

From Page 1

denly walked into Garrison's office after having reportedly left his home in fear. He was David F. Lewis, 26, who has been linked to Garrison's investigation. He was said to have asked Garrison whether "I should leave town."

Lewis, a freight agent, claimed to have met Lee Harvey Oswald in New Orleans four times and claims

to know the names of four or five persons involved in the alleged plot to kill President Kennedy.

DISAPPEARANCE

But he told reporters yesterday that Ferrie was not one of these persons. He was immediately whisked off into an elevator by an employee of Garrison's office before he could say another word.

The elevator doors closing upon him seemed to ring



AP Wirephoto

DAVID F. LEWIS
'In fear of his life'

doen the curtain on yesterday's events in the baffling investigation.

Garrison ordered his inquiry last fall, a few weeks after his public image as "the Perry Mason of New Orleans" went into decline.

In a move sharply criticized by the Metropolitan Crime Commission, Garrison won a pardon for a Bourbon Street stripper, Linda Briette, whom he described as "an unjustly convicted mother of small chilfen. . . ."

VOW

It is impossible to discern what evidence Garrison has at hand in his investigation of the Kennedy assassination. He has vowed to prosecute both "conspirators" and "accessories after the fact" who failed to volunteer important information.

But sources close to the investigation seem to feel that Garrison is likely to come up at most with charges against perhaps four or five individuals, presumably Cuban, who might have heard Oswald threaten to assassinate the President.

Said an official of the Dade County State Attorney's office where Garrison's men have gone on various forays: "My theory on this is that what they have is a bunch of guys who are sitting around in New Orleans talking and one turns state's evidence, they'll probably convict them, too. After all, this was a President."

TALK

The talk of a presidential assassination was apparently topic A in extremist circles in the days before Mr. Kennedy was shot Nov. 22, 1963.

For example, in Miami, which Mr. Kennedy visited before he went to Dallas, investigators working on a local bombing picked up a tape

recorded conversation from "a Ku Klux Klan type" about the possibility of going to a high building with a rifle along the route of some presidential motorcade.

"We probably could have woven something like this (Garrison's investigation) out of the same thing we had," the Miami official said.

UNCLEAR

Ferrie's role in the investigation here remains unclear. He said before he died that he had never met Oswald. And Garrison has refused to specify what he planned to arrest the former airline pilot for.

Ferrie told a reporter that he had never been to Cuba. But he had been arrested in 1961 on a morals charge involving juveniles and one of the officers in this arrest said one of the juveniles told of living in Cuba with Ferrie on different occasions.

In an interview before he died, Ferrie said at one point that he believed people who are murdered "usually bring it on themselves." But he died without giving any hint that he might have been involved in the death of a President.

Conflicting Testimony On Ferrie-Oswald Link

Washington

Documents in the National Archives disclosed yesterday that Jack S. Martin of New Orleans, the man who linked Lee Harvey Oswald and David W. Ferrie, had admitted to the Secret Service and the FBI that his story was a lie.

Ferrie, who was found dead Wednesday, was a major figure in an investigation by New Orleans District Attorney James Garrison of an alleged plot to assassinate President Kennedy. The District Attorney has promised sensational revelations and arrests. He insists the alleged plot was hatched in New Orleans.

STORY

Martin told Garrison shortly after the assassination that Ferrie knew Oswald, that he trained him in the use of rifles with telescopic

sights, and that Ferrie had visited Dallas about two weeks before the assassination of the President Nov. 22, 1963.

Soon thereafter, Martin swore in separate statements to FBI and Secret Service agents that his tale was a figment of his imagination.

On the night of Nov. 29, 1963, two Secret Service agents, Anthony J. Gerrets and John W. Rice, interviewed Martin "at length" in his apartment in New Orleans.

REPORT

Their report states:

"Martin, who has every appearance of being an alcoholic, admitted during the interview that he suffers from 'telephonitis' when drinking and that it was during one of his drinking bouts that he telephoned Assistant District Attorney Herman S. Kohlman and told him this fantastic story about David

William Ferrie being involved with Lee Harvey Oswald.

"He said he had heard on television that Oswald had at one time been active in the Civil Air Patrol and had later heard that Ferrie had been his squadron commander. Martin stated that Ferrie was well known to him; that he recalled having seen rifles in Ferrie's home and also recalled that Kohlman (who had been a newspaper reporter previously) had written an article on Ferrie and that Ferrie had been a Marine and had been with the Civil Air Patrol.

"Martin stated that after turning all these thoughts over in his mind, he had telephoned Herman S. Kohlman and had told his story as though it was based on facts rather than on his imagination."

New York T