

New Orleans Pilot's Death Ruled Due To Natural Causes

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Coroner Nicholas Chetta said today a chemical analysis of the body of David W. Ferrie showed he had died of natural causes.

"There is no indication whatsoever of suicide or murder," the Orleans Parish coroner said. A ruptured artery in the brain was the cause of death, he said.

One of the mysteries in the case has been an unsigned, undated note found in Ferrie's apartment. It said death would be "sweet prospects" and could be interpreted as a suicide note.

Ferrie, a pilot, was found dead in bed Wednesday. He was a central figure in Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison's current investigation into the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Garrison had termed Ferrie's death apparent suicide.

Results Negative

A chemical analysis of Ferrie's blood, urine and skin was negative for the presence of alcohol, drugs or poison, Dr. Chetta said.

Dr. Chetta, an M.D., disclosed he had been contacted by a physician who had treated Ferrie.

"This doctor told me he had treated Mr. Ferrie for high blood pressure and recently for a gastro-intestinal disturbance," Chetta said. "The doctor said he found Ferrie unduly disturbed and depressed and said Ferrie spoke about suicide."

"The doctor also said Ferrie was determined to sue Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison for a large sum of money. I believe the figure was something like \$500,000."

Derided Investigation

Ferrie had consistently denied ever knowing Lee Harvey Oswald — named by the Warren Commission as Kennedy's assassin.

In an interview last Saturday, Ferrie termed Garrison's investigation "a big joke" and said he supposedly had been pegged as "the get-away pilot" in an elaborate plot to kill Kennedy.

Garrison, without revealing details, described Ferrie after

his death as a central figure in his investigation. He said he had planned to arrest Ferrie next week.

Dr. Chetta said a final, comprehensive autopsy report would be made public Tuesday. A "conspiracy investigation" fund has been created by New Orleans businessmen to underwrite Garrison's pledge to prove there was a conspiracy in the assassination of Kennedy.

"It would amount to a blank check that would pay the cost of the investigation for months and even years," one of the sponsors said.

Garrison said it might be months rather than weeks before arrests could be made.

He also said he would go to banks, if necessary, to personally borrow money to finance the investigation.

While there have been a number of critics of the Warren report, Garrison is the first public official with power to investigate to say there was a conspiracy.

Convinced that Garrison is right and will produce results if his investigation is free of any money obstacles, various New Orleans businessmen pledged to privately finance the investigation.

The prime mover behind the fund raising is Joseph M. Rault Jr., president of Rault Petroleum Corp. of New Orleans.

Another of the principal businessmen involved is Willard Robertson, wealthy New Orleans automobile distributor. Like Rault, he is a personal friend of Garrison.

Others Frightened

Ferrie's death apparently

scared other persons whose names have figured in the probe.

David Lewis, a bus station baggage clerk who claims he had knowledge of a possible conspiracy to kill Kennedy, went to Garrison's office yesterday. Lewis again expressed fear for his life.

Miguel Torres, a Cuban exile who lived a block from Lee Harvey Oswald's 1963 residence here, was transferred from a jail cell to the Orleans Parish Prison Hospital. Reportedly there was a telephone call threatening his life. Torres was returned to New Orleans from the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola last month for questioning by Garrison's investigators.

The Warren commission's exhaustive investigation of the assassination concluded there was no credible evidence of a conspiracy or that any gunman other than Oswald was involved. Oswald is a native of New Orleans.

Rep. Hale Boggs, D-La., a member of the Warren commission, said last night he felt that Garrison "is acting in the best interests of his country" in making his investigation.

In Washington Rep. Gerald R. Ford, R-Mich., rebuked Garrison today for not cooperating with federal officials in his inquiry.

Ford, a member of the Warren Commission, told a news conference "I am amazed that public officials would refuse to cooperate with federal authorities."