

Anti-Castroite Leery of JFK 'Plot' Probe

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Cuban Fears New Orleans

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NEW ORLEANS, Feb. 26—A former Cuban exile leader wanted for questioning by District Attorney Jim Garrison said today he was fearful of

what might happen to him if he returns to New Orleans.

Sergio Arcacha Smith, one-time New Orleans delegate of the anti-Castro Cuban Revolutionary Democratic Front who now lives in Dallas, voiced anxiety and frustration in a tele-

phone interview about the controversial investigation Garrison is conducting into President Kennedy's assassination.

Garrison claims he knows who the conspirators and their accessories are. He has declared that "the only way they can get away from us is by killing themselves."

The single-minded prosecutor has adopted as an article of faith the thesis that Lee Harvey Oswald was not the assassin, but instead, apparently, a decoy and fall guy.

"I just don't know anything," Arcacha told a reporter over the phone. "What's this man trying to do? Why doesn't he arrest somebody? Why doesn't he tell us what he has?"

"If you can't believe in Earl Warren and the FBI, who can you believe in this Nation?"

Arcacha has been linked to New Orleans pilot David W. Ferrie whom Garrison accused of being "involved in events culminating in the assassination of President Kennedy." Ferrie died of a cerebral hemorrhage in his cluttered flat Wednesday after complaining that the DA's investigation smacked of "witch hunt."

Clearly nervous and upset, Arcacha refused to admit ever knowing Ferrie. "I can't recall," he said. "I studied the name in the papers the other day. I just can't place him."

Arcacha left New Orleans in 1961, moved to Houston and

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subsequently Dallas. "I don't know where I'll move next—the North Pole or the Amazon River," he said today.

While here, he was associated with Ferrie, according to reports of police and other Cuban exiles. Carlos Bringuer, head of the Cuban Student Directorate here, said today he was positive Arcacha knew Ferrie.

Bringuer said that when he met Ferrie in 1961 while circulating an anti-Castro petition, Arcacha was the one who went with me. Bringuer said he had heard criticisms of Arcacha's association with Ferrie and that he wanted to meet Ferrie for himself.

Whatever the relationships were, not a strand of evidence has been produced so far to show that either Ferrie or Arcacha knew Oswald. Nor has any evidence surfaced yet to

refute the Warren Commission's conclusion that Oswald was the assassin and that he apparently acted alone.

Ferrie, before he died, and Arcacha both have denied knowing Oswald. Garrison, however, is pressing his pursuit of the band "of conspirators," presumably Latin American and according to some reports four or five in number.

"Am I one of the four or five that's to be arrested?" Arcacha asked out loud. "My goodness, I didn't think I was that important."

Garrison's men had sought to get Arcacha to come to New Orleans for questioning voluntarily. Early last week, he asked Dallas's assistant district attorney, William Alexander, whether he had to return. Alexander advised him that he didn't.

Apparently in hopes of making it an acceptable substitute, Arcacha went to Dallas police Wednesday and gave them a statement saying, in essence, that he had nothing to do with the assassination and knew nothing about it.

CBS-TV reported today that two of Garrison's investigators, William Gurvich and James L. Alcock, flew to Dallas Friday in Gurvich's private plane to question Arcacha themselves. Arcacha was said to be willing but insisted on having Dallas detectives present as witnesses. CBS reported that this apparently was unacceptable to Garrison's men, who left without questioning Arcacha.

Garrison's investigation apparently revolves around a conspiracy theory beginning with a plot to assassinate Cuban Premier Fidel Castro that was transformed into a plot to assassinate the President. Arcacha complained that the Garrison investigation was giving Cuban exiles in this country a black eye.

Bringuer, who voiced the same complaint, said he felt certain Arcacha had nothing to do with the assassination. But Bringuer also blandly stated that it was he who helped Garrison's men to find Arcacha. Arcacha had called Bringuer to find out what was going on in New Orleans.