

S T A T E M E N T

of GEORGE LARDNER, JR., White Male, 32 years of age, residing 5604 Thirty-Second Street NorthWest, Washington, D. C., relative to his interview with DAVID WILLIAM FERRIE on this date.

Questions by WILLIAM GURVICH
Answers by LARDNER

Ferris Lardner

- Q. What is your full name, please?
A. George Edmund Lardner, Junior.
- Q. You are with the Washington Post, is that right?
A. Right.
- Q. Is your presence in New Orleans in relation to the District Attorney's investigation?
A. Yes.
- Q. How long have you been in the city?
A. I arrived Monday evening, the twentieth of February.
- Q. Where are you staying?
A. The Bourbon-Orleans.
- Q. Have you interviewed DAVID WILLIAM FERRIE since your arrival?
A. Yes.
- Q. When was that?
A. From approximately midnight February twenty-second to a few minutes before four A.M., this date, or February twenty-second, anyway you want to put it.
- Q. Where did this take place?
A. At MR. FERRIE'S flat, that's 3330 Louisiana Avenue Parkway.
- Q. Was anyone else present?
A. No.
- Q. How did you get there?
A. By cab. I forget which company it was, I think it was United.
- Q. What was the purpose of your visit there?
A. To interview MR. FERRIE in relation to published reports about what he had said of the investigation, and whatever comments he might care to make.
- Q. How did you gain entrance?
A. I rang the doorbell, lights were on, and as I got out of the cab I could see MR. FERRIE walking to the doors that led to the second floor porch that fronts the street.
- Q. Did he open the door for you personally?
A. Yes.
- Q. Did he do that by electric lock release or manually?
A. He came down the stairs and opened the door.
- Q. How was FERRIE dressed?
A. Had on brown pants, white shirt open at the neck, he was barefoot. He said he was just about to go to bed when I pulled up.
- Q. Did he say he noticed you pull up or was he first aware of your presence when you rang the bell?
A. Well, he didn't make reference to my pulling up but I could see him looking down at the street, as I got out of the cab. I told the cab to wait until he either consented to see me or turn me away because I didn't want to get stuck

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out there without transportation back to town.

Q. How long did the cab wait until you released it?

A. Oh, perhaps half a minute, I had paid him before I got out of the cab and had told him to wait till I waved or came back.

Q. Was FERRIE friendly towards you?

A. Yes, er, I had been out there earlier in the day when he wasn't there and had left a note under the door asking him to get in touch with me.

Q. What was your first impression of FERRIE?

A. Well, er, let me see, er, intelligent, well-versed guy and a broad range of subjects. He was in a good mood.

Q. What was your first impression of his apartment?

A. Kind of messy. He excused the condition of it, apologizing for the condition stating he had just moved in.

Q. Where did you sit during your interview?

A. I sat on a sort of old chair, living room chair, single seat.

Q. Where did FERRIE sit?

A. He sat mostly on a couch opposite me and against the wall.

Q. Can you recall any particular or unusual statement or answer FERRIE gave?

A. Looking back on it, he described himself as sort of moody, made a passing reference to it, and at another point he said in relation to, er, the assassination of President Kennedy, that a President isn't any better than anybody else. That any man who is killed deserves a full and complete investigation, as full and complete as is given the President.

Q. Did FERRIE answer all of your questions?

A. Yeah, he rambled quite a bit, I didn't get that many questions in. He would go into long discussions about various things. Philosophy, training, and, er, general outlook on the world.

Q. Did FERRIE say anything to you about moods of depression or fear of any particular thing?

A. He at various points mentioned that, as I recall it, he made a reference to manic-depressive moods, and, er, that he was concerned that some remarks he might make, if published, might trigger MR. GARRISON into making premature arrests. I asked him if he were worried and he said he wasn't. He let me into the apartment, er, with more or less the understanding I would read back to him the comments I intended to use. On the grounds he didn't want to make any problems for himself and that he wasn't particularly anxious to be interviewed.

Q. Did FERRIE say when he experienced his last manic-depressive mood?

A. No, no. He referred to it only in passing.

Q. Your impression was that he was not in a manic-depressive mood during your interview.

A. Oh, right, yeah, that's correct, that's my impression.

Q. Did he talk about any of his friends?

A. Of his, friends? He referred to JACK MARTIN, said he was sort of a courthouse habitue and semi-appointed private inv-

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continued

investigator. That should be self-appointed investigator.

Q. Did he go into detail about JACK MARTIN or anyone else?

A. Not too much.

Q. Did he at all?

A. He said, at one point, that you, WILLIAM GURVICH, were well-acquainted with JACK MARTIN.

Q. MARTIN, JACK MARTIN?

A. Yes, JACK MARTIN.

Q. Again, did he mention any names or refer to friends?

A. He also referred to youngsters that he had befriended over the years. He described it as sort of a hobby, taking deserving youngsters who are products of broken homes and helping them get ahead in life. He said he felt he had been pretty successful, that some had turned out doctors, military officers, and the like.

Q. Did you notice any medication in the apartment?

A. I noticed, particularly, a brown bottle that was standing on the piano near where we were sitting. It had a label on it but I don't recall what the medication was.

Q. Was the bottle empty?

A. I couldn't tell, the label covered most of the front.

Q. Did FERRIE eat, drink or take any medication, liquid or otherwise, during your visit?

A. He made a pot of coffee and we both had a cup?

Q. Do you know if the coffee was already prepared or did he make it fresh during your visit?

A. I think he made it fresh, he observed that it came out too strong.

Q. What room were you in?

A. The living room.

Q. Did FERRIE receive any phone calls or make any calls during your visit?

A. No.

Q. Did anyone else come to his apartment during your visit?

A. No.

Q. Did FERRIE say if he was expecting anyone?

A. No, he didn't say one way or the other. I take it he wasn't since he indicated he was about to go to bed as I drove up.

Q. Did you ask him if he thought he was a suspect in any current investigation?

A. I didn't put it that way. I asked him, as I mentioned before, whether he was worried in light of the investigation.

Q. Did FERRIE say, or indicate, that any of his friends or associates were worried about any current investigation?

A. No, he didn't.

Q. Did you ask him if he knew or was friendly with any person

interviewed by the WARREN COMMISSION?

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- A. No, except for LEE HARVEY OSWALD. I only asked about OSWALD.
- Q. What was his reply?
- A. Oh, yes, right, he said no, he didn't know him and had no recollection of ever meeting him. I did ask him about a conversation he had earlier in the week with CARLOS BRINGUIER and he acknowledged it had taken place.
- Q. Did he say what they discussed?
- A. BRINGUIER had told me what they had discussed.
- Q. What did BRINGUIER tell you?
- A. He said that FERRIE had asked him several questions in relation to the assassination of PRESIDENT KENNEDY.
- Q. What were the questions?
- A. Let me check my notes. One, any Americans or any Cubans that OSWALD had any association with in NEW ORLEANS. FERRIE asked BRINGUIER if he knew any. And two, if there is a conspiracy, when did it start, the dates. FERRIE explained to me that he was conducting his own investigation because he didn't trust GARRISON'S investigation and didn't have much faith in the court system.
- Q. Was FERRIE at all nervous during your interview?
- A. He didn't appear to be, several times he would get up and walk around and we parted on what I thought was a cheerful note.
- Q. Did FERRIE express an opinion about recent publicity?
- A. He said he was the one who, by telling the STATES-ITEM that an investigation was indeed in progress over the Kennedy assassination forced GARRISON to publicly acknowledge it.
- Q. Did he say if the local press was aware of the investigation prior to that?
- A. I can't recall the sequence on that. I think he indicated it was. I was under the impression that it was.
- Q. Did FERRIE say if anyone was filtering confidential or classified information to him?
- A. Not in those terms.
- Q. Then how did he express it?
- A. He indicated that he felt he was in fair standing with the FBI, that they had thoroughly investigated any possible role that he may have had in the assassination and that they had found nothing wrong.
- Q. Did he say if he was receiving any information from our office, that is, the DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, that he should not have?
- A. He said he had what he considered pretty good pipelines but he didn't specify who.
- Q. Did FERRIE express his opinion of the KENNEDY ASSASSINATION?
- A. Yes, he said he thought there was just one assassin, that he had had his own doubts about this but resolved them only this Sunday. He said his doubts were based solely on the confusion over the autopsy report. Here's what he said. The shortcoming of the WARR II REPORT insofar as it would leave the door open to that speculation (plot) and did

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cause me to feel there was a second assassin and therefore a plot. I found was the result of hastily collated material poor cross-checking and editing, and that confusion as far as I am concerned could have come only from the autopsy report and nothing else.

NOTE: LARDNER in latter part of answer was quoting FERRIE.

Q. Is there more?

A. Yes. He also said QUOTE It was not until it occurred to me that the public post-mortem should have reflected the position, not of the various wounds in a body when lying on a slab, but rather a body sitting in a position similar to what it was at the time of the shooting END QUOTE Parenthesis That I, FERRIE, Close Parenthesis resolve my doubts.

NOTE: LARDNER finishing quote for FERRIE.

A. (continuing) He did say he had given them a lot of leads or perhaps, more precisely points, to check out. That he had given them an exhaustive run-down of where he had been on his trip to TEXAS that afternoon:

Q. What afternoon?

A. Afternoon the PRESIDENT was killed. Said he had also given it to the DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE and that, as I recall it, it was at his insistence that the statement be given to the FBI, SECRET SERVICE, everybody.

Q. Did he talk about his arrests of the past?

A. I gathered only illusion he was making to arrests in past was his reference to youngsters he had helped and befriended. I took that to be his answer to what seems to be a common understanding.

Q. Is there anything you can think of during your interview with DAVID WILLIAM FERRIE that might be of interest or assistance to the DISTRICT ATTORNEY?

A. No, not off hand.

Q. Did you want to add something?

A. To finish the other answer, a common understanding or rather suspicion that these friendships might in any way be improper.

Q. Will you describe your parting with FERRIE?

A. I had been asking him to agree to publication a comment he had made during the interview. It related to the time he said he was questioned by the DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE in the recent investigation last NOVEMBER. The substance of the comment was that when he was called in the DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE said they wanted to run over the statement he had made in 1963 on the grounds that they had lost their copy. He said he replied that he would get the statement for them from the FBI. He said that the DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S men told him QUOTE NO, DON'T DO THAT UNQUOTE. FERRIE replied that he would go to the FBI and get a copy of the statement. He said the DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S men told him QUOTE DON'T SAY WE SENT YOU UNQUOTE.

Q. Did FERRIE get that statement from the FBI?

A. He said that when he went to the FBI their immediate response was OH THAT'S JACK MARTIN

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FERRIE said that the DA'S investigation was touched off by JACK MARTIN.

Q. Did FERRIE say if he got that statement?

A. FERRIE said that as soon as they said JACK MARTIN with some disgust FERRIE abandoned the idea. Relating back to our parting. In any event, FERRIE did not want these comments used on the grounds he said that it might get him in the middle of a fuss between the FBI and the DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE and that it might trigger a QUOTE PREMATURE ARREST UNQUOTE. And he implied that this would be unfair.

Q. Was FERRIE referring to himself?

A. I did not think that he was.

Q. Do you have any idea about whom he was referring?

A. No.

Q. What time did you leave FERRIE this morning?

A. I left shortly, I think, before four a.m.

Q. Did you call a cab?

A. Yes.

Q. What company.

A. Yellow cab company. They came within a few minutes and I went back to the hotel.

Q. Will you be available for the next day or so?

A. Next day, pretty sure, or so, I don't know.

Q. Do you feel that this was a reasonable and expected interview between you and me?

A. Yes, except for the QUOTE FERRIE'S UNQUOTE.

Q. Was it made voluntarily?

A. Yes.

SIGNED:

George E. Lardner, Jr.
GEORGE/E. LARDNER, JR.

This statement taken by, and typed by, WILLIAM GURVICH, in the office of the DISTRICT ATTORNEY, PARISH OF ORLEANS, STATE OF LOUISIANA, ON 22 February 1967, concluding at 9:10 PM/

William H. Gervich