

More 'Suicides' Predicted

JFK Death Is 'Solved,' New Orleans DA Says

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NEW ORLEANS, Feb. 24 (AP)—District Attorney Jim Garrison announced to a corridor jammed with newsmen today that "we have solved the assassination of President Kennedy beyond any shadow of a doubt."

Not a conspirator will escape, Garrison said in the impromptu, belief-boggling press conference held in the lobby of the Shell Building in downtown New Orleans.

"The only way they can get away from us is by killing themselves," the District Attorney declared, "because we're going to get every one of them . . . we will arrest everyone, not just some, but everyone involved."

Looking tired and admittedly "snappish" after long hours without sleep, Garrison predicted that "there will probably be other suicides" as

a result of his controversial investigation.

Orleans Parish Coroner See ORLEANS, A4, Col. 2

Nicholas Chetta announced earlier in the day that the sudden death of David M. Ferrie, the jack-of-all-trades once questioned in the assassination, appeared the result of natural causes.

Garrison was unimpressed. It was, he insisted, a suicide.

Probe Financed

The hulking, six-foot, seven-inch prosecutor made his assertions both before and, in more detail, after a luncheon with 50 wealthy businessmen in the exclusive Petroleum Club.

They formed a group called "Truth or Consequences" to help pay for what Garrison promised would be a relentless pursuit. The band's motto, apparently endorsed with fervor: "Let the chips fall where they may."

The fund-raising drive, designed to enable Garrison to conduct his investigation away from the prying eyes of the press, is expected to produce as much as \$50,000 a month from full-fledged contributors, its organizers said. Perhaps not all the money will be needed, they said, but it will be the District Attorney's to spend "as he sees fit."

The setting at Garrison's press conference verged on

the surrealistic. "We know what cities were involved, how it (the assassination) was done in the essential respects, and the individuals involved," he said with conviction.

In an elevator on the way down from the third-floor Petroleum Club, Garrison puffed on a cigar and stated: "It's my personal belief that Oswald did not kill anyone that day" in Dallas. The "plot" he promised to prosecute, it also appeared, may not even have been designed, in its beginnings, to kill Kennedy.

'Several Plots'

Asked whether the conspiracy he claims had been hatched in New Orleans was actually aimed at the late President from the start, Garrison replied:

"There were several plots. A change of course did occur. Now that's more than I wanted to say."

There have been indications that the conspiracy theory Garrison has built began not with a plot to kill the President but one to assassinate Cuban Premier Fidel Castro. How the purported scheme got turned around, and without Lee Harvey Oswald behind the trigger, is a secret the District Attorney is keeping to himself.

No Arrests 'Imminent'

Garrison said no arrests "imminent." But he insisted there "no question that if we wanted to make arrests within the next few days, we could make them stick."

"Let justice be done," he said, "though the heavens fall." At that point an incredulous reporter said in a stage whisper, "I'm waiting for the heavens to fall."

Garrison, however, was undeviating in his declaration that he already knew just how President Kennedy came under an assassin's bullets.

"There's no question about the motive," he said. "I've been known to be wrong," he allowed. "I was wrong once in the '30s."

Garrison said he was holding off on arrests now only because it might result in the sacrifice of "certain aspects" of his case, and because he wanted a tight

would produce convictions under the criminal court requirements of proof "beyond a reasonable doubt."

Accessories Seen

Garrison said the home-grown plot would bring the apprehension not only of conspirators but "accessories after the fact," people who have, as Garrison put it, "substantial knowledge" of what was going on and failed to notify authorities in time to save the late President.

Before Ferrie died early Wednesday morning of a cerebral hemorrhage he told me of his fears that Garrison's investigation would prove no more than a "witchhunt." The 49-year-old Ferrie had been interrogated after the assassination about reports that he might have been the pilot of a "getaway plane" for the assassin and that he knew Oswald. He denied it.

Dr. Chetta, the coroner, said there was no evidence of suicide or murder in Ferrie's death. New Orleans homicide Lt. Cornelius Drumm supported the semi-final assessment.

The coroner has said that autopsy findings indicated Ferrie had died some time Tuesday night, but later agreed he could have died as late as 6 a.m. Wednesday morning. I left Ferrie's flat, after a rambling, four-hour interview, at approximately 4 a.m. Wednesday.

Tension Blamed

Asked about this apparent time discrepancy again today by reporters, Dr. Chetta said: "I don't think this has any import at all. I think the difference was built up and mushroomed."

"I think he (Ferrie) was under tension . . . his high blood pressure and tension could have resulted" in the hemorrhage.

Outspoken, with a background of arrests on homosexual charges and views on every issue from philosophy to politics, Ferrie had been both publicly and privately critical of President Kennedy for lack of air cover in the Bay of Pigs invasion by Cuban exiles. He had been quoted as saying that the President "ought to be shot."