

Chetta Officially Rules Ferrie Death

Natural

Orleans Parish Coroner Dr. Nicholas Chetta today officially ruled that David William Ferrie died of natural causes.

The coroner said he did this despite a second note found in Ferrie's apartment, apparently to a friend, in which he indicated he expected to die very soon.

"It would be easy for the public to say this is emotional suicide, but we cannot classify it as such," said Chetta.

HE DESCRIBED FERRIE as an "intelligent psychopath." He called him a "dangerous man, capable of doing anything." He said Ferrie was a "manic depressive with paranoid tendencies."

Ferrie, who was found dead in his apartment last Wednesday, has been called by District Attorney Jim Garrison a key figure in the DA's investigation of a conspiracy to kill President John F. Kennedy.

The note, the existence of which was not revealed until today, said:

"Dear —:

"When you read this I will be quite dead and no answer will be possible. I wonder how you are going to justify things.

"Tell me you treated me as you did because I was the one who always got you in trouble. The police arrest. The strip car charge. The deal at Kohn School. Flying Barragona in the Beech.

"Well, I guess that helps ease your conscience, even if it is not the truth. All I can say is that I offered you love, and the best I could. All I got in return in the end was a kick in the teeth. Thus I die alone and unloved.

"You would not even straighten out—about me, though this started when you were going steady.

"I wonder what your last days and hours are going to be like. As you sowed, so shall you also reap."

The note, which was typewritten, was signed "Dave." The signature was also typed. The letter was not dated.

In these respects, it was similar to another note, part of which was revealed earlier, in which Ferrie described death as "a sweet prospect."

Dr. Chetta, in a news conference this morning, released the text of both letters. On Ferrie's death, Dr. Chetta said: "THERE IS NO EVIDENCE to indicate violence of any kind; certainly not murder or suicide."

He said a complete toxicological report indicated that the original cause of death pinpointed by his office was correct—a burst blood vessel in the brain.

The coroner said he had a telegram from Parmalee T. Ferrie of Rockford, N.Y., saying he was David Ferrie's brother and making arrangements for claiming the body and personal effects.

Dr. Chetta said a chemical examination of the bottles of pills found in Ferrie's room showed there were antibiotics, codeine tablets, paregoric, laxatives and at least one poison.

HOWEVER, THE CHEMICAL analysis of Ferrie's body definitely showed that he had consumed no poison, Dr. Chetta said. Earlier, the coroner had said that there was no way to induce a brain hemorrhage by taking drugs.

Dr. Chetta said he based his opinion that Ferrie was a psychopath on the record of Ferrie's associates, the material in the letters, Ferrie's interest in guns and hypnotism and on other available data. He said Ferrie was capable of "violent acts."

Four rifles were found among Ferrie's effects, as well as a box of shotgun shells and some .22 rifle blanks. There was also a radio transmitter turning unit and two Signal Corps field telephones. There was a sword and a 100-pound aerial-type practice bomb.

In the longer of the two notes, the one partially revealed earlier, Ferrie wrote a bitter indictment of law enforcement officers, courts and American justice in general.

IT CONCLUDED "IF THIS BE JUSTICE, then justice, be damned."

The first paragraph of the note, which was undated, was revealed previously, but the remainder of the text was kept secret while the investigation progressed. Tests revealed the note was written on a typewriter found in the apartment.

Today, the States-Item obtained the full text for the first time. It reads:

"To leave this life is, for me, a sweet prospect. I find nothing in it that is desirable, and on the other hand everything that is loathsome.

MORE

"DAILY WE ARE PROPAGANDIZED more and more about a rising crime rate. But how do we know it's true? We don't, for we Americans have little or no access to the truth. So I went to the police headquarters to see these 'public records' of this rising crime rate and nearly wound in my trouble. I was searched, interrogated, verbally abused, had my record checked, and finally threatened. Needless to say, I did not see the 'public records.'

"Still more irking is to hear a superintendent of police, who rose through the ranks (thus proving that zero times zero equals super zero) stating that the solution to the crime problem was tighter and more stringent laws. A somewhat messianic district attorney concurred. Together these men proved themselves utterly unfit for office, just as they proved that an electorate cannot be depended on to pick the right man. The problems of crime rest deep in society. The problems exist in the existence of divorce and the absence of regulations.

"No parents would send him child to an amateur for dental work, nor a quack for an appendectomy. Yet what atrocious negligence is permitting other amateurs to raise children. Mere kids are allowed to marry because they have the 'urge.' How stupid can you get? Every expert tells in detail how children must be cared for, physically, emotionally and intellectually. Yet society lets girls and boys, not yet capable of lover, beget children who, love-starved, turn to crime for some sort of identification. However, I don't think we will often see a district attorney or a police chief with brains to realize this.

"WE PAY SO MUCH ATTENTION to the law. I have not figured out the reason. I have watched judges like . . . at work. The various police and district attorneys and the like get to bend the judge's ear long before the trial. These judges of today deny defendants due process of the law. They permit the state to try the case in chambers, to have district attorneys form their opinions and decisions long before the defense gets a chance. Further, these same judges (and I am afraid it pertains to nearly all of them) then comment, by word, glance, gesture or remark, on the evidence in front of a jury. If the defendant wins, these judges take it as a personal insult.

"When I was a boy my father preached that in the 'American way of life' you are innocent till proven guilty. No greater lie has been told. The man charged before the court has flat got to prove his innocence. Go witness a criminal trial and watch. The state is supposed to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. If you read decisions of the various courts of appeal and the Supreme Court you discover that truth and falsehood, right and wrong have no place in court. All the state needs is 'evidence to support a conviction.' If this is justice, then justice be damned."

FERRIE HAD NEVER BEEN convicted of any crime, but had had several run-ins with the law. He was accused of two morals violations several years ago, but he was found not guilty on one charge and other charges against him were dismissed. He was held for short periods and questioned in the Kennedy slaying investigation, both by local and federal authorities.

No charges were known to be pending against him at the time of his death.

There was no indication how long before his death he wrote the note, or when he made the visit to police headquarters to which he refers.