

Bud, Paul, Gary, Mary

4/12/70

Dr. James B. Rhoads, Archivist
The National Archives
Washington, D.C.

Dear Dr. Rhoads,

I note the unduly long time in which there has been no response of any nature from you on a number of outstanding requests I have made.

You have taken exception to some of the things I have said about the David Ferris material and have denied me a copy of the list of documents relating to him that I told you had been made. You have, in fact, denied any such list was made. I told you that at the time Ferris was in the news I had been told otherwise by Mr. Marion Johnson, who also gave me a list of what had been released relating to Ferris. I have mislaid that list.

I believe I also told you that news account of the time would confirm what I said.

I have microfilm copies of two stories by Nen Robertson in the New York Times of February 24 and 25, 1967, pages 24 and 58, respectively. I regret they are too small to permit legible copying. However, I assume they are readily available to you. You will find these stories relate the release by the Archives of 16 relevant pages and report the withholding of about 40 others, at FBI order. It is also reported that Mr. Johnson "pulled" this information "together", in response to request from the New Orleans papers.

At your suggestion, I did examine your Ferris files. There is nothing in them that in any way suggests what is here reported. It is inevitable that a listing was made. These stories also recount that you had requested the FBI to release what was still classified, again bearing very much on whether or not there was a list. Could you ask the FBI to declassify what you did not specify?

These stories further refer to Secret Service interviews with Ferris. There are no such reports in what you made available to me. These are directly quoted in the story. If you have such reports, I would like copies of them. I also renew my request for a copy of the list of documents relating to Ferris and I add a request for the communication to the FBI relating to their declassification and any reply.

I hope it is not again a futility to hope this can be replied to within a reasonable time.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

cc: Mr. Thomas Kelley, Secret Service

4/12/70

Mr. Tom Kelley, Assistant Director
U.S. Secret Service
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Kelley,

Enclosed is a copy of my today's letter to the Archivist relating to the Warren Commission Ferris documents.

Since speaking to you last week, I have heard nothing from the Archives.

I am aware of the possibility that the Times is in error in quoting Secret Service reports or may have confused those of the Secret Service and the FBI. I am also aware of the possible interpretation of this reporting that your agency supplied some of the information to the Times.

You may not be aware of it, but I am the first to have "discovered" and written about Ferris. At our conference, you may recall I did ask you about him and Secret Service knowledge of him, etc. I have been trying to obtain what I believe is improperly withheld of the Ferris material, and for a long time. During this time I have been made false promises by some government officials, including an Assistant Attorney General of the United States. These files are available to you should you desire to see them. Recently I have again taken this up with the Department of Justice, looking to taking whatever steps may be possible to obtain this material.

I have conducted what, for a writer, is a rather extensive investigation of Ferris. Again, if it interests you, you may see what I have. But I assure you there is virtually no facet of his personal life and its character that is not public and well-known, largely published. This is also true of those with whom he had relationships. Some of this is recorded in various legal proceedings. As a matter of fact, the relationship between Ferris and others has been very well publicized, including in a book and in its serialization, by Milton Brener, attorney for several of the men who are among the subjects of the still-withheld FBI reports.

So, I am writing to ask for copies of any such Secret Service data. I have the Jack Martin interview that was so well and I think so improperly publicized by the government when the Garrison story broke. The Archives copy is close to illegible. If you have anything of this character, I would ask not only that you provide it to the Archives, if it is not there, but, with the history with which you are now familiar, that you send me copies separately. This is in no way improper and at the very worst it would save considerable time.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

2/24/67 P. 21

Story of an Oswald-Ferrie Link Shown by Archives to Be False

By NANCY ANDERSON

WASHINGTON, Feb. 25. Documents in the National Archives disclosed today that Jack S. Martin of New Orleans, who linked Lee Harvey Oswald and David W. Ferrie, had admitted to the Secret Service and the Federal Bureau of Investigation that his story had been a lie.

Mr. Ferrie, who was found dead yesterday in his bed, was a major figure in an investigation by the New Orleans district attorney, James Garrison, of an alleged plot to assassinate President Kennedy. The district attorney has provided a copy of his report to the Warren Commission. He insists the alleged plot was hatched in New Orleans.

Mr. Martin told Mr. Garrison shortly after the assassination that Mr. Ferrie had known Oswald, that he had trained him in the use of rifles with telescopic sights and that Mr. Ferrie had visited Dallas about two weeks before the assassination of the President by Oswald on Nov. 22, 1963.

Soon thereafter, Mr. Martin swore in separate statements to F. B. I. and Secret Service agents that his story had been a figment of his imagination. On the night of Nov. 29, 1963, two Secret Service agents, Anthony E. Gerris and John W. Rice, interviewed Mr. Martin at length in his apartment in New Orleans.

Their report states: "Martin, who has every appearance of being an alcoholic, admitted during the interview that he suffers from delirium tremens when drinking and that it was during one of his drinking bouts that he telephoned Assistant District Attorney Herman S. Kohlman and told him this fantastic story about David William Ferrie being involved with Lee Harvey Oswald."

"He said he had been on television that Oswald had at one time been active in the Civil Air Patrol and had later heard that Ferrie had been his squadron commander. (Martin stated that Ferrie was well known to him, that he recalled having seen Ferrie in Ferrie's home, and also

recalled that Kohlman, who had been a newspaper reporter previously, had written an article on Ferrie and that Ferrie had been a marine and had been with the Civil Air Patrol."

"Martin stated that after turning all these matters over in his mind, he had telephoned Herman S. Kohlman and had told his story as though it was true. He stated that he had no other facts other than on his imagination."

The Secret Service men also reported that they had learned from F. B. I. agents that they had with Mr. Martin three days before and that he had admitted that the information he had furnished to the Warren Commission was a figment of his imagination and that he had made up the story after reading the newspaper and watching television news.

Their reports and others are contained in 16 pages of information about Mr. Ferrie furnished to the Warren Commission investigation into the Kennedy assassination. About 40 reports are still classified, but the National Archives has made the FBI to close those as well. The 16 pages that came to light today were declassified by the F. B. I. in September, 1965, but until this month they were hidden through "many thousands of pages of information" according to Martin Johnson, the archivist in charge of the Warren Commission records. Mr. Johnson pulled the declassified information about Mr. Ferrie together in response to requests by reporters for New Orleans newspapers.

Mr. Ferrie is mentioned on pages 14, 20 and 21 of Volume 8 of the Warren Commission hearings. The fact that pages contain testimony by a detective, Frederick S. O'Sullivan, of the New Orleans Police Department, who was also in the Civil Air Patrol headed by Mr. Ferrie.

Mr. O'Sullivan told the Warren Commission that he knew Oswald and Mr. Ferrie. He also said that he had inspected Mr. Ferrie's apartment at New Orleans Airport shortly after the assassination and had found it "hot in the kitchen because its stove, sink and trimmings were broken."

Mr. Ferrie's apartment was a two-story "shotaway" built for a Presidential assassin. Although one of the apartment was known Oswald, said the Warren Commission he knew of no link between the President's killer and Ferrie. It is not clear whether any of their testimony was based on the documents that came to light today.

2/25/67 P. 56

By MAN ROBERTSON

WASHINGTON, Feb. 24. Documents in the National Archives added today details to the account of David W. Ferris' movements during the week of President Kennedy's assassination.

Mr. Ferris, who was found dead in his bed Wednesday in New Orleans, was a suspect in an investigation by the New Orleans District Attorney, Jim Garrison, of an alleged assassination plot. Mr. Garrison says the plot was hatched in New Orleans and carried out in Dallas.

Secret Service records show that Mr. Ferris told agents shortly after the assassination he was "positive" he was in New Orleans on the day of the murder, Friday, Nov. 22, 1963, and on the preceding day.

Secret Service men quoted him as having said he was certain of his whereabouts because he had been in court in connection with a trial involving Carlos Marcello. The New Orleans city directory lists Mr. Marcello as the owner of the Town and Country Motel.

Mr. Ferris also said that he left New Orleans about 9 P.M. the day of the assassination with two male companions and spent the weekend in Houston and Galveston, Tex. Federal Bureau of Investigation documents based on hotel records confirm that the three were in those cities that weekend.

The week after the assassination, Lee Fletcher, a porter at the Alamo Hotel in Houston, showed FBI agents a registration card with the information that D. W. Ferris, Alvin Beauchamp and Melvin Coffey checked into Room 19, Alamo Hotel, at 4:10 A.M. Nov. 21, 1963.

The record also shows that the men stayed until the following day, Sunday, Nov. 23, but this conflicts with a card shown to the FBI in Galveston.

Mrs. Mary Dover, a clerk at the Driftwood Motel in Galveston, presented a registration card with the information that the same three men checked into the Driftwood at 11 P.M. Saturday, Nov. 22. Another clerk, Shirley Deal, testified they left about 10 A.M. the next day, Sunday.

Long Distance Calls

The record cards for both motels stated that Mr. Ferris and his companions were driving a car with Louisiana license No. 784-805. Mr. Ferris had told agents that it was a light blue 1961 Comet sedan which was made by Mercury that he had bought in New Orleans several weeks before. At the Houston motel, it was listed as a Comet automobile. At Galveston, as a Ford station wagon.

The mileage and driving time between New Orleans and Houston are put by the American Automobile Association at 304 miles and eight to nine hours. Houston and Galveston are 50 miles apart, about one hour's drive. Dallas, where President Kennedy was killed, is 213 miles and 3 hours and 15 minutes away from Houston.

While at the Houston motel, Mr. Ferris made several long distance calls. Hotel records listed one local call and four to New Orleans.

Two of these were to radio stations WSTO and WDSH. The others were called today in late noon to the Town and Country Motel owned by Mr. Marcello and the Fountain Motel, at which Mr. Beauchamp's widowed mother, Evelyn, worked as a switchboard operator. The latter card was collect.

Mr. Ferris told the Secret Service in a statement that he and his companions returned to New Orleans about 9:30 P.M. Sunday, Nov. 24, 1963. He then telephoned attorney G. Wray Gill, by whom he is employed as an investigator, several times.

At Mr. Gill's suggestion, not explained, Mr. Ferris said he left New Orleans some about a month later, and stayed in Houston, Tex., where he worked with a friend's brother, Tom Lewis, at College.

The friend, Thomas Campbell, did not give his name or address. Mr. Ferris said Mr. Ferris and he checked back to New Orleans in the early afternoon of Nov. 25, arriving about 3 P.M. He again talked to Mr. Gill, who accompanied him to the Orleans Parish District Attorney's office, where he was wanted for questioning in connection with the Oswald case.

The 16 pages of declassified reports on Mr. Ferris in the National Archives are part of

the Warren Commission records relating to the Kennedy assassination. About 40 more pages are still classified by the F.B.I.

The examined pages were declassified in September, 1965. But until this month they were scattered throughout many thousands of pages of information. Marlon Johnson, the archivist in charge of the Warren Commission records, compiled the available records about Mr. Ferris in response to requests from New Orleans reporters.