

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

# Sick, Scared Ferrie Felt World Held No Justice

By DAVID SNYDER

The man labeled "one of history's most important individuals" by Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison was also sick, sometimes scared, and bitterly sure that there was no justice for him in this world.

At the end of his life, the mysterious David William Ferrie lived in the

clutter of a second-floor duplex on, as he said, a diet of "coffee, cigarettes and Jello."

THERE ALSO were pills — bottles and bottles of them.

The bottles were clustered, a hodgepodge of shapes, sizes and colors, like some sort of surrealist centerpiece on a coffee table in the middle of his living room.

My first contact with Ferrie was a telephone call late Friday afternoon following the appearance of the initial story in The States-Item on a new investigation launched by the district attorney into the slaying of President John F. Kennedy.

FERRIE'S voice was nasal and almost inaudible. He said

he was physically sick and mentally tired of remaining silent on the investigation. He wanted to talk.

He did talk — about everything under the sun — for a span of four and a half hours that night. Until the day of his death he stayed in contact by telephone.

The man investigated on two different occasions by the DA's office in connection with the slaying met me at the downstairs entrance to his apartment.

HIS STEPS were feeble as we climbed the stairs to the second floor. He apologized for the slowness, but said he was suffering from cephalitis. He assured me that it was not contagious.

He also apologized for the

condition of the apartment. Renovation work was in progress, he said.

The living room was filled with the rank smell of old cigarette butts and the ashtrays were stacked with them.

FURNITURE, greasy with deep-seated dirt, rested on a litter-strewn, thread-bare carpet. Dirty coffee cups cluttered the table tops and a dusty baby grand piano in one corner.

It was the room of a man who had ceased to worry about the niceties of life.

Ferrie either propped himself against the arm of a sofa or reclined full length against two soiled pillows as he related the details of troubles that had reduced him from a



DAVID W. FERRIE

"man of means" to poverty.

FROM TIME to time he broke into the narrative to lash out at the law, at justice and the news media.

Several times he asked if I thought he would be arrested in connection with the DA's investigation. He was to ask this question over and over during telephone conversations over the weekend and almost until the time of his death.

His head covered with a wig that was a rusty shade of red, his shoes off, and a cigarette or cup of coffee constantly in his hand, Ferrie talked almost non-stop.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

Page 1

New Orleans States-Item

Date: 2-23-67  
Edition: Red Comet  
Author:  
Editor:

Title: ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY 11/22/63

Character:

or  
Classification: 89-  
Submitting Office: J.O.

Being Investigated

SENT BUREAU

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FEB 23 1967	
FBI - NEW ORLEANS	

Once he questioned the Warren Commission report on the trajectory of the bullets that crashed into Kennedy's body and head.

HE DRAGGED enormous medical tomes from another room and launched into a medical dissertation on the assassination. He knew the human body like his living room and you caught flashes of brilliance as he tried to explain his theories.

It fascinated him, but, he said, he knew nothing more about it than what he had read.

It was because of his knowledge of science that he had become a part-time investigator.

"Ferrie is a pilot," he told me, "but in complex cases involving science several attorneys have found it advantageous to have me investigate for them."

He was proud of his ability, both as a pilot and an investigator.

Ferrie told of winding up a tension-packed case for G. Wray Gill, of the celebration afterwards with friends, and of a spur of the moment decision to take a trip to Texas for some "relaxation."

COINCIDENTALLY, the case in federal court wound up on the same day that Kennedy was shot, and the trip to Texas was in part responsible for Ferrie's involvement in the assassination probe, he said.

Of the Texas ~~tear-by-car~~, Ferrie said, "I had no idea this would turn out to be a stupid move."

The reason for going to Houston, as Ferrie recounted it, was almost ridiculous in its simplicity.

"One guy remembered there was an ice skating rink in Houston, so we decided to go skating."

Ironically, Ferrie seemed to be in better spirits on the day before his death than on the first day I talked to him.

He had become engrossed in the business of putting together a law suit designed to bring what he considered his tormentors to justice. He had begun to fight back against a society he thought had handed him too many bad breaks.

FERRIE called often to ask about progress in the investigation. He read every scrap in the papers and watched every newscast on television.

On the day before his death, he called with a new theory on how the bullets struck Kennedy, and he wanted me to go to a pathology lab so he could show me what he was talking about with a cadaver.

He wanted me to arrange a lie detector test in case he was arrested.

But the new confidence apparently was window dressing.

The note found by his body expressed feelings he had expressed to me on a number of occasions and different ways.

"To leave this life is, for me, a sweet prospect."