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WITH NEW ORLEANS FERRIE

WASHINGTON, FEB. 23 (AP)-A NEW ORLEANS PILOT WHO FIGURED IN DIST. ATTY. JIM GARRISON'S INVESTIGATION OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY'S ASSASSINATION PREDICTED SHORTLY BEFORE HIS DEATH THAT GARRISON'S INQUIRY WOULD TURN OUT TO BE A "WITCH HUNT," THE WASHINGTON POST SAID TODAY.

IN A COPYRIGHTED INTERVIEW WITH GEORGE LARDNER JR. OF THE POST, DAVID W. FERRIE WAS QUOTED AS SAYING HE WAS WAITING FOR GARRISON TO FALL ON HIS FACE.

FERRIE, WHO WAS FOUND DEAD IN BED SEVEN HOURS AFTER THE FOUR-HOUR INTERVIEW WITH LARDNER, TOLD LARDNER HE WAS SURE THAT THE FBI HAD INVESTIGATED THOROUGHLY LEE HARVEY OSWALD'S ACTIVITIES IN NEW ORLEANS.

"FERRIE TOLD ME HE FELT CONVINCED THERE WAS NO PLOT TO KILL THE PRESIDENT, THAT LEE HARVEY OSWALD WAS 'A LONER,'" LARDNER REPORTED IN TODAY'S EDITIONS.

OSWALD, WHO LIVED IN NEW ORLEANS DURING THE SUMMER OF 1963, WAS NAMED BY THE WARREN COMMISSION AS KENNEDY'S ASSASSIN. THE COMMISSION SAID THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE OSWALD DID NOT ACT ALONE.

GARRISON, THE NEW ORLEANS DISTRICT ATTORNEY WHO HAS PROMISED ARRESTS AND CONVICTIONS IN CONNECTION WITH HIS THEORY THAT AN ASSASSINATION CONSPIRACY WAS HATCHED IN NEW ORLEANS, SAID FERRIE'S DEATH WAS AN "APPARENT SUICIDE."

BUT CORONER NICHOLAS CHETTA, WHO SAID THE PILOT'S DEATH WAS DUE TO A RUPTURED BLOOD VESSEL IN THE BRAIN, SAID FURTHER TESTS WERE BEING MADE.

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LARDNER SAID FERRIE "SEEMED IN GOOD SPIRITS, NOT LIKE A MAN ABOUT TO KILL HIMSELF" DURING THE INTERVIEW THAT ENDED AT 4 A.M. YESTERDAY. FERRIE'S BODY WAS FOUND COVERED BY A SHEET AT 11 A.M.

"FERRIE SAID HE NEVER KNEW OSWALD AND HAD NO RECOLLECTION OF EVER HAVING MET HIM," LARDNER REPORTED.

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FERRIE COMPLAINED TO LARDNER THAT GARRISON HAD HIM "PEGGED AS THE GETAWAY PILOT IN AN ELABORATE PLOT TO KILL KENNEDY." HE PREVIOUSLY CALLED THIS A "BIG JOKE."

LARDNER ALSO SAID FERRIE SCOFFED AT REPORTS THAT THE PILOT HAD FLOWN OSWALD TO CUBA AROUND 1959. "I'VE NEVER EVEN BEEN TO CUBA," LARDNER QUOTED FERRIE AS SAYING. "AT THE TIME I WAS SUPPOSED TO BE FLYING OSWALD TO CUBA, I UNDERSTAND HE WAS IN THE MARINE CORPS."

WITHIN 72 HOURS AFTER THE ASSASSINATION, GARRISON'S MEN PICKED UP FERRIE AS A "FUGITIVE FROM TEXAS" AND QUESTIONED HIM ABOUT REPORTS HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN IN DALLAS THE AFTERNOON OF THE KILLING.

"FERRIE SAID HE WAS SITTING ON A COURTHOUSE BENCH OUTSIDE A FEDERAL DISTRICT COURTROOM IN NEW ORLEANS, 'SHOOTING THE BULL WITH A COUPLE OF FEDERAL AGENTS'" AT THE TIME OF THE SHOOTING, LARDNER REPORTED.

"FERRIE SAID HE DID LEAVE FOR TEXAS ON A TRIP WITH SEVERAL ACQUAINTANCES AFTER LEAVING THE COURTHOUSE BUT THAT HE WENT TO GALVESTON AND HOUSTON 'HUNTING GEESE,' AND NEVER SET FOOT IN DALLAS," LARDNER ADDED.

LARDNER SAID FERRIE TOLD HIM HE HAD BEEN CONDUCTING HIS OWN INVESTIGATION OF THE ASSASSINATION TO COUNTER GARRISON'S.

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