

SF Chronicle 23 Feb. 1967
The New Orleans Probe

Mystery Death of 'Kennedy Plot' Man

D.A. Had Planned His Arrest

Associated Press

New Orleans

David W. Ferrie, an important and strange figure in District Attorney Jim Garrison's investigation of the assassination of President Kennedy, was found dead in bed yesterday.

Garrison said he had planned to arrest Ferrie next week.

"The apparent suicide of David Ferrie ends the life of a man who, in my judgment, was one of history's most important individuals," Garrison told a news conference last night.

CAUSE

Coroner Nicholas Chetta said Ferrie's death was due to a ruptured blood vessel in the brain, but that further tests were being made.

Garrison said Ferrie, a pilot, had been under continual observation and his information "had caused us to become increasingly concerned about the possibility of his killing himself."

"Evidence developed by our office had long since confirmed that he was involved in events culminating in the assassination of President Kennedy.

"Because of this, at a meeting at my house this



UPI Telephoto

JIM GARRISON
The district attorney and the man he somehow suspected



AP Wirephoto

morning, we had reached a decision to arrest him early next week. Apparently we waited too long."

NOTE

Dr. Chetta said a note was found in the dining room of Ferrie's cluttered apartment which said, in part:

"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."

The coroner said Ferrie, about 45, was born with a weakness of one blood vessel at the base of the brain. When this ruptured, it caused massive hemorrhage, he added.

However, because of the circumstances and the note, a full autopsy was ordered to check the possibility of suicide. The body was found nude, with a sheet pulled up to the chest.

Ferrie had told friends he was suffering from encephalitis (sleeping sickness).

Dr. Chetta said he had hypertensive cardiovascular disease — high blood pressure.

Garrison told newsmen the

See Page 12, Col. 1

"primary reason for the planned arrest of Ferrie was because we felt we had reached a point where we had enough information to move."

OSWALD

Ferrie became "increasingly more and more nervous as the investigation progressed," Garrison said.

"Although my office has been investigating Ferrie intensively for months, we have not mentioned his name publicly up to this point," Garrison added. "The unique nature of this case now leaves me no other course of action."

Asked if he had any reason to believe anybody but Lee Harvey Oswald took part in

the assassination, Garrison replied:

"I have no reason to believe at this point that Lee Harvey Oswald killed anybody in Dallas on that day."

Ferrie, who did private investigating and listed himself as a psychologist, had complained that Garrison had him "pegged as the getaway pilot in an elaborate plot to kill Kennedy." He called it a "big joke."

FUROR

The New Orleans district attorney has promised arrests and convictions in his probe of the Kennedy assassination in a matter of months, but he has been close-mouthed about his investigation.

The inquiry has stirred an international furor because it backed up critics of the Warren Commission, who claim that the assassination of the President could hardly have been the work of only one man.

The official commission report said Oswald shot Mr. Kennedy — and there was no credible evidence to show anyone else was implicated.

Ferrie was questioned by Garrison's office last November for the second time in connection with the assassination. The first was in 1963.

"We arrested Ferrie 72 hours after John F. Kennedy was assassinated," Garrison said. "The arrest was on the basis of information supplied out of this office. I turned Ferrie over to the FBI on Nov. 25, 1963. As a matter of record at that time, we suggested the FBI take a detailed statement."

SECRET

Garrison said he had never seen a copy of the FBI interrogation.

"There are 40 pages relating to the interrogation and report on Ferrie which are in the National Archives in Washington," he said. "Only four of these pages are unclassified."

Ferrie repeatedly denied that he ever knew Oswald, briefly a New Orleans resident.

Ferrie said he and two companions went to Texas from New Orleans the afternoon of the assassination. He insisted it was a pleasure trip and that he had given a "meticulous" account of the

22
2013

trip during his first questioning.

Ferrie had said it was fruitless to search for an accomplice to Oswald because "my assessment of Oswald is that he would be incapable of any interpersonal relationship, especially anything as delicate as a conspiracy to kill."

A police officer outside Ferrie's apartment, shortly after officers arrived yesterday to take away the body, pointed to a blond youth with long sideburns and said, "he found him."

The youth was hustled away by police. Before he left, he told a newsman he didn't find the body, didn't know Ferrie and "just happened to wander in."

Ferrie was an odd looking figure. An explosion several years ago cost him his hair and eyebrows. He wore a shaggy toupee and mascara eyebrows.

Police records showed he was fired as an airline pilot after being arrested in Jefferson parish (county), which adjoins New Orleans, on a morals charge. The case never went to trial.

Ferrie, a native of Cleveland, Ohio, has lived in New Orleans for the past 15 years. Oswald lived in New Orleans during the summer of 1963.

Ferrie has said that the FBI first became interested in him when a New Orleans man identified as Ed Voble reported that he served with Oswald in a Civil Air Patrol unit under Ferrie.