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Kennedy probe NL

By Bernard Gavzer

New Orleans, Feb. 24 (AP)- Dist/,Atty. Jim Garrison said today his investigation of President Kennedy's assassination indicates "there were several plots" to kill the president.

He would give no further ~~more~~ details except to say "their names of the individuals and the groups are known."

"There were several plots and a change of direction (in them) did occur," the Orleans district attorney said. Garrison maintains Kennedy was killed as a result of a conspiracy hatched in New Orleans.

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Garrison is known to have considered a theory that a group of anti-Castroites had been plotting to kill Premier Fidel Castro of Cuba. This group then later changed its target to President Kennedy.

One element of the theory was that Lee Harvey Oswald was to have been the gunman in the Castro plot. The plot supposedly collapsed when Oswald -- named by the Warren Commission as the President's assassin -- failed to enter Cuba. When Oswald, according to theory, was denied entry to Cuba, the target was switched.

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The disclosures came following a Luncheon at which he received promise of a private fund that would amount to \$50,000 or more per month to finance his controversial investigation.

The fund has a base of an estimated \$5,000 a month pledged at the luncheon, to which 50 New Orleans businessmen had been invited. The meeting was called for create a formal organization for receiving and disbursing funds.

The organization was given the name "truth and consequences."

After the luncheon, Garrison was surrounded by newsmen, checking on a report that he had just announced the Kennedy assassination was solved. Garrison ~~said~~ explained that he merely used a different word to state what he had said previously: Arrests will be made and convictions obtained.

"What I've been trying to emphasize is that arrests are not imminent," he said. "For them (newsmen) to say arrests will take place any day is ridiculous. They asked me if it might be in the next few days, and I said it might be months -- that it might be 30 years."

As to the emphasis on his reported statement that the case was now "solved," he made clear this represented no revelation.

"I wouldn't have said days ago that there would be arrests if we hadn't had the case solved. I thought I made that explicit. But that doesn't mean arrests are imminent."

He again stressed that arrests in the case may be months away and that he was "building a case that I can take into court." He expressed confidence that these would produce convictions.

"We are going to arrest every human involved, that is every human involved who is still alive."

This apparently referred to the death of David W. Ferrie, a man Garrison had labeled as important to his investigation. Ferrie was found dead in his apartment Wednesday morning. Garrison again today called it "suicide -- without any question."

But the coroner Nicholas Chetta said today chemical tests produced no evidence of barbiturates, alcohol or other drugs or chemicals which could have produced death. The coroner said death resulted from natural causes -- a massive brain hemorrhage. Dr. Chetta said there was no evidence whatsoever of violence.

Garrison's investigation won powerful support in the creation of the private fund.

Three local businessmen instrumental in its organization -- Joseph Rault Jr., Willard Robertson and Cecil Shilstone, -- explained creation of the fund.

"This was done to express out confidence in our district attorney and to state we have full confidence in his ability, his integrity, and the integrity of his office," Rault said.

They would not say how many attended the luncheon in the New Orleans Petroleum Club. However, Rault implied strongly that all 50 had made pledges and the fund was being kicked off with a solid foundation of \$5,000 a month.

"The men who were invited were told that funds were going to be raised and that contributions would be limited to a top of \$100 a month per contributor. You could say that those who attended indicated by their presence they would pledge the contribution. Those who could not attend, indicated by response to the invitation their support," Rault explained.

He would not reveal how much money was collected at the meeting, but did say the organization received an unexpected \$10 contribution from a luncheon waiter.

Rault, an oil man, and Shilstone, who owns a testing laboratory, said pledges were coming from "all over the country." Rault fanned a sheaf of telephone messages he received, indicating they were from persons who wanted to put up money.

The fund organizers indicated that small contributions would be accepted from anyone ~~was~~ wishing to donate. But as to a self-replenishing fund that could count on consistent contributions of substantial amounts, Shilstone said much more could be expected.

"I think we will soon have 500 (such) pledges," he said. "At \$100 a man, that would mean \$50,000 a month, wouldn't it?" he was asked.

Both Rault and Shilstone nodded, with smiles of satisfaction.

Rault, Shilstone and Robertson, who is an auto distributor, will act as shepherds of the fund, which will be kept in a bank. They will distribute it to Garrison as he needs it.

"If he needs money to send an investigator somewhere, he 'll have no trouble doing it," Robertson said.

By having such a private fund at his call, Garrison will be able to dispatch investigators in any direction he wishes, or to any place he desires without resorting to public funds. This would prevent anyone from getting clues to his investigative activities through examination of vouchers.

Garrison's public statements that he will not share his findings with federal authorities drew a rebuke today from Rep. Gerald R. Ford, R-Mich.

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"It is the public responsibility of any public official to send to the attorney general any information he has gathered in this matter," said Ford, who was a member of the Warren Commission that investigated Kennedy's death.

In Austin, Tex., Gov. John Conally said he doubted Garrison's investigation "will come up with anything new or revealing. I am confident in my own mind that the FBI and ~~the~~ investigative agencies went into the state (Louisiana) and concerned themselves with these individuals." Conally was seriously ~~wounded~~ wounded by rifle fire while riding in the same car with Kennedy.

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