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ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

NEW ORLEANS, FEB.25 (AP)-BIG JIM GARRISON, THE NEW ORLEANS DISTRICT ATTORNEY, HAS BEEN RIDING THE TIGER FOR A WEEK AND LOOKS LIKE HE'S BEGINNING TO ENJOY IT.

THE CHINESE PROVERB HAD IT THAT HE WHO RIDES THE TIGER CAN NEVER DISMOUNT--LEST IT TURN AND DEVOUR HIM.

THE KENNEDY ASSASSINATION CASE IS GARRISON'S TIGER. HE SHOWS NO FEAR OF IT. ONCE HE COULD HAVE DISMOUNTED GRACEFULLY. IT WOULD NOT BE EASY NOW.

TOO MANY TIMES, GARRISON HAS REPEATED THAT HE WILL PROVE THAT A CONSPIRACY HERE LED TO THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY AND THAT HE WILL CONVICT THOSE INVOLVED.

THE SCORE THUS FAR:

DEAD. (ALL CAPS) DAVID W. FERRIE, 49, A FREE-LANCE PILOT ACCUSED OF TAKING PART IN A PLOT. SUICIDE, SAID GARRISON. NATURAL DEATH, SAID CORONER NICHOLAS CHETTA, DUE TO MASSIVE BRAIN HEMORRHAGE, POSSIBLY BROUGHT ON BY STRESS.

PROVEN. (ALL CAPS) TO MANY THE WORLD OVER THE KENNEDY CASE IS AS ALIVE TODAY AS IT EVER WAS. DESPITE THE EXHAUSTIVE AND OFFICIAL WARREN COMMISSION REPORT, WHICH SAID LEE HARVEY OSWALD, A FORMER NEW ORLEANS RESIDENT, SHOT THE PRESIDENT AND THERE WAS NO CREDIBLE EVIDENCE THAT OTHERS WERE INVOLVED.

UNREVEALED. (ALL CAPS) ALMOST EVERYTHING IN GARRISON'S HAND.

GARRISON'S PROBE REMAINS A RIDDLE WRAPPED IN AN ENIGMA, WITH THE CONTROVERSIAL 5-FOOT-3 DISTRICT ATTORNEY GRINNING AT SOME OF THE UPROAR HE HAD CAUSED.

"THE KEY TO THE WHOLE CASE IS THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS," HE MOCK-SOLEMNL Y TOLD AN INTERNATIONAL CREW OF NEWSMEN, IN A STATEMENT WITH AN ALICE IN WONDERLAND TWIST.

"BLACK IS WHITE, WHITE IS BLACK. I DON'T WANT TO BE CRYPTIC, BUT THAT'S THE WAY IT IS."

THE 45-YEAR-OLD PROSECUTOR, WHO PACKS A PISTOL UNDER HIS COAT, SAID HE REALIZED THAT THE WORLD WAS "CHOMPING AT THE BIT" TO SEE WHAT COMES OF HIS PROBE. BUT ARRESTS, HE REPEATED, MAY NOT COME FOR MONTHS.

EMPHASIZING THE POINT BY EXAGGERATION, HE ADDED, "IT MIGHT BE 30 YEARS."

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SKEPTICS ARE MANY. BUT FEW WITH OFFICIAL STANDINGS, WARY OF POSSIBLE BACKFIRE, CARE TO BE QUOTED.

ONE OF THE FEW WAS TEXAS GOV. JOHN CONNALLY, WHO SAID HE PERSONALLY DOUBTS THAT "ANYTHING NEW OR REVEALING" WILL COME OF THE NEW ORLEANS PROBE--PARTICULARLY SINCE MANY OF THOSE KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN QUESTIONED BY GARRISON ALREADY HAD BEEN PUT THROUGH THE WRINGER BY THE FBI BACK IN 1963.

"I AM CONFIDENT IN MY OWN MIND THAT THE FBI AND INVESTIGATIVE AGENCIES WENT INTO THE STATE AND CONCERNED THEMSELVES WITH THESE INDIVIDUALS," CONNALLY SAID IN AUSTIN FRIDAY. CONNALLY WAS SHO AND SERIOUSLY WOUNDED WHILE RIDING WITH KENNEDY AT THE TIME OF THE ASSASSINATION.

AMONG THOSE EXTENSIVELY QUESTIONED IN 1963 WAS FERRIE.. WHEN THE NEW INVESTIGATION STARTED, HE WAS A SICK AND EMBITTERED MAN, LIVING ON "COFFEE, CIGARETTES AND JELLO."

IN 1963 AN INFORMANT HAD LINKED HIM WITH OSWALD. ALSO, FERRIE HAD MADE AN AUTOMOBILE TRIP TO TEXAS THE DAY OF THE NOV. 22, 1963, ASSASSINATION.

"I HAD NO IDEA THIS WOULD TURN OUT TO BE STUPID MOVE," HE SAID SHORTLY BEFORE HIS DEATH. "IT WAS JUST A SPUR OF THE MOMENT THING FOR RELAXATION."

RECORDS IN WASHINGTON SHOW THAT THE INFORMANT LATER ADMITTED THAT HIS STORY THAT FERRIE WAS TO BE THE GETAWAY PILOT FOR THE ASSASSIN WAS "A FIGMENT OF HIS IMAGINATION."

FERRIE RAN A SMALL FLYING SERVICE HERE.

AFTER BEING REQUESTIONED BY GARRISON LAST NOVEMBER, FERRIE WAS SURE HE WOULD BE ARRESTED. HE PESTERED NEWSMEN FOR THE LATEST DETAILS. HE FREQUENTLY TELEPHONED THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE IN AN EFFORT TO SEE WHAT HE STOOD. HE STARTED AN INEPT INVESTIGATION OF HIS OWN WHICH HE SAID WOULD PROVE HIS INNOCENCE. HE WAS UNDER DAILY SURVEILLANCE.

FERRIE'S DEATH WAS A SHOCK. HE WAS FOUND IN BED WEDNESDAY MORNING AT HIS MESSY, INCREDIBLY CLUTTERED APARTMENT, ALREADY RIGID IN RIGOR MORTIS.

SUICIDE, SAID GARRISON. HE SAID HE HAD PLANNED TO ARREST FERRIE WITH A FEW DAYS. HE ADDED THAT:

"EVIDENCE DEVELOPED BY OUR OFFICE HAD LONG SINCE CONFIRMED THAT HE WAS INVOLVED IN EVENTS CULMINATING IN THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY."

CORONER CHETTA, AFTER TWO DAYS OF TESTS, SAID DEATH WAS DUE TO NATURAL CAUSES BUT THAT IT WILL REMAIN OFFICIALLY UNCLASSIFIED UNTIL FINAL TOXICOLOGICAL TESTS ARE COMPLETED TUESDAY.

HOWEVER, GARRISON REPEATED HIS BELIEF THAT FERRIE WAS A SUICIDE.

INVESTIGATION CONTINUED, HE SAID, AND THE ONLY WAY "PEOPLE INVOLVED CAN GET AWAY FROM US IS TO KILL THEMSELVES."

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HIS PROBE STARTED LAST OCTOBER. IT WAS THE FIRST TIME AN OFFICIAL WITH INVESTIGATIVE POWER HAD STEPPED INTO THE CASE SINCE THE EXHAUSTIVE WORK DONE BY THE FBI, DALLAS POLICE AND THE SECRET SERVICE.

NEWSPAPERS KNEW THE PROJECT BUT LET IT LAY UNTIL A NEWSPAPER, REPORTING THAT GARRISON HAD MADE AN AGREEMENT TO GIVE THE NEWS BREAK TO A NATIONAL MAGAZINE, POPPED THE STORY ONTO ITS FRONT PAGE FEB. 17.

GARRISON DENIED MAKING ANY DEAL ON THE NEWS BREAK. BUT HIS LITTLE PUSSYCAR OF A PROBE WAS SWIFTLY CHANGING. HE MADE IT INTO A TIGER BY HIS NEXT MOVE.

HE COMPLAINED VIGOROUSLY ABOUT "PREMATURE" PUBLICITY. THEN, INSTEAD OF LETTING THE STORY DIE FOR LACK OF COMMENT OR INFORMATION, HE TOLD THE ASSOCIATED PRESS SATURDAY:

"THERE WILL BE ARRESTS, CHARGES AND CONVICTIONS. THIS IS NO MICKEY MOUSE INVESTIGATION. THERE WERE OTHER PEOPLE INVOLVED BESIDE LEE HARVEY OSWALD."

THE LID WAS OFF. WHY DID GARRISON SWITCH FROM NO COMMENT TO SUCH A STATEMENT?

"M.R. GARRISON IS AN IMPETUOUS MAN," SAID ONE OF HIS NEW FINANCIAL BACKERS, DRILY.

THE 50 FINANCIAL BACKERS STEPPED UP TO FORM "TRUTH AND CONSEQUENCES, INC.," TO UNDERWRITE THE INVESTIGATION AFTER GARRISON COMPLAINED THAT PUBLIC RECORDS OF HIS OFFICE'S EXPENSES WERE A CLUE AS TO THE ACTIVITIES OF HIS AGENTS.

PLAINLY, THE PERSUASIVE GIANT IN SIZE 14 SHOES HAD IMPRESSED A LOT OF ASTUTE BUSINESSMEN WITH HIS CASE.

GARRISON WAS VERY SURE OF HIMSELF.

"I HAVE BEEN WRONG BEFORE--I WAS WRONG ONCE BACK IN THE EARLY 1930," HE TOLD NEWSMEN. "IF YOU WANT TO BET AGAINST ME, YOU WILL LOSE YOUR BET."

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