

Another JFK-linked death as conspiracy evidence mounts

BY WILLIAM TURNER

New evidence—accented by a mysterious death—is rapidly turning the case that the Warren Commission couldn't solve into a climatic drama in Orleans Parish, Louisiana.

The un-opportune death of the New Orleans commercial pilot, David William Ferrie, and the simultaneous disclosure by Orleans Parish District Attorney Jim Garrison that he was going to arrest Ferrie this week in connection with the Kennedy assassination has raised the curtain higher on this new and third act of the affair.

Ferrie was found dead in bed on February 22, some 31 hours after being exhaustively interviewed by Garrison. The coroner ascribed death to a ruptured blood vessel at the base of the brain. Because of pills at the bedside, Garrison termed it a suicide.

It might also be pointed out that a competently administered karate chop to the neck, such as possibly killed another assassination figure Jim Koethe of the Dallas Times-Herald, could cause a fatal embolism in the brain vessels.

Although Ferrie had denied

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knowing Lee Harvey Oswald, a possible connection was through mutual activity in the New Orleans Civil Air Patrol.

When first interrogated by New Orleans authorities in 1963, Ferrie had admitted he traveled to Texas on the afternoon of the assassination, but claimed that it was on a spontaneous hunting trip that did not include Dallas.

Garrison has announced that he had planned to arrest Ferrie in about a week, although he did not connect the suspect with any aircraft that might have been used in a getaway plan. In this respect, the inquiry into the assassination that has been conducted by Ramparts magazine has determined that two witnesses observed a twin engine private plane, engines idling, in a field next to the highway bounding Red Bird airport, a

field used primarily by business and pleasure aircraft that is situated just south of Dallas' Oak Cliff area. The witnesses took particular note of the plane because of its location well away from the paved runways and assess strips.

The death of Ferric adds one more name to the list of mysterious deaths of persons in some way touched by the assassination which was reported in the November issue of Ramparts magazine.

Additional fuel has been heaped on the fire by a new development in the strange death of Thomas Henry Killam, one of those on the Ramparts list. Killam was the husband of Wanda Joyce Killam, a long-time employee of Jack Ruby in the Carousel Club, and a close friend of one John Carter, who resided in the same rooming house as Oswald. He left Dallas after the assassination and wandered through Florida, telling his wife he was being hounded by "federal agents." Two days before his death he called his brother Earl Killam in Dallas and stated: "I'm a dead man. I've run as far as I'm going to run."

On the day of his death, March 17, 1964, in Pensacola, he was summoned from bed by an unidentified phone caller and later was found, his throat fatally cut, in front of a broken store window. At first adjudged suicide, Pensacola authorities have re-opened the case in the light of recent developments.

Garrison's probe has included the questioning of a state prison inmate, a Cuban who formerly lived close to Oswald in New Orleans; a coffee house proprietor whose establishment reportedly was frequented by Oswald and Cubans; and a private detective. The latter, a man named David Lewis, knew Oswald in New Orleans as well as five Cubans who were fanatically anti-Castro; Lewis says he fears for his life and has asked for police protection.

Assassination buffs have long felt that New Orleans, along with Miami, Houston and Mexico City, may well hide the key to unlock the Pandora's Box. Apparently Garrison is on the spoor of an anti-Castro element, and he has developed the intriguing theory that Oswald was associated with this element, had gone to Mexico City with the intent of obtaining a Cuban visa to travel to Havana to assassinate Castro, and, failing that, had been importuned to turn to the President.

According to the State-Item, Garrison has been in Miami recently hunting for a "physically powerful and dangerous" Cuban

man who "is believed to be one of a group of Cubans who reportedly hid behind a billboard on the parade route in Dallas Nov. 22, 1963."

The Warren Commission volumes contain the testimony of a Cuban refugee, Mrs. Sylvia Odio, whose father allegedly is still a Castro prisoner on the Isle of Pines.

According to Mrs. Odio, Oswald appeared at her Dallas apartment several weeks before the assassination accompanied by two Latin men who identified themselves as Leopoldo and Angelo. She did not previously know the three.

The next day, she said, Leopoldo telephoned her and mentioned that Oswald had been in the Marine Corps and had said that Cubans should have assassinated President Kennedy for his role in the Bay of Pigs fiasco. Leopoldo also assertedly said that he and his companions had just come from New Orleans and were about to leave on another trip.

Another fascinating angle to New Orleans is the testimony of Attorney Dean Andrews that an enigmatic figure using the name Clay Bertrand had brought Oswald to his office for legal counsel. After the assassination Bertrand telephoned Andrews asking him to defend Oswald. Although Andrews saw Bertrand in a New Orleans bar on one occasion afterward, the man avoided contact and slipped out a rear door. Mark Lane, the Commission's most persistent critic, contends that Andrews, a Louisiana Democratic functionary, agreed to an interview but reneged after "contacting the White House" and being told not to talk.