

CORONER RULES OUT SUICIDE BY FERRIE

NEW ORLEANS, Feb. 28 (AP)—David W. Ferrie, a freelance pilot, died of natural causes, Coroner Nicholas Chetta ruled today. District Attorney Jim Garrison has contended Mr. Ferrie committed suicide while under investigation in the prosecutor's inquiry into the assassination of President Kennedy.

Mr. Ferrie, 48 years old, was found dead in bed last Wednesday with a sheet pulled up to his chest. Mr. Garrison said "evidence developed by our office had long since confirmed that he was involved in events culminating in the assassination."

Dr. Chetta, Orleans Parish (county) coroner, said Mr. Ferrie was killed by high blood pressure, which burst a weak vein at the base of the brain.

"It would be easy for the public to say this is an emotional suicide, but we cannot classify it as such," Dr. Chetta said. "This man died a natural death. There is no indication of violence of any kind, certainly not murder or suicide."

Mr. Ferrie repeatedly denied having known Lee Harvey Oswald, the former New Orleans resident named by the Warren Commission as Mr. Kennedy's slayer.

An informant linked Mr. Ferrie to Oswald. This resulted in Mr. Ferrie's being intensively questioned about the accusations, which included an assertion that he was to be the "get-away pilot" for the assassin. Mr. Ferrie was cleared by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Secret Service.