

Mystery Figure in JFK

Tagged by New Orleans

DA as Getaway Pilot

New Orleans, Feb. 22 (AP)—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 today. Garrison said he had planned to arrest Ferrie next week. He expressed the view that Ferrie had taken his own life.

Ferrie had been questioned and only last Saturday he told a New Orleans newspaper that Garrison had him "pegged as the getaway pilot in an elaborate plot to kill Kennedy." He called it a "big joke."

"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 said.



David W. Ferrie

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

Unsigned, Undated Note

Dr. Chetta said an unsigned, undated 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."

Ferrie's body was found nude, with a sheet pulled up to the chest.

Garrison said there were 15



(Associated Press Wirefoto)
Nicholas Chetta
Orders more tests

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Probe Dies



(Associated Press Wirefoto)

Police and newsmen outside apartment house where David Ferrie's body was found.

bottles of pills in the apartment. He said Ferrie's death was apparent suicide. Dr. Chetta and the police said they had not yet decided whether or not it was. Ferrie had told friends he was

where we had enough information to move."

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

"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."

Ferrie originally was arrested here for questioning within 72 hours after the assassination, when he returned from a trip to Texas. An informant had linked him to Lee Harvey Oswald, named as the assassin.

"We thought it peculiar that a man would undertake a trip to south Texas when everyone else was watching television," said Garrison.

Asked if he had any reason to believe anybody but Oswald took part in the actual assassination, Garrison replied:

"I have no reason to believe at this point that Lee Harvey Oswald

suffering from encephalitis (sleeping sickness). Dr. Chetta said he had high blood pressure. Garrison told newsmen "the primary reason for the planned arrest of Ferrie was because we felt we had reached a point

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Mystery Figure in JFK Quiz Dies

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killed anybody in Dallas on that day."

The district attorney, in an investigation that started in October, has been trying to prove that a conspiracy was hatched here that "culminated in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy" in Dallas.

Garrison promised arrests and convictions, but kept details secret.

The probe has stirred an international furor because it appeared to support critics of the Warren Commission who claim that the assassination of the President could hardly have been the work of just one man.

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

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

"He Found Him"

"We arrested Ferrie 72 hours after John F. Kennedy was assassinated," said Garrison. "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."

Garrison said he'd 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, a former 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.

"We went to Houston, Galveston and back to Alexandria, La.," he said, adding that he had given a "meticulous" account of the trip during the first interrogation.

Ferrie 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 today to take away the nude body, pointed to a blond youth with long sideburns and said, "He found him."

Garrison said his investigation has unearthed evidence not available to the Warren Commission. He would not elaborate.

Ferrie, a native of Cleveland, had lived in New Orleans the last 15 years. Oswald lived in New Orleans in the summer of 1963.

Ferrie had said the FBI first became interested in him when a New Orleans man identified as Ed Voble reported he served with Oswald in a civil air patrol unit under Ferrie.

Garrison has said he is confident his investigation will prove that the Kennedy assassination was the culmination of a conspiracy in New Orleans.

Ferrie said Saturday that while he was in Texas in 1963 his home was entered by district attorney's investigators, who carted off books, photographs and personal belongings.

Ferrie said he heard nothing more about the matter until November, when he was summoned to Garrison's office. He said chief investigator Louis Ivon told him Garrison had "positively uncovered a plot in New Orleans to assassinate Kennedy."

He said he was released and not contacted again.

It was learned however, that the district attorney's office later had two men maintaining surveillance of his apartment.