

Miami Cuban Hunted

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NEW ORLEANS — A three-year-old rumor that once had Miami's Cubans looking underground for a conspirator in the Kennedy assassination turned up here Friday as a key item in the district attorney's revived and private probe. Investigators for prosecu-

tor Jim Garrison are scouring Cuban coffee shops and nightclubs seeking information on moustachioed Latin of either Mexican or Cuban origin.

This is the same "mystery man" who, in late 1963, was photographed in Mexico City by the CIA and identified by that agency as Lee Harvey Oswald.

Oswald was in the Mexican capital at the same time supposedly making efforts to get a visa for a trip to Cuba.

According to the post-assassination stories, this Mexican or Cuban was part of an abortive plot known then as "The Oswald Switch."

Just how and why Oswald, named by the Warren Com-

mission as the sole murderer of President Kennedy, and this unidentified Latin planned to exchange identities never was made clear by government agents.

The plot is supposed to have hit a clinker when Oswald was captured in a Dallas theater which was to have been his hideout until dark that Nov. 22.

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However, in early 1964, Miami Cuban leaders were shown the "mystery man's" photos and asked to help uncover his hiding place, at that time believed to be somewhere in Miami or Tampa.

Long before the Warren Commission report appeared, Secret Service and FBI agents discounted the story.

Garrison quietly re-opened the conspiracy phase of the assassination last October. He said he was prompted by "valid reports" that a plot to kill the President was hatched in New Orleans during the summer of 1963.

New Orleans' Cuban colony, far less organized and with less leadership than Miami's, has pulled into a shell since Garrison's new

drive has riddled the area with public and private investigators.

"To talk is to be questioned," said one cafe owner Friday. "Everybody comes and tells you 'I'm working for the district attorney.'"

"I have to laugh. They talk about plots. Everybody is plotting. It's something to do. I've seen them sit here and plot to take Fort Knox," one coffee shop owner said.

He and others admitted they had been shown reproductions of the blurred CIA photo and were asked repeatedly if the man had been in their cafes and with whom he might have met.

The FBI and Secret Service reports on the investiga-

tion of this man are available to Garrison, but he has not asked for them.

Nor has he changed his mind about turning over any of his information to the federal agencies.

They in turn are giving the district attorney's probe the cold shoulder and have asked for none of his findings. Even Garrison's own homicide bureau is being kept in the dark.

Lt. Cornelius Drumm said Friday "none of my men have been asked to take part in this investigation and we know nothing about it."

Some of Garrison's witnesses are getting restive, too.

Miguel Torres once lived a half block from Oswald in New Orleans. He since has been convicted of burglary and grand larceny and was until recently a prisoner held at the state penitentiary.

He was returned to New Orleans two weeks ago and placed in Parish Prison, an antiquated and decrepit county jail here, to be available for Garrison's questioning.

Thursday he balked at

in pure English together and put them apart and

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answering questions because of the "poor living conditions" in the jail and was transferred to its hospital ward where beds are softer and the food somewhat better.

A key link in Garrison's conspiracy theory was a 40-year-old free lance pilot named David W. Ferrie.

Ferrie died, officially of natural causes, last Wednesday morning. Garrison said he had intended to arrest him next week.

The pilot, before his death, had steadfastly denied he was to fly to Texas and make a highway landing to pick up Oswald or anyone else. He did leave New Orleans by auto, with two young friends, on the afternoon of the assassination and drive to Houston and Galveston.

Garrison's aides say this trip began sometime after it was revealed Oswald had been picked up as Kennedy's assassin.

They indicate the pilot's tour may have been an effort to meet others involved in the alleged conspiracy.

Coroner Nicholas J. Chetta released reports on the second phase of Ferrie's autopsy Friday morning.

He said tests showed no alcohol, barbiturates, cyanide, arsenic or lye in Ferrie's body.

"There is no evidence of murder or suicide. This man died of a brain hemorrhage," Chetta said.

But Garrison's investiga-

Probe

tors still feel, despite the medical reports, that Ferrie took his own life — if he wasn't murdered.

Told that the coroner's report Friday seemed to rule out anything but a natural death, one detective said:

"That's okay. Nobody will ever believe it."

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