

Reporters Question Tag Of 'Trial of Century'

Can the Jack Ruby murder case be properly called "The Trial of the Century?"

Some reporters have already tagged it that way. Others question it.

"It's one of the big ones," said Charles Murphy of NBC. "It'll be in the same category with the Sacco-Vanzetti and Scopes trials."

"I've used the term 'Trial of the Century,' but I've always said 'some people' are calling it that," said Nelson Benton of CBS.

ABC's Murphy Martin said, "It will certainly be one of the top five for this century."

Homer Bigart of the New York Times reminded: "The century ain't over."

AP's Reiman Morin said, "This is the first one I can think of where you have a murder case with national implications. In that sense, the term might fit."

"The fact that a presidential assassination is involved gives the case a dimension that some other highly publicized cases have lacked."

"I suppose the Ruth Snyder or Hall-Mills or Lindbergh kidnaping trials may have equaled this one in drawing the public's attention."

Morin looked over the 125 reporters in the courtroom and said, "I believe this is the maximum number of reporters I've seen in a courtroom for any case. Probably more reporters worked on the Eichmann case, however."

Hearst's Bob Considine said, "If this were Oswald on trial, there would be no doubt about it. This would be the 'Trial of the Century.' But the only suspense here is whether or not they can prove he's whacky."

"Suspense in this case will be mostly limited to watching Belli weave his defense to the satisfaction of the jury."

English author Sybille Bedford, who is writing the Ruby trial for Life magazine, said, "The 'Trial of the Century'? I don't think it will go down in history as such."

"Most people have no doubt at all about the deed. In fact, many people think they witnessed it. But you did not see Ruby shoot Oswald."

As a contender for "Trial of the Century," she mentioned the case of the Belgian mother who killed

her own Thalidomide-deformed infant.

Al Moscow, who ghost-wrote Richard Nixon's "Six Crises," and is now becoming defense counsel Melvin Belli's Boswell, indicated he wouldn't argue with use of the term. But he added:

"However, they come along every so often. Wait a few months and there'll be some other 'Trial of the Century.'"

—KENT BIFFLE