

THOROUGH, TOO

To Deputies at Ruby Trial Frisking Is Really Fine Art

Capt. F. M. (Buck) Buckalew undoubtedly has felt more hip pockets than any other man in Dallas County history.

One of Sheriff Bill Decker's top men, the captain heads what has come to be known as the "frisking squad."

He and four other deputies — including two women — check and search everyone (well, almost everyone) who enters the courtroom where jury selection in the Jack Ruby Case is under way.

"We're looking for weapons, cameras and recording equipment," says the 17-year sheriff's office veteran "plus thermos bottles, cokes and food of any kind." Capt. Buckalew has been on this duty through the bond hearing, the change of venue hearing and now the trial.

The only items confiscated to date are an unloaded pistol from an ex-stripper in one of Ruby's nightclubs, at the bond hearing and a harmless water pistol from a woman spectator last week at the second hearing.

The two women deputies, Mrs. Nellie Jo Tyler and Mrs. Rosemary Allen, did the confiscating in both cases.

The frisking technique is practiced by Capt. Buckalew's crew

is friendly, but firm, as any newsman who has been through it can testify.

All pockets are fingered, backs and shoulders are patted as well as legs, arms and armpits.

Newsmen, used to it by now, automatically throw their hands up over their heads immediately upon approaching the courtroom.

The only ones excused from searching are attorneys in the case, members of the district attorney's and defense staffs, visiting attorneys, police officers and prospective jurors.

While it's all business as far as the deputies are concerned, the frisking does take on comic aspects occasionally.

One newsman claims he got the frisk three times in one minute

Tuesday. Entering the courtroom, he was checked, then a few seconds later he left to deliver a message to a photographer and re-entered. Another frisk. He was barely seated when something in the testimony required him to leave again, deliver still another message, and then return—etc.

100 TIMES DAILY

Capt. Buckalew, 45, only chuckles when asked to estimate how many individual searches he and the other two male deputies, J. N. Sewell and W. D. Reese, have performed.

"I would imagine that I do it more than 100 times a day — and the other boys the same," he says, pointing out that there are usually two recesses a day, plus a noon adjournment.

And every newsman and spectator is searched with every entrance.

The captain, a friendly, pipe-smoking man who handled traffic coordination in the pre-Ruby days, said there has been no resentment of the frisking.

"We've had complete cooperation from everyone," he says.

How does the captain enjoy his unique duties?

"It's different. Yes, it's different, to say the least," he grinned.