

Belli Complains of Inability To Get at 'Guts of the Case'

Heated verbal repartee between defense and prosecuting attorneys flared Saturday as they continued their attempts to select a jury for the Jack Ruby murder trial.

"We are not picking a jury, anymore. We're having a jury forced down our throats," proclaimed Melvin Belli, chief defense counsel, when Judge Joe B. Brown stopped him from inquiring into the opinion of a prospective juror.

Belli said questions were allowed by the judge on other subjects, "but when we get down to the guts of the case, we are not allowed to ask any questions."

"Mr. Belli, you may ask any questions not proscribed by law.

Otherwise, no," snapped Judge Brown.

The byplay came during the examination of A. C. Phillips of 2804 Southwood, a lumber company employe, who testified he had seen the shooting of Lee Harvey Oswald on television.

In answer to questions by Judge Brown, Phillips acknowledged he had formed an opinion in the case, but he was not allowed to say what the opinion was.

Belli termed that the "most bitter, emphatic proof" since the trial began that prospective jurors in Dallas County are prejudiced. He renewed his efforts to have Judge Brown transfer the case from Dallas.

"Dallas need not be vindicated. Why do you keep doing this to us, your honor?" he asked when his request was denied.

Chief Assistant Dist. Atty. Jim Bowie jumped to his feet objecting to Belli's statement.

"He has no right to question the court," Bowie said. "It took your honor only two legal questions to determine what he wanted to know."

Phillips was excused by Judge Brown because of his opinion.



—Dallas News Staff Photo by Jack Beers.

WEEKEND RESPITE

"Just checkin' in with the wife," said Joe Tonahill, Jack Ruby's huge defense lawyer, as he slipped into the judge's chambers to use the telephone. "She wants to go shopping and I'd rather go fishin'." Mrs. Tonahill, from Jasper in East Texas, later Saturday joined her husband in Dallas.

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