

DA

ON THE LINE:

Did Ruby Have a Chance?

By BOB CONSIDINE

DALLAS.—The jury in Dallas seemed excessively determined to kill the man who killed The Man.

Melvin Belli's homeric blasts against the city in general and the eight men and four women jurors in particular, must be assessed carefully. After all, he lost the case he had carefully and expensively built to save the seamy little exhibitionist from the ultimate sentence a jury can hand down.



CONSIDINE

But it seemed to this writer that Mr. Belli had something there when he charged, as he repeatedly did, that his man had no real chance in this particular city. Ruby's involved defense might not have worked anywhere else in Texas, to be sure. But there seemed to be less chance of its working in Dallas.

"Everybody knows Jack Ruby killed Lee Oswald," one of the prospective (and rejected) jurors nervously laughed during the long period of shaping up the jury box. "Everybody" knew, of course. It was the first murder on national television. Mr. Belli's point was that the man was sick, and he brought in some pretty impressive evidence that he was indeed some kind of a nut. The jury either couldn't understand the gobbledegook of scientific testimony or didn't wish to. Mr. Belli believes the latter is true: that the jury would have given its verdict when summations ended a little after one o'clock Saturday morning. "But it must have figured that that would be too much—even for Dallas," Mr. Belli bellowed in the wake of his disaster.

The jury seemed to have its mind made up, judging from its facial expressions, since early that morning. When it returned from breakfast we

noted that it seemed to be linked in happy rapport. Each noticed and commented to the juror next to him on a new haircut one of the young deputy sheriffs was sporting near the courthouse door. When they came into court, after two hours and 19 minutes of what was called deliberation, they all carefully avoided Ruby's eyes—which was the tipoff, as it had been since man first appointed man to take another mans' life.

It was as inevitable as the fate of a steer in an abattoir. Yet, like a professional vegetarian, you wondered if something couldn't have been done about it. The "image" of Dallas as a law-abiding and particularly God-fearing community cannot have prospered by such a swift lowering of the boom on the balding skull of a guy whose greatest pride in life was carrying Barney Ross' bucket.

The two nice old ladies on the jury, the middle-aged one, and the attractive one who has six children ranging down in ages from 20 to 10, should have held up the verdict until at least after lunch. Or there must have at least a token request for a look at the pile of evidence. These people do not deserve all the harsh things Mr. Belli said of them. But if they thought that it was proper to order Ruby's death as swiftly and almost as brutally as Ruby ordered Oswald's they have only added to the city's unfortunate reputation as a place of quick and senseless vengeance.

The jury had been pictured as a most devout one. The first request of the first juror to the outside world was for a book of Dr. Billy Graham's letters. The second was for a phonograph player, and an album of religious hymns and songs. Yet that jury gave less actual time to ordering a man's life taken than it did to watching Lawrence Welk and Candid Camera.

It looked as if it just didn't want somebody named Ruby, who had hurt Big D, to louse up another weekend.

- Tolson _____
- Belmont _____
- Mohr _____
- Casper _____
- Callahan _____
- Coprad _____
- DeLoach _____
- Evans _____
- Gale _____
- Rosen _____
- Sullivan _____
- Tavel _____
- Trotter _____
- Tele Room _____
- Holmes _____
- Gandy _____

Biddiscombe
Selby
Heath

F-1
6-AY

- The Washington Post and Times Herald _____
- The Washington Daily News _____
- The Evening Star _____
- New York Herald Tribune _____
- New York Journal-American 2
- New York Mirror _____
- New York Daily News _____
- New York Post _____
- The New York Times _____
- The Worker _____
- The New Leader _____
- The Wall Street Journal _____
- The National Observer _____
- People's World _____
- Date _____

144-24616-A
NOT RECORDED
128 MAR 20 1964

MAR 16 1964

79 MAR 20 1964