

Death Takes the Last Actor in the Dallas Drama

Jack Ruby was a tragic, plain little man who yearned for class, who tried hard to be liked. He was quick-tempered and emotional, and these qualities gave him — if not class — at least notoriety, an assured place in history.

His death Tuesday of a massive blood clot, probably induced by the lymphatic cancer which was spreading rapidly through his body, had a touch of the irony which had brought him this notoriety in the basement of the Dallas police station a little more than three years earlier, and which had followed him through court, jail and hospital.

Just hours before his death at Parkland Memorial Hospital in Dallas, Columbia Records scheduled a press conference in New York.

By the time that conference came off a few hours later, Ruby was dead. But his voice lived, on a secret tape recording made days before, as he lay on his deathbed in the same building where President Kennedy and his assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, had died. The recording had been made with a machine hidden in an attache case as one unwitting policeman listened and two more guarded his door. Ruby, dying, had once more slipped past police security, just as he had on Nov. 24, 1963, when he had



Ruby as he heard his death sentence pronounced in 1964.

gunned down Oswald before the eyes of the Dallas police force and millions of horrified television viewers.

Ruby's words were heard denying any complicity between himself and Oswald, an equally tragic little man

who came from obscurity to history with a well-placed ~~blow~~ days before he met his own death. This message had become an obsession with Ruby. He wanted desperately to quiet the mounting controversy spurred by a recent spate of books questioning the Warren Commission's findings regarding Kennedy's death.

He insisted it was an accident of timing, a wrong turn onto a one-way street, and blinding passion which led him to the police station basement, where Oswald was being transferred from one jail to another. He was running an errand, he explained, took a short cut down a one-way street into a parking lot, and was drawn to the station by the crowds. He was known to, and liked by, police, whom he often informed of happenings in the night club business, and had no trouble getting past police lines.

Carried Gun to Protect Cash Bundle

He had a gun, he said, because he often carried large sums of money. He also was his own bouncer in the Carousel Club, his walk-up Dallas strip joint.

An emotional man who was extremely disturbed by Kennedy's death, Ruby insisted he acted on impulse as he shoved the gun into Oswald's ribs and fired the fatal shot.

Throughout his trial, at which he was found guilty of murder with malice and sentenced to death, Ruby's attorneys echoed his insistent statements that he acted alone, and on impulse.

"All that talk about a plot is nothing but junk," argued Melvin Belli, one lawyer who defended him. "There wasn't any plot. He was insane, that's all." And quipped Belli in Paris last week: "Some people would think there was a conspiracy if LBJ bought a turkey."

Ruby denied by cancer another chance to tell his story. A planned February retrial ordered by the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals—died in black despair that his story was not believed. Medically, he died of a blood clot. But his faithful sister and busi-

- Tolson _____
- DeLoach _____
- Mohr _____
- Wick _____
- Casper _____
- Callahan _____
- Conrad _____
- Felt _____
- Gale _____
- Rosen _____
- Sullivan _____
- Tavel _____
- Trotter _____
- Tele. Room _____
- Holmes _____
- Gandy _____

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

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ness partner, Mrs. Eva Grant, insisted it was anxiety that took her brother's life.

That his death would fan the flames of controversy even higher seemed most probable.

"Though we are satisfied that Ruby's role was limited and adequately explained, his death will inevitably leave greater latitude for voices of doubt," said the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. The Los Angeles Times admitted that Ruby's death "will probably refuel the fires of rumor," though the Times saw "no shred of substantive evidence to contradict [his] statement."

Joseph A. Ball, senior counsel for the Warren Commission, insisted Ruby's death offered no reason to reopen an investigation, though he admitted there would be increased demands for another inquiry.

As for Belli, and for Ruby's family, his passing was merely another blot on the image of Dallas. Belli called it "the ultimate shame of the city," and insisted: "I can't understand why nobody realized that this man, kept under constant surveillance after a suicide attempt, was dying. Dallas flatters itself [that] it has the best medical care in the world . . . while I'm not saying there's anything sinister about what's happened, it's just a case of damned carelessness."

Ruby's Cancer Noted Month Ago

Ruby, argued his jailors, got better medical care than most prisoners—though perhaps not as fine as that offered by a private physician. He died just a month after his cancer was discovered during treatment for what was diagnosed as pneumonia.

On Friday, in simple, private Jewish services, Jack Ruby, who died tormented at 55—and looking nearer 80—was buried in Chicago's Westlawn Cemetery, his murder conviction stricken from the books. Some will always doubt his statements. And they will continue to ask questions—the same questions, word for word, that were asked for years after the assassination of Abraham Lincoln.