

ON THE LINE:

Tough Hombre on Bench

By BOB CONSIDINE

DALLAS: Judge J. Frank Wilson, the tough hombre who gave the lagging Ruby trial a shot in the arm during his one-day appearance in court as a substitute for ailing Judge Joe B. Brown, is greatly respected around the Criminal Courts Building.

The prosecution made it abundantly evident it would have preferred to have Judge Wilson on the bench for the remainder of the trial. It liked the way he domesticated the adroit and learned Melvin Belli, the defense attorney from San Francisco, whose manner and dress set him apart from the less sophisticated lawyers handling the state's case.



CONSIDINE

The once-strident voices of Texan members of the defense subsided to timorous whispers during Judge Wilson's stay in court, particularly after he commanded the sometimes ram-bunctious Belli to sit down and shut up. The command had an implied "or else!" attached to it.

"Judge Wilson knows all there is to know about Texas law," a reverent bailiff whispered to me, looking up at the impressive bronze-faced jurist as he pondered the testimony and puffed an expensive cigar.

"What's more, the judge is a millionaire," the awed bailiff continued. "He doesn't need this job at all."

"How did he make his million?" I whispered back. "Oil? Cattle?"

"He was in Congress for eight years," the bailiff said.

P.S.—Judge Wilson is a self-made legal eagle who ran an original stake of \$300 into a fortune in law practice before going to Washington in 1946.

JACK RUBY'S SISTERS, Eve and Eileen, were told to leave the court when the trial turned to the taking of testimony. Belli pleaded vainly to

Judge Brown to allow them to remain. "Ruby has no mother or father," Belli said. "At least he should have someone here with him..."

Judge Brown said nix, the ladies were presumed to be witnesses for the defense, and no witnesses are permitted to hear what's going on in the court until they take the stand.

Eve Ruby Giant has asked former welterweight champion of the world Barney Ross to fly to Dallas to lend moral support to her brother. The Rosses and the Rubensteins grew up together in Chicago. Barney has received several letters from Ruby since the shooting.

"If they throw the book at Sparky," Ross told the writer recently, using the nickname by which he has known Ruby for years, "they'll have to throw it at me, too. I would have done the same thing as he did if I had been in his position."

BIG Joe Tonahill did not get very far with his mistrial motion, which he based on the premise that Ruby cannot get a "public" trial because most of the seats in Judge Brown's courtroom are filled by reporters.

The judge gave his old friend Joe one of those "Who are you trying to kid, chum?" looks and told him to get along to something else.

One wonders if there has been a more public trial.

It is getting a bigger "play" in several foreign countries—notably France, Italy and Britain—than it gets in the local papers. The French press, radio and TV are still clutching hopefully to the long-discredited notion that there was a dark conspiracy involving JFK's death, and that Ruby, a part of it, killed Oswald, another part of it, to keep him from squealing.

The forlorn supposition ignores a basic reasoning. If Ruby had wanted to "silence" Oswald he had a chance to do so on the night of the assassination. What sense was there in "silencing" him after 48 hours of interrogation?

- Tolson
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