

Chicago Recalls 'Ruby'

By LARRY GROVE

Back in the west side Chicago neighborhood around Roosevelt Drive and Peoria, they remember Jack Rubenstein as "Sparky."

In the Jewish ghetto neighborhood where Rubenstein was born 52 years ago, people know him as a man who was quick to fight; he won a reputation as a toe-to-toe street fighter.

He wouldn't take anything off anybody.

There was a flood of minor police infractions — nothing really serious — against him. He crashed gates and was caught scalping tickets. And he made his living with small time gambling and as the owner of a small night club. He wanted very much to make the big-time.

A DAPPER DRESSER despite his wavering fortunes, he had a stock of gimmicks for hauling in the fast buck. One such gimmick was to approach a "chorus girl" type sitting with a rich friend in a nightclub. Rubenstein would dart quickly to the girl's side, slip a sparkling ring on her finger and stand back to admire it.

The "sugar daddy" would almost always buy it.

No one took him real seriously. He was happy-go-lucky, but volatile when he was angry.

He never liked to see a guy without a buck.

And he certainly didn't want to be the guy without a buck.

He ain't a bad guy, understand. He's a good guy.

That's the way some of his former associates remember Jack Rubenstein.

DURING THE twenties back in Chicago, he tried to crash the

gate for the Dempsey-Tunney fight and they caught him.

The dark-haired fellow everybody calls "Ruby" wanted in there, that's all. He never would allow himself to get flabby. And sometimes he'd even work out with barbells at the YMCA.

Fifteen years ago he came to Dallas to tend bar for his sister. One thing about Ruby: he never needed a bouncer.

And he branched off into business for himself, with a swinging little place called the Silver Slipper.

He wanted to be a handyman with the ladies, too. But his attentions weren't always appreciated.

"He was a loner and a bully," said Geneva Foster. "I never saw him in a clean shirt and his necktie would be undone. He was arrogant and a mean little man. He just blew up at the least little thing. . ."

MRS. FOSTER — now working at an aerospace firm in San Diego, Calif., — demonstrated ballroom dancing with a partner in Ruby's Silver Spur Club in Dallas nine years ago.

"He wasn't much better than the man he shot," Mrs. Foster said.

Even so, Ruby had a way about him. He was breezy and his talk was rapid, with a little trace of a stutter.

He was a character in a business of characters.

He branched out his nightclub operations and centered his activities on the Carousel Club, a strip-tease house across Commerce from the Adolphus Hotel. And he had Club Vegas on the outskirts.

He boasted, or was it boasting, that he came from "tough stock." He never let an insult against Franklin Delano Roosevelt go uncontested.

He frequently carried a weapon — "for protection."

A FORMER western regional director of the American Guild of Variety Artists, Irving Mazzei, said in Los Angeles that he used to own several lounges in Dallas in partnership with Rubenstein.

"I used to have trouble with

him," said Mazzei.

But Ruby called him just recently to complain of a competitor's operations. "He said he was going to get rid of some of the . . ."

"He's excitable and impetuous."

"I told him to put on better shoes and beat his competitors his way."

Perhaps more than most, Rubenstein felt the death of President Kennedy. When the assassin's bullet killed the President, the square and impetuous nightclub owner took it hard.

"Don't worry," his sister, Mrs. Eva L. Grant, told him. "Somebody will shoot Oswald."

AND MRS. GRANT said, that may have put an idea into her brother's head.

But Rubenstein said at the time, "Look at the logic of this. Oswald got to the President, but no one can get to Oswald."

J. L. Campbell, who owns a service station across the street from the Vegas nightclub, said Ruby "is emotional to the extent that he would want to be involved in whatever transpired."

"It's a shame," Rubenstein said. "That guy who shot Kennedy ought to have thought about Jackie and the kids . . ."

"That poor family."

That's what Ruby told his roommate, George Senator, on the sunny morning of Nov. 24, 1963, when he left the room where they lived together in Oak Cliff.

He took his dog, Sheba, for a walk. He took his pistol with him. There wasn't anything particularly unusual about that.

AND WHEN he appeared at the Dallas police station, there was so much activity about that few people even noticed Jack Rubenstein. When reporters nodded to him, he nodded back. He knew many of the reporters who were anxious to train their cameras on Lee Harvey Oswald, the young man who shot the President.

Oswald would be under heavy guard when he appeared. He would be taken through a corridor, from the Dallas City Jail, to an arm-

ored car that was waiting half in and half out of the entrance on Commerce Street to remove him to the Dallas County jail.

An officer called to him. "Hey, Jack, what are you doing down here?"

... and carrying weapons.
But Ruby replied airily. "Ah, I brought the sandwiches."
IT WORKED
... another detective asked
... in interpret for the Jew
... press, the squat man said
... chuckle.
... inside, motorists on the street
... moving slowly, craning their
... at the building, following
... parts on the radio that Lee Har-
... Oswald soon would appear in
... corridor.
... and inside, there was confu-
...
... Jack Ruby was unnoticed
... among the throng of newsmen—
... only persons aside from the
... guards who would rap-
... Oswald and take him safe-
... to the County Jail to await
... that anyone hoped
... to see justice done.
... "After all, didn't he kill the Pres-
... of the United States?"
HE'D NOW JACK Ruby saw
... walking between two plain-
... officers. His hand was
... his nickel plated pistol. He
... toward Oswald. He
... the trigger. Oswald fell
... and slumped to the floor.
...
... Ruby. An am-
... and arrived.
... Oswald was hurried away
... and he dis-
... after the doctors pumped
... of blood into him to save
...
... The United States of America
... robbed of its chance to learn
... about the assassination of
...
... Jack Ruby had the reputa-

... believe in violence. He
... he was so affected by the
... (the President's death) that
... went out of his mind."
... charge Ruby with
... said Dist. Atty. Har-
...
... district attorney certain-
... Rubenstein. Just Satur-
... evening, he had crashed
... conference when Pol-
... Jesse Curry revealed most
... details of the case against
... Oswald and called it "airtight."
... know all the policemen
... had told the district at-
... "And the reporters, I know
... too," he said breezily.
... came to listen in."
... that isn't, of course, what
... Rubenstein came for. He
... Lee Harvey Oswald.
... one knows exactly why
... But Jack Rubenstein,
... was a street fighter
... didn't take anything off
... gave reporters an answer
... when they asked him.