

Ruby's Murder Trial Begins

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DALLAS — Tears filled Jack Ruby's eyes the day after President John F. Kennedy's assassination when he was told about gifts of saddles arranged for little Caroline and John Jr.

He sat with a "fixed stare" moments after the assassination, in a newspaper office only five blocks away, with insight of the building from which the assassin fired the shots.

And he was on the scene "in the crowd" when accused assassin Lee Harvey Oswald was produced for the press that night in police headquarters, or was rumored to be arriving at county jail the next day.

Early Highlights

These were highlights of early testimony Wednesday as the actual trial of Ruby for the murder of Oswald finally got under way.

Dist. Judge Joe B. Brown, back on the bench after a one-day absence with a cold, denied all defense motions, including one seeking a ruling that Ruby is presently insane and incompetent to stand trial.

Ruby, described by chief defense counsel Melvin Belli as "tense," pleaded "not guilty" before the jury of eight men and four women. Belli attempted to add the plea of "not guilty by reason of insanity."

Only Interested in Plea

"All the court is interested in is whether he pleads guilty or not guilty," said Judge Brown.

Insanity at the time of the shooting will be the defense, nevertheless, and if proved will require a verdict of not guilty.

The state quickly put on eight witnesses to recount the movements of Ruby, balding, 52-year-old night club operator, on the day of

President Kennedy's assassination Nov. 22 and the following day.

In each instance the defense elicited testimony from the state's witness that Ruby is an "excitable" man and a sort of "Damon Runyon character" known to police and newsmen.

Three employees of the

Dallas Morning News, Don Campbell, John Newnam and Georgia Mayor, testified Ruby was at the newspaper office inserting advertising at the very time the President was slain.

Ruby Called 'Stunned'

All three testified that Ruby was "stunned" or "upset" by the news. Miss Mayor said she saw him sitting with his eyes in a "fixed stare."

Ruby arrived at the newspaper office around noon, 35 minutes before the President was shot five blocks away, and remained until about 1:30 p.m. watching news developments on television, the witnesses testified.

They said they saw nothing unusual about his behavior, although conceding that he was usually a "volatile" or "excitable" person.

Newnam said Ruby went to a telephone and called his sister, Mrs. Eva Grant.

"Was he crying?" asked defense attorney Joe Tona-hill.

"I don't recall if he was crying," the witness replied, "but Eva was carrying on over the telephone. He called me over to listen."

Concerned Over Ad

Newnam said Ruby was "concerned" over a full page advertisement that had appeared in the newspaper that morning. Tona-hill, saying the ad presented "insulting" questions to President Kennedy, placed a copy of it in evidence.

William Glenn Duncan Jr., radio newscaster, told how Ruby called his station around midnight that night, just after Oswald had been formally charged.

Duncan said Ruby, calling

from City Hall, placed Dist. Atty. Henry Wade on the telephone for a recorded interview.

Later, Ruby brought sandwiches and soda pop to the station and told how he had gotten close to Oswald at City Hall when he was "swept up in the crowd," Duncan related.

"He seemed to be pleased in the sense that he was in on something important," the newsman testified, describing Ruby as "high strung."

Offered Sandwiches

Police Det. R. M. Sims said

Ruby had telephoned offering to bring sandwiches to the station where Oswald was being questioned, but was told they were not needed.

Lt. T. B. Leonard testified he saw Ruby at about 11:30 p.m. in the basement assembly room where Wade was holding a press conference and Oswald was brought in.

"He had a notebook and pencil in his hand," Leonard recalled. "Someone asked what he was doing. He said, 'I brought the sandwiches, they're in the car.'"

"Someone told him to go get them, but he said, 'No, I'm a reporter tonight.'"

Wes Wise, television newsman, told of seeing Ruby at about 3 p.m. the next day (Nov. 23) near the Texas school book depository building.

Discussed Assassination

"We discussed the killing of the President, how terrible it was," Wise related. "I said I had been at the Trade Mart, where the President was to appear, and saw his rocking chair."

"I also said I had seen the presents that were to be given the President for Caroline and John Jr.—western saddles. There were tears in his eyes."

Wise said he did not notice a crowd at the county jail a block away at that time, nor was he aware of any plans to transfer Oswald there at 4 p.m. Saturday.

"Chief (Jessie) Curry had said, 'I suggest you be alert at 10 o'clock Sunday morn-

ing — sometime after 10 o'clock," Wise testified.

Police Sgt. D. V. Harkness, however, testified a crowd gathered at the county jail anticipating transfer of Os-

wald about 4 p.m. Saturday and that he saw Ruby in the crowd.

As the session wore on, Belli said Ruby was following the testimony but that his comments were "out of context and irrelevant."

"He is the most agitated I have seen him," Belli said.

At the outset of Wednesday's session, the judge overruled defense motions for a change of venue, for additional peremptory challenges of jurors, for a mistrial and for striking the last two jurors chosen.