

Tom Howard, Lawyer for Ruby Who Quit in Dispute, Dies at 48

~~NYT~~ NYT-3/30/65
DALLAS, March 28 (AP)—Tom Howard, the first lawyer to represent Jack Ruby in the murder of Lee Harvey Oswald, died Saturday night, 30 minutes after having been admitted to Methodist Hospital suffering from a massive coronary infection. He was 48 years old.

Mr. Howard had been ill for several days but continued his law practice.

George Senator, Ruby's roommate, took Mr. Howard to police headquarters to represent Ruby shortly after Oswald, the accused assassin of President Kennedy, was shot to death on Nov. 24, 1963.

During the first few days of Ruby's trial, Mr. Howard appeared in court with Ruby's lawyers—Melvin Belli, Joe Tonaill and Phil Burleson.

"Tom and Belli disagreed violently regarding how Ruby should be defended," Mrs. Howard said later. "He said he pulled out of the case when he felt the trial procedures would result in a conviction."

The jury convicted Ruby of

murder and set sentence at death. He is in jail pending an appeal.

Mr. Howard was a colorful and at times controversial personality.

District Judge Joe B. Brown, who presided at the Ruby murder trial, jailed Mr. Howard for an hour and a half in 1949 when Mr. Howard and an assistant district attorney tried to shout each other during a trial.

In 1951 Mr. Howard and Fred Bruner, then an assistant district attorney, paid \$50 fines for exchanging blows in Judge Brown's court.

In 1960 Mr. Howard received a six-month sentence, which was suspended, and was fined \$2,500 in Federal Court for failing to file income tax returns for three years. The Government also claimed a \$22,000 tax deficiency in the suit.

As a result of this conviction Mr. Howard was disbarred for six months.