

# Creed of Violence Led to Ruby's Destruction

## Tough Kid From Chicago, He Prevented World From Really Knowing Lee Oswald

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To Jack Ruby, who learned to fight as a youth in the Jewish ghetto of Chicago, violence and success meant much the same thing. It was a lesson he never forgot.

But in the end, Jack Ruby's violence spilled an indelible blot on the pages of history. And destroyed Ruby.

Jack Ruby's last and greatest act of violence was committed Nov. 24, 1963, when, while millions watched on television, the stocky, middle-aged man stepped from a crowd of reporters and police and fatally shot Presidential assassin Lee Harvey Oswald.

That single shot robbed the world of an opportunity to really know Oswald. The result has been continuing doubts about the circumstances surrounding the murders of President John F. Kennedy and Oswald.

### Last Wish

Ruby remained in custody until he died Tuesday of cancer in Dallas' Parkland Memorial Hospital. His last wish, his relatives said, was for the world to know there was no conspiracy in the slaying of Oswald.

"I was so emotionally upset for three days," Ruby said in a secretly tape-recorded interview a few weeks before his death.

In the recording, first reported in The Times, Ruby denied having known Oswald and insisted the shooting was the result of fantastic coincidences.

... the difference in meeting this fate was 30 seconds one way or the other," he said.

### To Show the World

Ruby took a more dramatic view immediately after the shooting, according to Secret Service agent Forrest V. Sorrels, who quoted him as saying:

"I guess I just had to show the world that a Jew has guts."

Sorrels told the Warren Commission that Ruby "on the Friday night (after the Kennedy assassination) ... had gone to a synagogue and had heard a eulogy on the President ... that when he saw Mrs. Kennedy was going to have to appear for the trial, he thought to himself why should she have to go through this ordeal for this no-good so-and-so."

The Warren Report quoted Ruby as saying, "The emotional feeling came within me that someone owed this debt to our beloved President."

### Perfect Timing

Whether it was coincidence or something more, Ruby's timing was perfect for the murder.

In the distinguished Dallas nightclub operator became an everlasting enigma in history.

It is an unlikely role for a tough Jewish kid from the Maxwell St. area of Chicago, who was born Jacob Leon Rubenstein on March 25, 1911.

Ruby, who changed his

name legally from Rubenstein in 1947, was the sixth of nine children born to Polish immigrants. His father was an alcoholic, frequently unemployed carpenter who reputedly deserted from the Czarist army in Russia in 1898; his mother was an illiterate, mentally-disturbed woman who often was the target of her husband's violence.

### Called 'Sparky'

As a youngster, Ruby quickly developed a reputation with his fists, usually battling Italian boys from nearby "Little Sicily." His friends called him "Sparky."

"Sparky was a real scrapper, even when he was 10," his brother, Earl, has said. "He was always getting into fights and winning 'em. I think that's the main reason Pa liked him so much. He was the old man's favorite. I remember Pa was always bragging about 'My boy, Jake.'"

When he was 12, Ruby's parents separated and he was placed in a foster home. Despite his lifelong identification with Judaism, he never had a bar mitzvah, traditional confirmation ceremony at age 13.

### Good Athlete

When he was 14, his parents reconciled and Ruby returned to his family. Ruby was a good athlete in those days and his idol and sometimes friend was Barney Ross, another scrapper who eventually won two world boxing championships.

Ruby dropped out of Roosevelt High School when he was 16, and thereafter lived by his wits. He was a ticket scalper at sporting events, a novelties salesman, a seller of horserace tip sheets.

### Union Organizer

In 1933, Ruby went to San Francisco, and spent four years on the West Coast, peddling newspaper subscriptions door-to-door.

In 1937, he returned to Chicago to help an old friend, Lem R. Cooke, organize a waste-handling

union. Cooke was killed two years later and Ruby was forced out of the union.

Ruby later went to New York, and the Warren Report said: "Ruby, with several friends, frequently attempted to disrupt rallies of the German-American Bund. One acquaintance said that Ruby was responsible for 'cracking a few heads' of Bund members."

Ruby was drafted by the Army Air Corps in 1943, and served for three years at various domestic bases. He was mustered out in 1946 with a good record.

In 1947, Ruby went to Dallas to help a sister, Eva Grant, run a nightclub called the Silver Spur. It was followed by the Club Vegas, and, finally, the Carousel, a striptease joint in downtown Dallas only four blocks from the City Hall where Ruby was destined to slay Oswald.

#### Wanted 'Class'

For 16 years, Ruby achieved some success in Dallas, gaining friends among police and newspapermen. Despite his toughness, he seemed most anxious to have friends and, as he often said, "class."

He was a sharp dresser, who lived in an apartment, never married and exercised daily at the YM-CA. He was devoted to four pet dachshunds, whom he called "my children."

Serving as his own bouncer, Ruby could display a cruelty as extreme as the warmth he showed

his friends. On 15 occasions since 1950, the Warren report said, Ruby beat with his fists, pistol-whipped or blackjacked unruly patrons.

In his Runyonesque world of extremes, Ruby could be a charmer and a sadist, a glad-hander, gambler, protector of his strippers, and an entrepreneur who introduced himself to customers as their "congenial" host.

#### Carried Revolver

Ruby was in debt on his income taxes, but often carried large sums of money and a .38-caliber revolver to protect his money. Dallas police had arrested him eight times on charges ranging from carrying a concealed weapon to permitting after-hours dancing. But the lawmen were always welcome at his clubs.

Psychiatrists have tried to unravel Jack Ruby, and there is disagreement on whether he really was aware that he was murdering Oswald.

#### Periods of Lucidity

In his final weeks, Ruby had periods of lucidity when he maintained the shooting occurred during an emotion-triggered blackout.

As he lay dying, Ruby also had hallucinations that American Jews were being executed in retaliation for his violent act.

"I hear them screaming from the basement every night," Ruby told his brother, Earl.

But the Jewish boy from Chicago had grown too old and sick to fight back.

## CHICAGO BURIAL SET BESIDE HIS PARENTS

Exclusive to The Times from the Chicago Tribune

CHICAGO—Jack Ruby will be buried here Friday alongside his parents in Westlawn Cemetery, Hershey Weinstein, president of the funeral chapel where the services will be held, said Tuesday.

Ruby died Tuesday in Dallas.

His brother, Earl R., of Detroit, and two sisters, Mrs. Eva Grant of Dallas and Mrs. Eileen Kaminsky of Chicago, who were with Ruby when he died, returned here early today with his body.

Ruby's other Chicago relatives—two brothers, Sam and Hyman, and two sisters, Mrs. Norman Carroll and Mrs. Ann Volpert—learned of the death from Earl Ruby, Miss Judith Kaminsky, his niece, told a reporter.

"The whole family is very upset," she said. "There is nothing anyone can say except that we believe he was not involved in a conspiracy to kill President Kennedy."

"Ruby lost all will to live near the end," said Elmer Gertz, a Chicago attorney on the legal team that won a reversal of Ruby's murder conviction for the slaying of Oswald. He added:

"When I saw him two weeks ago he said he was a man about to die. He did not look sad about it."