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Ruby's Struggle Against Cancer Believed Lost Disease Spread To Vital Areas

By BILL MEADA, Staff Writer

Doctors fear that cancer-ridden Jack Ruby is beyond hope.

A reliable source close to the medical aspects of the case said the tumor inside Ruby's body has escaped detection too long.

"It has spread itself into too many vital areas," the source said.

Dr. Jay Sanford, head of the medical team treating Ruby, said he could not deny that Ruby may be on his death bed.

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"I cannot say with complete certainty until we have more medical information," Dr. Sanford said. "We do know the tumor has spread, but we don't know how far or from where."

Dr. Watts Webb, a surgeon in the case, said Ruby may survive "two weeks or five years."

A TEAM OF specialists began to search Ruby's internal organs by X ray Monday, paying special attention to the gastrointestinal tract, the lungs, and the pancreas.

"These are the major areas of consideration at this time," Dr. Sanford said Monday morning.

The doctor said Ruby may or may not be operated on for the primary tumor, depending on its location.

He added that if surgery is not used, chemical and radiological treatment might be employed.

No matter what doctors find inside Ruby, it appears unlikely that the one-time night club operator will be able to keep his date for a new trial on a charge of killing Oswald, doctors said.

The new trial, ordered by the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, has been set in Wichita Falls, perhaps in February.

Doctors detected the presence of an internal tumor Saturday when pathological tests on an enlarged lymph node removed from Ruby's neck proved to be malignant.

DR. SANFORD said that discovery of the lymphatic malignancy is a secondary effect which indicates undeniably that a primary tumor exists somewhere in the 55-year-old Ruby's body.

Dr. Sanford visited with Ruby briefly Monday morning and re-

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ported that the balding Ruby "said he feels better than he has felt in months."

The physician said Ruby has taken the diagnosis well. "Obviously he is trying to maintain his composure," Dr. Sanford said, "but he is reasonably cheerful."

Officially, the patient's condition continues to be listed as serious.

Ruby was taken from his jail cell to Parkland Hospital Friday afternoon with what appeared to be pneumonia. He has been in the Dallas County jail since March, 1964, when he was convicted of murdering accused presidential assassin Lee Harvey Oswald.

Detailed X-ray examination of Ruby has been withheld until a partially depressed right lung re-extended sufficiently for examination.

Dr. Sanford said Monday the lung has extended to "about 75 per cent of normal." This, he said, is enough to begin the tumor search.

X-rays of the lung were taken Sunday morning and Sunday afternoon. Neither indicated the lung had extended sufficiently.

THE RIGHT LUNG was squeezed by the pressure of fluid which had completely filled the right chest cavity. More than four quarts of the fluid were removed through a semi-permanent drain which now pierces Ruby's chest.

Dr. Sanford said medicine is being put into Ruby's windpipe to act directly on the lung.

"This (the medicine) has made him throw up occasionally, but it probably would have the same effect on you or me," the doctor said.

WHILE MEDICAL attention seems to be focused on the in-

paired right lung, Dr. Sanford said this should not tend to indicate that the lung is the prime suspect.

"It could be anywhere," he reiterated.

Thorough X-ray examination of Ruby's body seems to offer the best single method of locating the site of the primary tumor.

"The chances are better than 50-50 we can find it with X rays," Dr. Sanford said. Meanwhile, the results of supportive pathology tests expected sometime Tuesday may help to point the way.

Dr. Sanford revealed Monday that a sample of Ruby's right lung was taken with a special instrument Saturday for pathological examination. Results of this test—which will not necessarily prove that the malignancy is in the lung or not—are not expected until Tuesday.

Dr. Sanford said the tumor search "will be conducted with all reasonable speed." However, though physicians and X-ray personnel worked Sunday, no pathology laboratory personnel were called in for special duty.

OFFICIALS AT Parkland Hospital have scheduled twice-daily condition reports. Any drastic change will be made public immediately, they say.

Ruby, once sentenced to death by a Dallas court for gunning down Oswald, has a date for a new trial on the murder charge.

The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals said certain evidence heard during the first trial was prejudicial to the defendant. A new trial to be held someplace other than Dallas was ordered.

Only last week the defense and prosecution agreed to try the case again in Wichita Falls, probably in February.

Whether Ruby will be physically able appears doubtful at this time, physicians say.