

# Kantor sheds light

By Carroll Ann Brooks  
NEWS WORLD STAFF

Publisher's Weekly has said that Seth Kantor's new book, "Who Was Jack Ruby?" (Everest House, \$10.95), "tears to shreds the Warren Commission's portrait" of Ruby and "adds weight" to arguments that he was part of a conspiracy to kill John F. Kennedy. Author Kantor is currently an investigative reporter on the Atlanta Constitution's Washington bureau and a correspondent for North American Newspaper Alliance.

Kantor explained recently to The News World that he began intensive research on Ruby in 1974 when the Freedom of Information Act made available a lot of new material and documents. But his knowledge of Ruby went back to 1952-1962 when Kantor, a reporter and magazine writer in Dallas, was acquainted with night club operator and publicity seeker Jack Ruby.

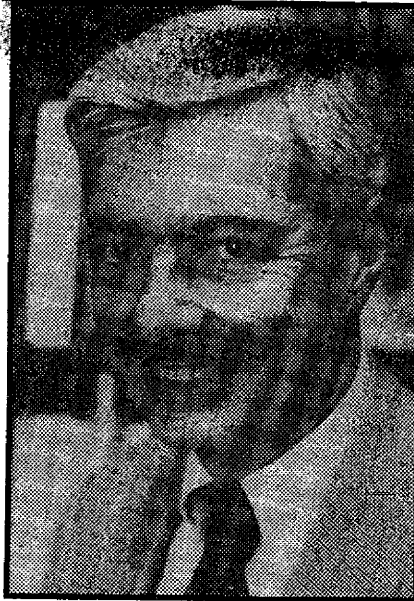
According to Kantor, Ruby attached himself to police officers and reporters and anyone whom he considered influential. Ruby wanted to be noticed.

On Nov. 22, 1963, when the fateful shots were fired, Ruby was in a nearby newspaper office. Seth Kantor, then 36 and on his first trip with the president as a White House reporter for Scripps-Howard newspapers, was riding in the motorcade.

The two met in Parkland Memorial Hospital moments before the announcement of the president's death. They shook hands and Ruby asked whether Kantor thought Ruby should close his clubs. Kantor said there was nothing unusual in seeing Ruby at the hospital because he often appeared at such events.

## Witness to discrepancies

Kantor, because of his familiarity with Dallas, pulled his gear off the press plan that was accompanying the new president, Lyndon Johnson, back to Washington and remained to cover the events in Dallas as a police story. He was the only Washington correspondent asked to testify before the Warren Commission. And he was in the basement of the Dallas police station when Ruby lunged forward to kill



Seth Kantor

the president's suspected assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald.

Yet Ruby steadfastly denied that he had gone to the hospital and he had made repeated trips to the police station that weekend, despite the reports of many who had seen him. When he died of cancer in 1967, a prisoner sentenced to death in the electric chair and awaiting a new trial, he still stuck to his denials.

Kantor said, "When I got into my research, I found that Ruby had made numerous trips into the police station that weekend and numerous policemen and reporters had talked to him. But all of this was ignored by the Warren Commission. They chose to believe Ruby when he denied having done these things. Then I was really intrigued by his coverup."

As Kantor began to pursue the mysteries of Ruby's movements, he was led to the National Archives, into previously undisclosed files and on a 6,200-mile trip to interview those who had information. At first Kantor said he just wanted to explore the possibilities and wasn't immediately committed to writing a book.

## Ruby ignored

But he was curious why Ruby seemed always to be ignored. "Ruby came into the police station and shot

## on Ruby case

this guy in front of 20,000,000 television viewers. Everybody was a witness. It was an open and shut case. His explanation that he was distraught was acceptable, given his character."

Kantor explained that the Warren Commission devoted no more than one-seventh of its resources to Ruby, spending far more time on Oswald. And he added that many of the books that came out at the time either ignored Ruby completely or covered him in passing.

Kantor explained the discrepancies among the published Warren Report, what the Warren Commission actually knew, and the information which Kantor covers in his book. "I think that there were two big trouble areas. In the first place, the seven members of the Commission were Establishment people, people whom the new president could trust. I think that it was important to Lyndon Johnson to get an investigation going by a blue ribbon panel which could be trusted by the nation at large.

"Then also consider that the president and members of the Commission wanted to lay to rest any wild speculation that another country was involved in the assassination." Because of these points, said Kantor, whenever Burt Griffin and Leon Hubert, the attorneys in charge of the Ruby investigation, came up with leads and angles to pursue, they were yanked back.

"They came up with a lot of leads to Cuba, connections to Cuba that Ruby had or may have had. And the Establishment within the Warren Commission considered Cuba a bottomless pit, that once they started exploring that possibility, they would never find the end. And Chief Justice Warren wanted an end. He was under the gun from the White House to have a report written by June 1, 1964."

### Rushed investigation

Kantor pointed up the impossibility of doing a thorough investigation in the amount of time available. Griffin and Hubert started on the investigation in early January 1964 and they were told that they could not interview people connected with Ruby until after his murder trial was over. The trial didn't take place until March. They spent the

first several months assembling whatever they could through FBI interviews with other people.

Immediately after the trial, Ruby's lawyers appeared for a new trial on different grounds. Because of the pending appeal, Kantor explained, the Warren Commission decided there was no point in meddling in Ruby's affairs, and accepted a lot more second-hand information and discarded a lot of potentially important points. A prime example was the Warren Report's statement that Ruby had no known criminal connections, an absurd contention, according to Kantor, because all of the information connecting Ruby to organized crime was available at the time or the Warren investigation and was either ignored or glossed over by the Commission.

Kantor explained that the Warren Report was issued on a Friday afternoon in September 1964 for release in Sunday's paper. That first volume, ahead of the 26 other volumes, was 888 pages long. No one could conveniently digest it all so the Commission included their conclusions and a brief synopsis of their findings to support their conclusions. Most reporters had to write their stories from the information the Commission wanted the public to read and to accept. However, Kantor's concluding sentence from "Who Was Jack Ruby?" states that in the matter of the Warren Report, "there are those who say a great deal was not laid to rest."

Kantor's own interest in journalism dates back to high school when one of his papers attracted the attention and acclaim of one of his English teachers. "It didn't take much encouragement to make me think journalism was the profession I should be in." He joined the school newspaper. When he enlisted in the Marines and went to the Pacific, he did some reporting as a Marine Corps correspondent.

Back from the military service, he worked for a little daily in Colorado as sports editor and then as city editor. "It was a small paper where you could do a ton of different things." Then came the Dallas interlude before he and his wife and two daughters came to Washington, where they have been for the past 16 years.