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Jack Ruby's Sanity Is ¹⁴⁷ Court Issue

DALLAS (UPI) — A sanity trial starting June 13 in district court could take Jack Ruby out of the shadow of the electric chair and send him to a hospital for the criminally insane in the East Texas pine woods.

The question that a jury must decide is: has Ruby become insane since he was convicted and ordered electrocuted for murdering Lee Harvey Oswald, the assassin Nov. 22, 1963, of President John Kennedy?

A year ago, psychiatrists and relatives of Ruby said he was screaming in his Dallas County jail cell that his killing Oswald had set off a vast persecution against Jews in the United States.

Says He's Sane

But Ruby, in a court appearance two months ago, insisted he was not insane and did not look it. Reports from persons who have seen him recently in jail say he is "much better."

If a jury agrees with Ruby that he is sane, the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals will start considering the contentions of Ruby's lawyers that he ought to have a new murder trial because trial judge Joe E. Brown made 1,200 legal errors.

The appeals court ordered the sanity trial to determine whether Ruby, 55, is mentally capable of hiring and firing lawyers in his best interests. He wants to fire Joe Tonahill, the No. 2 defense lawyer in his murder trial.

Because of a logjam of defense legal actions, a decision on Ruby's appeal is far behind schedule.