Dallas Times 8/15/78

Ruby's .38 taken to D.C.

House committee to test pistol that killed Oswald

By EARL GOLZ

The .38-caliber Cobra Colt used by Jack Ruby to kill Lee Harvey Oswald has been taken to Washington for ballistics tests ordered by the House Assassinations Committee, which also will attempt to learn where Ruby got the revolver.

The pistol was taken to Washington Sunday by U.S. Rep. Jim Mattox, a friend of Dallas attorney Jules F. Mayer, the independent executor of Ruby's estate.

Mayer said the Dallas Democrat is "the only man I would trust with it." Mattox said he expects to deliver the gun to the committee Tuesday for the two weeks of tests.

The committee had tried unsuccessfully to subpoena the gun from Mayer.

Before giving the weapon to Mattox, Mayer got written assurances from the committee's chairman, U.S. Rep. Louis Stokes, D-Ohio, and the committee's chief counsel, G. Robert Blakey, that the gun will not be damaged and will be returned. Stokes and Blakey also wrote letters to that effect to Mattox.

Rev. Ralph Abernathy says he believes political conspiracy was behind Martin Luther King's assassination, Page 2A. KERA to televise testimony from House Assassinations Committee hearing, Page 6C.

Mayer said he "didn't trust" anyone connected with the committee to take possession of the gun without proper guarantees he would get it back.

The committee, which has been trying to get the gun since June 1, rejected Mayer's suggestion that ballistics tests be performed by the FBI or the Dallas Police Department.

Mayer said he was told the committee also "wants to check out the records on this gun in connection with the killings of Mafia hitmen — that this gun was really owned by the Mafia and given to Ruby to kill Oswald."

The Warren Commission didn't give any indication that it traced the origin of the revolver or tested it ballistically.

Mayer called the gun's possible Mafia connection "far-fetched" and said Ruby usually carried a revolver wedged under the waistband of his trousers.

"Jack carried the gun in his waistband because he carried large sums of cash with him from his clubs," Mayer said. "He never had a bank account that I knew of."

Mayer helped Ruby write his will in August 1950 when he visited Mayer and his wife at the Jack Tar Hotel in Galveston. The attorney also was the first person Ruby called from jail after he pumped one shot into Oswald in the basement of the Dallas police station Nov. 24, 1963, two days after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

For Ruby, Mayer called criminal attorney Tom Howard, who was the first of a long list of defense lawyers hired and fired by the Dallas nightclub owner.

Ruby died Jan. 3, 1967, leaving behind little more than the revolver and other personal belongings — and $46,000 in federal taxes and $2,000 in state taxes still owed by his estate.

If the revolver were sold, Mayer said, money from the sale might be enough to pay the tax bills many times over. The latest offer was $125,000 from a person he declined to identify.

Dallas News staff photo.

Jim Mattox . . . takes Ruby's pistol to Washington.

Weather

Dallas-Fort Worth area — Clear to partly cloudy and hot through Wednesday. High Tuesday and Wednesday near 100. Low early Wednesday upper 70s.

Monday's high: 100.

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