Esquire

"You all know me! I'm Jack Ruby!"

He was indeed. That's why he shot Oswald

by Garry Wills and Ovid Demaris

At 1312½ Commerce Street in Dallas, across from the Adolphus Hotel and just down Commerce from the Baker and the Statler, there is a stairway up to a second-floor warren of rooms and corridors. The sign on the locked door reads:

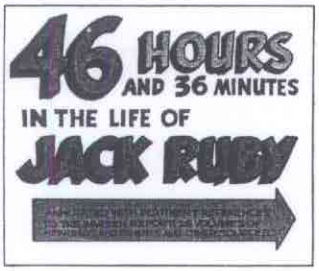
DALLAS POLICE
GYM
For Golden Glove Boxers
Sponsored by
DALLAS POLICE ASSOCIATION

As before, the place is open only at night; but now its stairs temper the welcome rolled down them in thick red carpeting. Only two officers have a key to the gym, and a rubber treadway is clamped into the carpet with metal strips. The run of stairs, broken by a short landing, is capped with a dusty, unused box office. A door on the right takes one into a low room widened, on both flanks, beyond ceiling traces of thin walls removed. Back in the Thirties, Benny Binion ran his book out of these rooms, from a club called Pappy's 66, but for two decades number 1312½ gathered dust until, in 1960, S & R, Inc. (Slatin and Ruby) opened The Sovereign Club (private clubs apparently could evade the Dallas ban on public sale of mixed drinks). The club had its troubles, and Slatin's interest in S & R was soon taken over by Ruby's friend Ralph Paul, who insisted that the club be opened to the public and strippers be brought in. That is how The Sovereign Club became The Carousel, managed by Jack Ruby. Paul owned half of the club, and Ruby's brother Earl owned most of the other half; but for Jack it was the fulfillment of a dream.

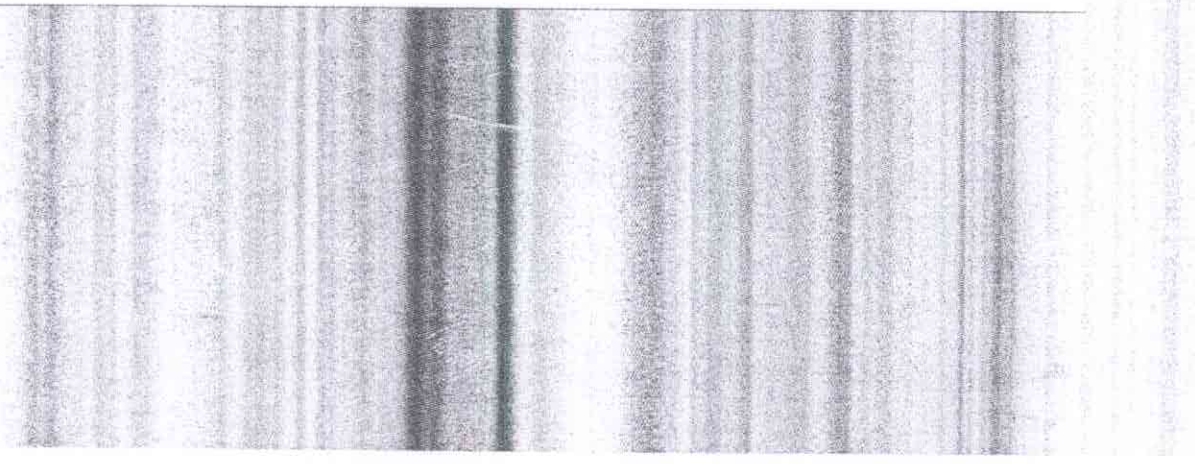
Today, a boxing ring is built out from the stage where blue lights cooled the strippers' writhings. Only one of Ruby's short runways still projects beyond the ring's lip ("The Only Club in Dallas With Three Runways"). In the girls' dressing room, cops shower after their workout. Down the hall from dressing room to stage, one walks past scribbled-over walls: "Number four girl goes first." Eleven musicians' names are recorded in fading pencil: Tom Piesnor and Bill Willis top the list. Traces of the nightclub look dingy in the gymnasium's hard light. Tinny chandeliers are tied aslant. The pasteboard star on Jada's dressing room shrivels at its corners. A sequiny gold horse in basrelief is punctured at two points and shows its papery insides. There is more (and more efficient) punching than in the club's old days, but less fighting. It is still, as in Ruby's lifetime, a policeman's world, but no longer a girl's world. Ruby's club was electric with the violence of exploited women.

Dingy as it seems, it marks the top of a ladder. The rungs, each laboriously reached, were: The Singapore Club, The Silver Spur, The Bob Wills Ranch House, The Vegas Club, Hernando's Hideaway, The Sovereign Club, The Carousel. In 1947 Ruby came to Dallas to help his sister Eva, who had taken over The Singapore Club. This was in South Dallas, a prowling ground of tough outcasts, of Texans with an oil millionaire's temperament and a janitor's pocketbook. It is a Dallas that was forgotten when the city's thin wedge of skyscrapers reared itself, after World War II, to yodel challenges across the continent at New York. But Jack and Eva were used to tough neighborhoods. They grew up in a Chicago ghetto; every step outside it was dangerous. "Jack was the girls' protector," Earl Ruby says; if anyone picked on the Ruby sisters (there were four of them), Jack would hunt him down. On Dallas' South Ervay Street, he was still protecting Eva—though the two squabbled like fishwives when they were together. (If Eva called Jack at his office, he would put the receiver on the desk and go about his business, checking every now and then to see if the indignant static had died away.)

The brother and sister changed their Singapore Club to The Silver Spur, specializing in hillbilly Western music. The club bruised along, and became known as Dallas' "bucket of blood." Ruby needed no bouncer; he had been a scrappy admirer and hanger-on of Barney Ross in Chicago, a haunter of fight circles, known for his own flare-ups and nicknamed "Sparky." Bill Willis, Ruby's drummer in The Carousel, says: "Jack grew up in the same kind of neighborhood I did. If you have our background, you learn to be a jungle walker; you *sense* a fight coming on. Jack used to tell me, 'You have to take the play away. If *you* don't take the play, the



Comic Strip by Jack Kirby



12:45 P.M., NOV. 22, 1963 -- JACK RUBY LEARNS OF THE ASSASSINATION IN THE NEWSROOM OF THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS WHERE HE HAS GONE TO PLACE AN AD FOR HIS CLUB AND WHERE HE COMPLAINS ABOUT AN ANTI-KENNEDY AD.

KENNEDY'S BEEN SHOT!

WELCOME MR. KENNEDY -TO DALLAS-

STUNNED, RUBY GETS ON THE PHONE AND CALLS ANDY ARMSTRONG, BARTENDER AT HIS CLUB, THE CAROUSEL.

ANDY, IF ANYTHING HAPPENS, WE ARE GOING TO CLOSE THE CLUB. I'LL SEE YOU IN ABOUT HALF AN HOUR.

THEN HE CALLS EVA GRANT, HIS SISTER, BUT SHE IS UPSET.

JOHN, I AM NOT OPENING TONIGHT. I WILL HAVE TO LEAVE DALLAS..

1:15 P.M., RUBY GOES, POSSIBLY, TO PARKLAND MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, WHERE NEWSMAN SETH KANTOR CLAIMS TO HAVE SEEN HIM.

SHOULD I CLOSE MY PLACE FOR THE NEXT THREE NIGHTS, DO YOU THINK?

YES... I THINK THAT IS A GOOD IDEA..[1]

1:45 P.M., HE ARRIVES AT HIS CLUB.

CALL EVERYONE AND TELL THEM WE'RE NOT OPENING![1]

1:51 P.M., RUBY CALLS RESTAURANT OWNER RALPH PAUL AND OTHERS...

ISN'T THIS A TERRIBLE THING? RALPH, I CAN'T OPEN. YOU SHOULD CLOSE YOUR PLACE TOO![1]

A DALLAS POLICEMAN NAMED TIPPIT HAS JUST BEEN SHOT AND KILLED!

I KNOW HIM! I KNOW HIM![1]

LATER, AT A DELICATESSEN WHERE RUBY GOES TO BUY $22.00 WORTH OF COLD CUTS...[3]

JOE WHAT IS THIS GOING TO DO TO OUR BUSINESS? WE'RE GOING TO LOSE ALL OF THE CONVENTIONS![4]

YOU DON'T KNOW THIS, BUT I STARTED ALL OF MY PROGRAMS WITH A PATRIOTIC NUMBER!

DO THEY HAVE THE SON-OF-A-BITCH THAT DID IT? THEY SHOULD SHOOT HIM RIGHT AWAY![5]

RUBY ARRIVES AT HIS SISTER'S APARTMENT.

EVA, WHAT SHALL WE DO?

JACK, LET'S CLOSE FOR THREE DAYS. WE DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ANYWAY, BUT WE OWE IT TO...

RUBY THEN PLACES A CALL TO THE NEWSPAPER TO CHANGE HIS AD.

DO ME A FAVOR, LISTEN, USE MY SPACE AND SAY, "CLOSED FRIDAY, SATURDAY AND SUNDAY," AND DON'T TELL THE WEINSTEINS I DON'T CARE WHAT THE OTHER CLUBS ARE DOING. I WANT TO SCOOP THEM.[1]

AT LEAST FIVE WITNESSES SAY RUBY WENT NEXT INTO THE POLICE STATION AND ACTED AS A SPOTTER FOR THE PRESS..

WAS THAT SHERIFF DECKER?

NO THAT WAS CAPTAIN WILL FRITZ. YOU SPELL IT, W-I-L-L-F-R-I-T-Z-[10]

9:00 P.M. RUBY CALLS A BROTHER AND TWO SISTERS. THEN GOES TO TEMPLE. THE RABBI WAS SURPRISED THAT HE SAID NOTHING ABOUT THE ASSASSINATION.[11]

RABBI, I WANT TO THANK YOU FOR VISITING MY SISTER IN THE HOSPITAL...

AFTER SERVICES, RUBY DRIVES BY OTHER NIGHTCLUBS TO SEE IF THEY ARE OPEN. THE BALI-HAI IS OPEN...[12]

THE GAY NINETIES IS CLOSED.[13]

AT 10:30 P.M. STOPPING OFF AT PHIL'S DELICATESSEN. RUBY ORDERS 8 SANDWICHES AND 10 CELERY TONICS FOR POLICEMEN ON DUTY, THEN HE WALKS OVER TO A GROUP OF STUDENTS WHO HAVE AN EARLY EDITION OF THE NEXT MORNING'S PAPER.[14]

I'VE GOT SOME ADS HERE FOR MY CLUB... MAYBE, I'LL GIVE YOU FREE PASSES. NAH, YOU LOOK TOO YOUNG.

I'M OVER TWENTY-ONE.

WELL, DROP AROUND SOMETIME, AND MAYBE I'LL LET YOU IN.[15]

AT 11:30 P.M. RUBY GOES TO THE POLICE STATION FOR A PRESS CONFERENCE WITH OSWALD...

JACK, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

I BROUGHT THE SANDWICHES. NOTHING BUT KOSHER STUFF IS ALL I BRING[16] I'M INTERPRETING FOR A JEWISH NEWSPAPER.[17]

OSWALD ...WAS A MEMBER OF THE FREE CUBA COMMITTEE.

THE *FAIR PLAY* FOR CUBA COMMITTEE!

RUBY APPROACHES D.A. HENRY WADE AND JUSTICE OF THE PEACE JOHNSTON, TO WHOM HE GIVES A CLUB CARD...

HI, HENRY, DON'T YOU KNOW ME? I AM JACK RUBY, I RUN THE VEGAS CLUB.

THAT'S JACK RUBY. HE'S A VERY MEAN MAN. HE BIT SOME GUY'S NOSE OFF ONCE. HE FIGHT'S LIKE A WOMAN.[18]

YOU A REPORTER? HOW LONG ARE YOU GOING TO BE IN TOWN?

AS LONG AS IT TAKES TO DO THIS STORY.

COME ON OVER TO THE CLUB IF YOU GET A CHANCE. YOU CAN HAVE SOME DRINKS. THERE ARE GIRLS THERE.[19]

DO YOU WANT ME TO GET WADE FOR YOU?

AFTER A TRIP TO STATION **KLIF**, WHERE RUBY SITS IN ON 2 A.M. NEWSCAST AND SUGGESTS INTERVIEWER ASK WADE IF OSWALD WAS SANE. RUBY GOES TO TIMES HERALD, WHERE HE DEMONSTRATES HIS "TWISTBOARD" A GIMMICK HE IS PROMOTING.

POOR MRS. KENNEDY-JACKIE AND THE KIDS.[20] OSWALD'S A LITTLE WEASEL OF A GUY...[21]

I SCOOPED MY COMPETITORS WITH MY AD.[22] I HELPED OUT WADE DURING THE CONFERENCE. YOU SEE, I'M IN *GOOD* WITH THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY.[23]

4:30 A.M.- RUBY GOES HOME, WAKES HIS ROOMMATE, GEORGE SENATOR, AND CALLS CRAFARD AT THE CLUB.

GET OUT THE POLAROID AND MEET US ON THE STREET IN FRONT OF THE CLUB...[24]

THEY DRIVE TO A SPOT ON THE CENTRAL EXPRESSWAY.

THIS IS THE WORK OF THE JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY OR THE COMMUNIST PARTY OR MAYBE A COMBINATION OF BOTH. WE OUGHT TO KILL THE S.O.B.'S![25]

IMPEACH EARL WARREN

LOOKING FOR A CONNECTION BETWEEN THE RIGHT-WING AD AND THE BILLBOARD, THEY GO TO THE POST OFFICE TO EXAMINE THE CONTENTS OF THE BOX LISTED IN THE AD, #1792. UNABLE TO FIND OUT WHO RENTED THE BOX, THEY PEER INTO IT.

IT'S SO STUFFED WITH MAIL.[26]

SATURDAY, RUBY LEAVES HIS APARTMENT AROUND NOON AND DRIVES TO DEALEY PLAZA, WHERE, AGAIN, HE ACTS AS LOCAL ASSASSINATION GUIDE... TALKS TO REPORTERS...

THAT'S CAPTAIN FRITZ AND CHIEF CURRY OVER THERE LOOKING AT THE FLOWERS.[27]

RUBY'S NEXT STOP IS AT SOL'S TURF BAR. HE SHOWS THE PICTURES OF THE "WARREN" SIGN.

I KNOW WHO TO GIVE THESE PICTURES TO, I WANT IT TO BE A SCOOP.[28]

THEN HE CALLS STATION **KLIF**

I UNDERSTAND THEY ARE MOVING OSWALD OVER TO THE COUNTY SEAT. WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO COVER IT? I BELIEVE I CAN GET SOME NEWS STORIES. I'M A PRETTY GOOD FRIEND OF HENRY WADE.[29]

WHO THE DEVIL IS JACK RUBY?[30]

KLIF

9:30 P.M. NOV. 23. RUBY CALLS HARRY MEYERS, A FRIEND IN CHICAGO.

THOSE POOR PEOPLE! THOSE POOR PEOPLE! I HAVE TO DO SOMETHING![31]

AROUND MIDNIGHT HE GOES TO THE PAGO CLUB, SITS DOWN AND ORDERS A COKE...

WHY ARE YOU OPEN?

SUNDAY 8:30 A.M. RUBY IS AWAKENED BY A CALL FROM THE CLEANING LADY. HE IS CONFUSED.

ARE YOU COMING OVER? WHAT ARE YOU COMING OVER FOR?[32]

HE TAKES A SWIM IN HIS APARTMENT HOUSE OUTDOOR POOL.[33]

DURING THE MORNING, GEORGE SENATOR NOTICES RUBY PACING THE FLOOR, MUMBLING.

HIS LIPS ARE GOING. WHAT HE IS JABBERING, I DON'T KNOW. BUT HE IS REALLY PACING.

11:00 A.M. RUBY IS BEHIND THE WHEEL OF HIS WHITE 1960 OLDSMOBILE... TAKING A WRONG TURN BEHIND A BUS RUBY DRIVES INTO A PARKING LOT OPPOSITE THE POLICE STATION.[34]

11:17 A.M.--SENDS $25.00 BY WIRE TO KAREN BENNETT, A STRIPPER.

RUBY STRIDES 339 FT. AND 6 INCHES TO THE POLICE STATION.

11:21 A.M.

YOU KILLED MY PRESIDENT, YOU RAT![35]

JACK! JACK! YOU SON-OF-A-BITCH![36]

I HOPE THE SON-OF-A-BITCH DIES... YOU KNOW ME - YOU KNOW ME - *I'M JACK RUBY!*[37]

END

other guy will.' Jack was a reactionary." A what? "A reactionary—he reacted fast." (A stripper who worked for him told us, "Jack was a spastic." He was? "Yes—he acted suddenly.")

At The Silver Spur, there were many plays Jack had to take away. He was not a big man —five-foot-nine, 175 pounds—but he was brawny in the arms and shoulders, and fast, and deft at his tactic of the seized initiative. We found no memory, in the jumbled fight stories from his "bucket-of-blood" days, of his ever losing the play. He struck fast. Once, though, having struck, he left his hand too long in an opponent's face: "Dub" Dickerson chomped down on his finger and would not let go. By the time Jack shook him off, the flesh was mangled and one joint of his left index finger had to be amputated. Typically, Jack and Dickerson were friends when they met after this.

Even on South Ervay, Jack maintained strict, if eccentric, standards of decorum. "He didn't let no 'characters' in," one character told us. ("Characters," in Ruby's world, is the truncated form of crime-story phrases, like "suspicious characters" and "questionable characters.") "He threw me out four or five thousand times." The speaker is a wry young man with a sullen pout, Gilbert "Corky" Crawford. "I have a record, you see" (a five-page record of arrests, to be precise, often on charges of pandering), "and police would come in and sometimes take me out and sometimes take me to jail. So Jack said he didn't need my business." Did he ever throw you out physically? "Oh no!" Buddy Walthers, one of Sheriff Bill Decker's most promising young understudies (one of those who wear Decker's Dick-Tracy-style hat, not a Stetson), snorted at this. "He beat the hell out of Corky." Ruby, who despised "punks" and "characters," rarely found other ways of expressing disapproval. He moralized with his fists.

Decorum meant a great deal to Jack Ruby. He did not smoke or drink (his father was a drunkard). He rarely talked Yiddish (the language of his childhood); he was intent on perfecting his Bottom-the-Weaver English (his mother could not write her own name). Alas, the only verbal mastery he achieved was in the realm of imaginative obscenity. ("He could cuss straight on, like saying his prayers," one of his friends said admiringly.) And his ardor for decorum manifested itself primarily in a readiness to flatten any patron who put his feet on the table. His determination to run a "clean club" made many strippers wonder how they could find protection from his protection. One girl told Jack she was given her black eye by her husband, and she was leaving him. The next time the poor fellow appeared at the club, Ruby pitched him down the stairs, though the couple had been reconciled and the girl was pleading, "Jack, I don't *want* you to hit him."

In 1952, Ruby tried to open a new place, and lost both it and The Silver Spur. It was the first, and the harshest, of his business failures in Dallas. Eventually he got The Silver Spur back, but by now he had his eye on the "respectable" downtown clubs. His first real advance toward that goal came when he went in with Joe Bonds at The Vegas Club—which meant a switch from hillbilly music to rock-and-roll. He ran dance contests to bring in the young crowd, and kept the place even cleaner of "characters." "Oh yeah," Corky says, "he threw me out of The Vegas, too." Jack lived for this club—as manager, bouncer, advertising agent, promotor, M.C.—until the day when he took his farthest step up and moved into the center of town, right next to Abe Weinstein's Colony Club, back at 1312½, where "Pappy" had started in the Thirties. In 1961 he opened The Carousel, which he thought of always as his "high-class place," his first club with strippers and a real "show." He left the old club for Eva to manage; Bob Larkin, a giant blarneyer, became the "houseman" (polite for bouncer) of The Vegas.

"He carried a lot of money," Larkin told us. "That's why he kept a gun in the bank bag. I often carried the gun. At the end of the night, Jack would take the money out of the cash register and put it in the deposit bag; that's when he took out his piece and put it in his pocket. Whenever he was carrying the money, he kept his piece handy. Sometimes he had me tote money from The Vegas to The Carousel, or to the bank, so I had the gun." Did you put it in your pocket? "No. I didn't want it. I just left it in the bag." But Jack put it in his pants pocket? "Yes." Ready, if anyone reached for the money bag or asked for his roll, to take the play away.

Was Jack a good fighter? "Sure. He never hesitated. Once he dropped by the club while I was at the door. I had to handle a troublemaker and, before I even got started, Jack stepped between us and nailed him. I asked him, 'Jack, why did you do that? That's what you pay me for.' 'Don't ever stop me,' he said; 'I might lose my nerve.' "

Did you get along well with him? "Sure. He was good to me. When I left him and went to work next door [at Abe's Colony Club], I got stabbed three times up in the Colony's telephone booth. By the time they got me down to the ambulance, Jack was there, leaning over and asking me how I felt. He followed the ambulance, and came into the emergency room. A priest was trying to give me the last sacraments, but Jack shouldered him aside and came straight at me: 'What the hell, Bob! Freddy Bass had to pick his guts up and carry them after he got stabbed. You're as good a man as he was.' I tell you, it was the best medicine I got in that hospital. When I went into the operating room, he came right with me. They told him he couldn't stand there. He said he could watch through the door, couldn't he, and they let him. He was with me all through, in the recovery room and everything. He even offered to give me blood. When my own boss came to see me, there was his next-door rival already there. In fact, Jack told me I should sue Abe for getting stabbed in his club. I said, 'Aw, Jack, what would I do with all that money?' 'Come in as a partner at The Carousel.' He was always figuring the angles.

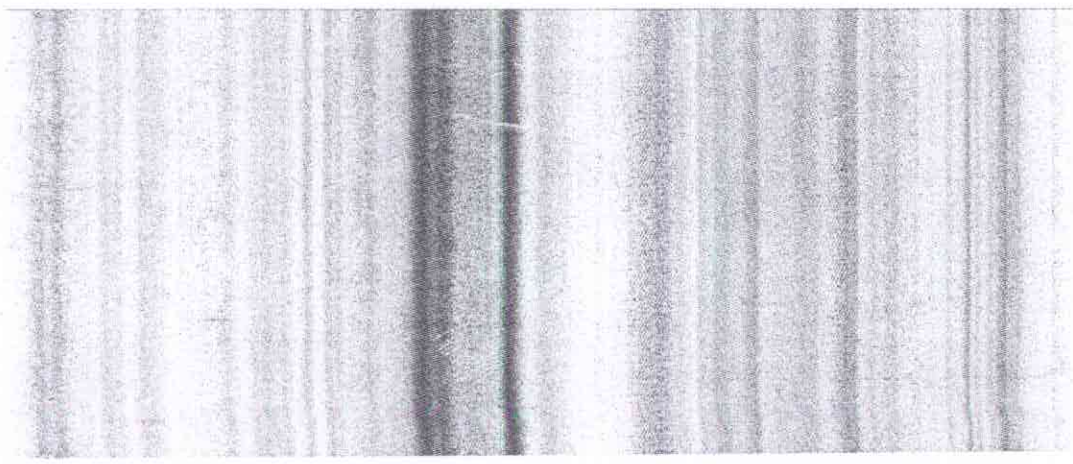
"He was a stickler for the law. He thought of himself as a kind of cop. He liked to do their job for them. If people came in after hours, he would frisk them to make sure they weren't still carrying their bottle. He'd even frisk some of the girls. Other times, he'd have his girls take lie-detector tests if he thought they were hustling out of his club. We had one girl who liked to tell everybody her troubles; she kept Joe Johnson at the club till four one morning. When Jack and I came in from the restaurant, Jack hit the ceiling. 'This isn't a goddam bedroom.' The girl swore they had just been talking, but he took her over to Fort Worth to take the lie-detector test. He liked those tests and things the police use."

As Bill Willis, the drummer, puts it, "Most of my neighborhood friends became hoods or cops. When I started playing in clubs, old pals would drop by to say a raid was coming. I just got up and left my drums behind, while the old pals went after their paddy wagon. Jack was the same: he thought of cops as friends, as the ones who made good, who stayed out of the gangs." Jack made quite an impression on the police at the outset: on South Ervay, he came to the rescue of two policemen—Officers Blankenship and Carlson—who were being beaten by three toughs.

When Jack was at The Vegas, his bandleader was the shy, proud Negro musician, Joe Johnson. Joe now plays the piano at a supper club before lugging his saxophone over to The Pretty Kitty Kat Klub, out by Love Airport, where his band is playing. This is the kind of club Ruby moved up to from The Silver Spur. It is a small place throbbing with the amplified beat that keeps dancers at their puppet-jerks in the cramped area left them for maneuver. At intervals, a pomaded young man takes the microphone and grunts back at the drum—five feet of silk suit and half a foot of elevator heels, mouthing syllables as unshaped as the drum thuds. At unmercifully briefer intervals, two bovine girls make bare-limbed efforts at the spasm and lurch called "go-go dancing." It looks like a preternaturally violent form of hiccuping. Patrons shout ill-mannered "requests" at Johnson, who keeps his smile determinedly in place.

There is no talking to Johnson (or to anyone) in this club; but Denny's is just across the highway, and by one-thirty Joe can escape the inexplicable cries for more of the same ("same" being one of this exaggerating crowd's rare accuracies). Joe carries himself with a pained deference; Texas long ago "taught him his place"—or thinks it did. But he is accepted at Denny's, which, from one to five a.m., is taken over by "show-business folk." "They are night people," says Bill Willis (who does not join them but goes home to his wife, an interior decorator). "If success has to be bought by working from eight to five, they don't want it. It's a grimy world, but it has the promise of glamour, and they live on that. At Denny's or Brinks —in Jack's day, at Lucas B and B Restaurant, right next to The Vegas—you meet the table-hoppers, coming to tell you that so-and-so is thinking of taking them into their act, or so-and-so is writing them a song."

The diner is crowded: aging charmers, male and female; sculpted coiffures, male and female; self-consciously "casual" outfits,



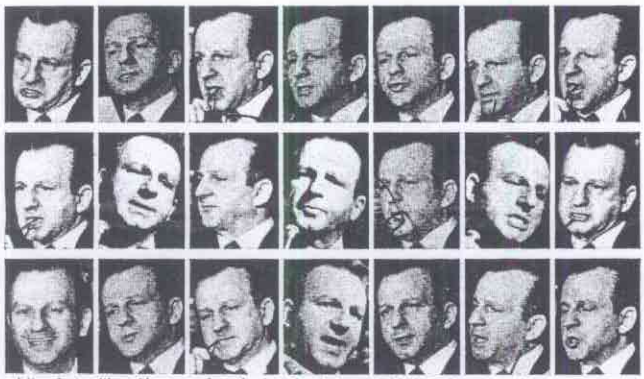
girls with Tower-of-Pisa hairdos, raspberry-popsicle pants, dragonfly eyelashes. These fine-featured rough-skinned girls, their eyes framed in velvet, their figures not good enough for the tight pants that proclaim them, are treated to elaborately gallant leers. This is the world Ruby aspired to when he came to Dallas. He was on the outskirts of it for years, got one foot in it with The Vegas, moved into its center with Carousel.

Denny's is at its rush hour, and we cannot get a seat until Bob Larkin comes in and cons a booth from the diner's "mayder dee." Larkin is now a private investigator for a team of lawyers who have to know what is going on in this world. Bob knows. He moves from table to table histrionically hugging girls and ducking a short punch at each man's arm. Bill Howard, an old friend of Ruby's, arrives Thunderbird-wafted to talk about his renovated Stork Club ("I was the first to bring the go-go girl to Dallas"). Howard invests in oil, and once got Jack out of a disastrous venture in Oklahoma wells ("He plunged into things. Jack was always a first-puncher"). Howard ran a club in Miami for a while, where Jack stopped by to visit him while traveling on a free ticket to Havana. Sam and Joe Campisi, who run the Egyptian Lounge in Dallas but skip over to Las Vegas whenever they can, come into Denny's after their own restaurant closes. Joe Campisi liked to go to The Carousel to watch Ruby in action: "He was the best goddam show in town."

For this crowd, Dallas is partly a tryout town for Las Vegas, the new world's New Haven. Members of the Bottoms Up troupe, when they mince in, stir widening ripples: they have just played Vegas and are haloed with its neon. Anyone with a Vegas connection—especially if the connection carries a perfumy hint of the expensive underworld—is a celebrity. People who were children when Benny Binion and Herbert Noble ran the gambling in Dallas claim to have been their friends. Even now, when a man with a "reputation" (like R.D. Matthews) stops by Denny's the night people eat their scrambled eggs in awe. Just before the small-time Dallas gambler Lewis McWillie moved on to Vegas, he played the *padrone* to his old pal Jack Ruby, sending him that cut-rate ticket to visit Cuba. In an expansive mood, McWillie once thought he would acquire a gun like Jack's; but when Jack obligingly sent him one C.O.D. to Vegas, McWillie's wife would not let him pick it up; the package came back unpaid for. Disillusioning, no doubt; but the night people are still dazzled by the town Jack's "second club" was named for.

Joe Johnson does not talk except in short answers. Yes, he worked for Jack a long time. Yes, Jack frisked customers. Yes, Jack took that girl to Fort Worth for a lie-detector test. Yes, Jack liked to show his club off to the cops. But what kind of man was he? "He made me part of his family. He never made me feel ill at ease because I'm a Negro. He always remembered to throw a party for me on my birthday." How would you compare the Kitty Kat to The Vegas? "Well, my band is more versatile now. We're getting so we will be able to play *all kinds* of engagements." Always the promise of glamour.

For Ruby the promise was fulfilled in The Carousel. "This is a f—— high-class place" he would assure doubters as he threw them down the stairs. To get some idea of that club, one must walk the block from Commerce Street to Jackson—from the dust of the Police Gym to the smoke that final-filters cellophane-dyed lights in Barney Weinstein's Theatre Lounge. It is a place still amused or made uneasy by memories of Jack. Every member of the band once worked for him—the drummer Bill Willis, "Mr. Texas" of 1952; trumpeter Johnny Anderson, once in Stan Kenton's band; pianist Billy Simmons, who wrote *M-i-s-s-i-s-s-i-p-p-i*. In this world men reach the top of their short ladder rapidly and take, without strong feelings of loss, the short fall down. It is a world of reputations won and lost, or never lost because not won; claimed anyway, and enjoyed as if bestowed by crowds enthusiastically.



After forty, it's said, a man has the face he deserves. This is Ruby's in various moods. Faces to meet the faces he met. Not distinguished, perhaps, but adequate for the world he moved in.

Crammed backstage in a tiny dressing room, Bill Willis looks like an overgrown adolescent. A mild-mannered, non-smoking, non-drinking gymnast and devourer of books, he wears black suede boots and has long blond hair his hands mother and his eyes seek out in this wall or that of the mirrored room. "Hell, man, Dallas is still a shoot-out town. When I was wrestling as 'Mr. Texas,' I had people see me on television and pile in the car to come over and whip me. I knew the signs. 'Oh-oh,' I'd say, 'what can I do for *you*?' There are people who go out on the streets here looking for someone to 'draw' on them. They have the look. You stare it down; or, if that won't work, take them on. A smirk means they are confident you won't even draw. There's nothing to do with the smirk but mess it up, right now."

And Jack understood the shoot-out code? "He had to *live*, didn't he?" What about the view that he fought in sudden fits, not knowing what he did? "Well, the girl who said that is not very trustworthy. No, Jack knew. He didn't *want* to hesitate. He had to take the play. One time a rough boy started trouble and the M.C. hit him, then Jack hit him, but he kept getting up. I went over and put a pin on him, and we were at the top of the stairs, this boy kicking at Jack and Jack cussing him, when some well-dressed people started coming up the stairs. Jack instantly said, just as cool as you please, 'Come right up, folks! Step right over them! Just a couple of bums!' "

We told Bill a story given us by one of Jack's waitresses. She had just begun working for him, and was underage. When a drunk got boisterous, Jack took her back into the kitchen. "Stay here," he said, "there's going to be trouble; the police will come." He went out and pounded the fellow, then held him for the arrival of the officers. Does that sound like Jack? "Oh, yeah! One night he had two Vice Squad men at a table by the old hallway (he tore that wall out later, and moved the box office forward, but the hall used to lead to the stairs). There was a guy at the bar who wouldn't pay and wouldn't leave. Jack went over to him several times, but got nowhere. So Jack grabbed him, rushed him right into the hall past the Vice men, quietly beat the shit out of him, and threw him downstairs; then picked up the conversation with the Vice men, who never knew anything had happened."

What made him fight so much? "He used to say, 'This is my home. I don't want people spoiling it.' He wouldn't let anybody get away with anything." But his club became known as a rough place precisely because he fought so much! "Yeah, well, Jack tried to please, but he usually did the wrong thing for reaching his goal. It's like his big words to impress you. They always came out wrong. He'd say things like, 'It's been a lovely precarious evening.' Or he'd tell a girl, 'You make me feel very irascible.' " (Another of Jack's acquaintances told us he would say, "In lieu of the situation, let's do this.")

He was a Mr. Malaprop? "Yeah, he always did the very thing he was attacking. Like the time when Frank Fisher, our trumpeter, was lousing up his part, and shouting

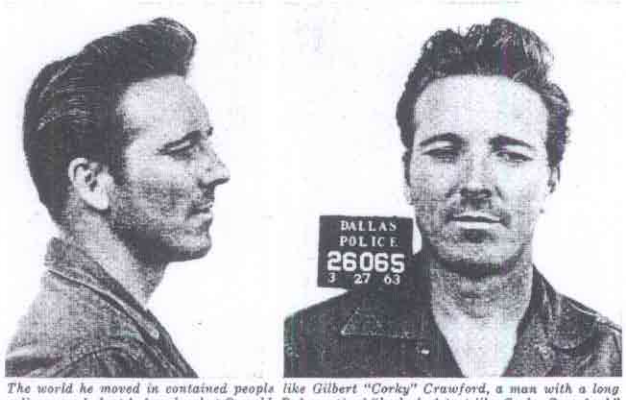
insults back at the audience. Jack called out to him across the club, 'Frank, you c--------, you got no *class*!'" (One of Ruby's employees told the F.B.I. that Jack beat him up because he had ordered the employees not to fight and this fellow got in a brawl anyway.)

Didn't Ruby's antics drive customers away? "No! They came to see *him*. The strippers would be working away up front and people would turn around to watch Jack. Man, we had a *club*. We had a *show*." Was it enjoyable for the employees then? "Sure, we all liked Jack. There was a circle of us, the steady ones. Tammi, and Andrew, and Alice the washroom attendant, and a couple of the waitresses: Diana the dingbat, and Alice, and Nisi, and Bonnie. Jack was hard on some, like Jada; but they asked for it. They were tough customers."

"Bill!" The M.C., a man named Benny, sticks his face in, a sad-eyed greenish face, wearing the greenish appendage that, out under lights, is only mildly unconvincing as a cigar—at any rate, more convincing than the slab of black moss he covers his baldness with. "Time to go." The intermission is over, and Bill must climb to his balcony seat out in front of the piano, behind his drums.

The Theatre Lounge is owned by Barney, one of the Weinstein brothers who monopolized the downtown strip business until Ruby came along. The Weinsteins like to pretend that Ruby was not a competitor; but, looking around Barney's club (which is bigger than Abe's), one finds many veterans of The Carousel: all of the band; this week's star stripper; one of the best champagne girls; many of the "professionals" who drop in. The Theatre Lounge has a U-shaped balcony which is, technically, a "private club"—making Barney's the only strip joint that can serve mixed drinks. The lights are low; it makes the motions of the champagne girls less obvious. Up on the left there is an iridescent murk of bottles and a robin-breasted bartender. To the right, the glitter of metal on his drums marks the spot where Bill Willis is nested in darkness. On the stage, the first of the evening's four strippers is flouncing through her garmented overture ("Number four girl goes first"). There is a fringe of oglers around the runway, but most of the tables are empty. Back from the stage, below the overhang of balcony, things brighten near the cashier's lighted cranny (*her* motions are not to be obscure). An all-American college-boy type, the bouncer, takes us around through the kitchen into Barney's office.

Barney does not think much of Ruby's business practices. "He was unethical. He used to go and give out Carousel passes to people lined up in front of Abe's club. Besides, he raffled off turkeys, or dishes, or anything to bring in the customers." (This, in some way Barney takes to be obvious, sullied the purity of Strip.) "Jack had seven fights a week. I've had three fights in thirty years." Not that the business is without its risks. Abe Weinstein told us of the time when some hoodlum type was dating a young stripper, back in the Thirties. It was the girl's first job, her mother had asked Abe to look after her, and he told her to break it off. "So this character came in one afternoon while I was in the office alone. 'Abe,' he says, 'I'm going to kill you.' 'Well,' I said, 'I understand how you feel. But killing me won't do any good. I could see it a lot better if you just beat the shit out of me.' That got him, so he sat down and we talked a while. But that cured me. I never messed in the lives of my performers after that. They're not worth it. Do you know a moral, Christian, God-fearing girl who'll stand up there and take her clothes off?" Did Jack get involved in the girls' lives? "He was all mixed up with them. He had to be in on everything."



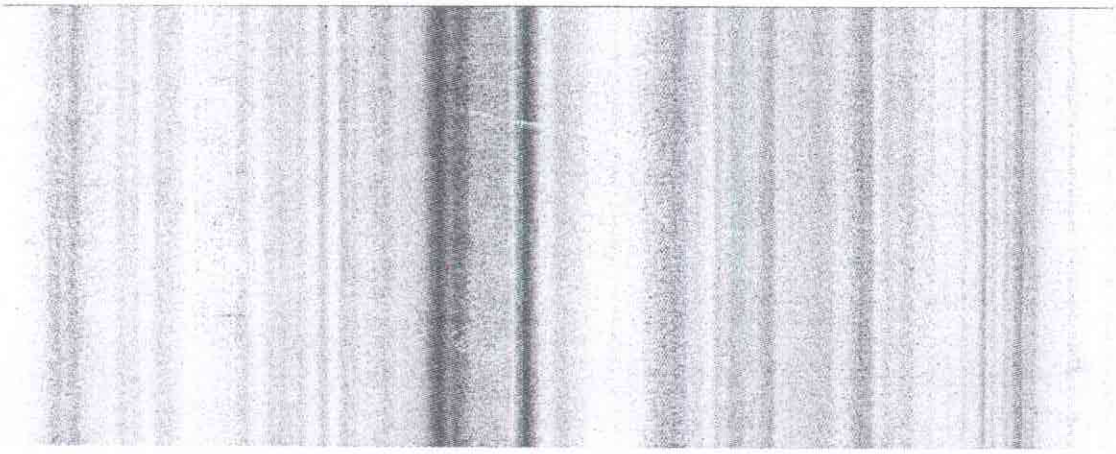
The world he moved in contained people like Gilbert "Corky" Crawford, a man with a long police record. Just before he shot Oswald, Ruby noticed "he looked just like Corky Crawford."

Barney agrees with his brother. "Jack had to *be* there, even when he wasn't wanted. I put on a benefit for one of our performers who died, and he came offering to sell ten tickets. But he never let well enough alone. He met people as they came in that night, and tried to get them to buy *more* tickets. I said, 'Jack, leave them alone. They already bought their tickets.' So then he wanted to sell *special* tickets for the best seats; he wanted to be my usher; he wanted to help, and he only got in the way. Once he dropped by when my houseman had not come in. He said, 'Don't worry, I'll stay and take care of any trouble.' I told him, 'I don't *want* you to, Jack.' You know, he doesn't stop trouble, he starts it. But he stayed anyway. He had a wonderful heart. When he hardly knew me, he read about my mother's funeral in the newspaper and came to it. He just had to get into everything, including the excitement of that weekend Kennedy died."

Do you think that was his attitude? "Sure, that's where the limelight was. He always wanted class. That's why he would hang around here. He said, 'Someday I'm going to buy a Cadillac and a Jaguar in the same week, like Barney.' That was his idea of class. But these are nothing to me. My idea of money is investing in the market; and my idea of a good time is going to Las Vegas. Jack never used to go there."

Barney is tolerant of Jack, considering his foibles as clumsy attempts to be Barney. It is a tolerance shared by others. Milton Joseph for instance, a jewelry store on the hoof, put it this way: "He wanted to be able to do this" (out comes a big roll, hundreds arranged around the outside as big strawberries are scattered on top in the supermarket). "He had one?" (Out with his gun.) "I have five." (We fear he will turn out pocket after lethal pocket to display this arsenal.) "He always wanted to be at the openings and closings of shows. But I was at more. He wanted to know the visiting movie stars. Face it, Jack was jealous of me. Now, you just met me, right?" Right. "If you were to see me again, would you remember me?" Undoubtedly. "Why?" It's hard to say. "The characteristics, perhaps?" (He shoots his cuffs with wide-flung hands as if stabbed from behind, then folds his arms with giant watch face flashing at us—a Victorian clock stand, china "Artful Dodger" from a line portraying Dickens' characters.) "The characteristics? The cigar? The star sapphire?" Yes, probably that. Did Jack shoot Oswald to be in the limelight? "Sure, I know. As soon as I heard Oswald was dead, I went down to help Tom Howard, Jack's lawyer. I became Tom's bailiff." His what? "I mean, if you came into his office, I would ask your name. 'Mr. X and Mr. Y? From Esquire? Fine, step in this room.' And then I would guard the door." Would what? "Guard the door. There was no telling what was going to happen. So when Jack's sister Eva came, with the newsmen Tony Zoppi and Hugh Aynesworth, I showed them straight into Tom's office, and stood guard. But Eva said I had to leave." You were guarding the door from the *inside*? "Yes." What did you do when she said you had to leave? "I guarded it from the outside." Would you say you and Jack were much like each other? "A little. So they tell me. But Jack had no class."

Barney takes us out of his office, which contains such exotica as a nude jigsaw puzzle, back into the kitchen. The atmosphere is homey; Barney's wife is giving out her cookies; no one drinks anything but coffee. Even the family pet is here, a forty-year-old parrot named Panama—one "exotic" whose wardrobe never dims. Pampered and taught



The Dallas Morning News

bad words by the envious girls, he shifts his shot-silk eyes complacently and ruffles velvet feathers. He is the Weinstein bird. "It is time for Nikki." Barney takes us out to see his star, Nikki Joye, who is now working second billing. She cannot, for a while, turn fast on her athletic knees; a surgeon has just mined them for the cartilage ground loose when she works hard. She remains Barney's favorite, though she is disillusioningly thick below the waist. She has been with him twelve years, from the time she lied about her age at fifteen and bared the breasts that have been her visible means of support ever since. She twirls warily tonight, relying more on winks, pouts, serpenting tongue, mimed kisses than on drumbeat spasms. Makeup and shifting light do not blot out the incisions under each kneecap. Out at the end of the runway she whispers "Ouch" to her fond employer, who runs his thumb reflectively across a house matchbook (nudes on the cover, with little cardboard bosses for the breasts).

Above, in his aerie, Bill Willis concocts hysteria on his druma. "That's when I write my playa," he told us. What plays? "Oh, there is my *Bug in a Sycamore Tree*. A man is whittling on his porch one morning when something black splotches his hand. 'Son,' he says, 'what are we breeding in the bug way these days?' 'Wa-al,' says the boy, looking up, 'in that tree I see a ladybug, a cicada, and a Volkswagen.' The VW is driven by a candidate for office who wanted a divorce. He figured on holding out till after election, but his wife ran off the day before. He thought what the hell and took off with his girl. But a strong wind drove them off the road, off a cliff, and into the tree. The candidate, you see, is now parked illegally close to a voting booth. But they cannot take him away without chopping down the tree, and the tree is the last sycamore in Sycamore Junction." He winks at us, "How's that for a dramatic dilemma?" He was known for pulling Jack's leg, too. When Jack said he would match whatever his employees gave to charity at Christmastime, Bill (the one chosen to hold the money because he does not drink) came to him and said, "Here it is, Jack—four hundred dollars." Jack had his four hundred counted out before Bill told him they had only scraped up fifty.

Nikki has spun herself to a controlled climax, arching her upper torso out while, deftly, she veils her stomach bulge—a true pro can fake it. It is time for the penultimate thrill—the M.C.'s Al Jolson routine (it had to come, sooner or later; better sooner, so it comes later). Bill Willis leads the "spontaneous" applause when the lights go out and Benny moves around with tie, gloves and shoes lit up, a walking jukebox, Al Wurlitzer. Benny dampens the effect, of course, by his preliminary bustlings—turning on the amplifier, moving out the glow spot, starting the Jolson tape. It is like watching Houdini put the rabbit in his hat beforehand. Benny never gets beyond the obviousness of his wig.

Number one girl goes last: tonight, Tammi True, Barney's present star and Jack's columna. She is short and energetic, throwing herself orgasmically back and back against the drive of Bill Willis' drum. Nikki's action was all above the waist, Tammi's is mainly below: she has what Jack called a "loose ass," which her act is designed to mix and stir with maximum agitation. One of Jack's waitresses, in a catty moment, accused her of having a *creased* ass. The next day Tammi came in with net stockings sewed to her G-string (which is waist-high in back). She pulls that G-string far out in front, and shrieks surrenderingly (a trick brought to Dallas by Jack's last star, the meteoric Jada).

Back into the dressing room with a perspiring Bill, followed in a moment by a blonde perspiring Tammi. She is smaller than she looked oscillating under lights. She blinks dark half-stars of eyelash down (chiming silently with the pasties that star her breasts), sets her tired doll's face (rosily mummified in makeup), and says: "I won't say anything against that man." Why not? "I understood him. I'm like him." How so? "I have a quick temper too. I don't normally do what Jack did; but when the time comes —did you hear what I did to Alice?" No. "Well, I caught her in the john and beat her into the trash barrel. I told her that was where she belonged." We hear Jack fired you that night. "Yes. I *told* you I understand him."

Bill levers his shoulders out of the room. Tammi, glancing after him, says in her gravelly warble, "A good boy, Bill. But he takes liberties." The Victorian locution sits oddly with this girl's truck-driverisms—until she makes it clear that Bill dreamily makes her throw, in mid-grind, an unprepared bump or two: "He's writing plays again." When we ask her about the story of Bill holding a man down at the top of the stairs while Jack welcomed customers and told them to ignore the bums, Tammi remembers it with great concern for the dancer left onstage when Bill abandoned the drums: the poor thing had to work her pelvis without acoustic punctuation.

What kind of man was Jack? "A good man." Why? "Well, he found out I was living with my children in an apartment house full of gay boys. It was $25 a week, all I could afford. He was shocked. He said, 'You shouldn't be living next to queers.' He paid the deposit on my apartment in the house where he lived." Did he have any designs on you? "No." Why not? Wasn't he interested in girls? "He laid some, and he liked the others." And he liked you? "Yes. Of course, we had our clashes." For instance. "Well, he never let an M.C. tell racial or religious jokes—not about any race. One time he thought I was off base. In December, I stitched 'Merry' across the net on one butt, and 'Xmas' on the other. He came backstage and said, 'I don't think it's good for you to have Christ's name on your ass.' I told him, 'For Christ's sake, Jack, it only says *X*-mas. Do you want me to put Yom on one butt and Kippur on the other?' That finished him. He just mumbled something about thinking it over."

Tammi had never been hit by Ruby, nor seen a women hit by him. "Of course, he used to talk big. He was always going to beat our ass, but nothing ever came of it." She thinks him capable of hitting a woman. "*They* are ready to hit—*I* was—why shouldn't he be?" The girls Tammi works with are a tough crew; at the first hint of trouble, they have one shoe off, their weapon. After Tammi beat up her good friend Alice, they went on being good friends—like Jack and "Dub" Dickerson.

Did he ever talk to you about politics? "No. But he liked that picture of Caroline in high heels. And he always turned the TV on in the back of the club when the President spoke—an Inaugural Address or State of the Union Message. The press asked me whether Jack was a queer. I said no, and they took that as if I had been proving he wasn't in bed. It wasn't true, but I don't care what they say about me so long as they don't lie about Jack so much."

Time for the mummy-doll to dress again (so she can undress) and put on her stage pout. Shortly after she leaves, Bill returns. Tammi is loyal to Jack, isn't she? "She's a good girl. She's steady and hardworking, and keeps a good home for her grandmother and children. At least she's not a lesbian." Are most of the strippers? "Well, many. You should see them fight over the green girls who come in." Why is this? "Oh, it's narcissism, I guess. They're making love to *themselves* out there. The only bodies they're interested in are women's." (In the other Weinstein club, Buddy Raymon, an emaciated comedian turned bartender, gave us *his* interpretation: "When they have been pawed so many times by so many guys, they begin to think there *must* be something better." One of the strippers told us she amuses herself by dreaming up tortures; she is the one who supplements her income with labors to titillate an impotent old man.)

What did Jack think of these girls? "He worried about them. He said he wanted no prostitutes working for him. But he didn't know what went on. He was generous when they got in trouble, bailing them out, loaning them money to get home or come back to work. A girl named Bonnie called from New Orleans and asked for money to get out of a hot-check charge and back to Dallas. He said, 'Who the hell is Bonnie?' We told him, and he sent her the money; but he didn't remember who she was."

Did he ever talk about politics? "Nah, he wasn't really interested. He was patriotic and everything, but he would have been that way about any President. What impressed him about the Kennedys was that they were in authority *and* they had glamour. Just like movie stars, he'd say. One day he claimed he saw an actress out at Love Airport—I think it was Rhonda Fleming or Arlene Dahl —and went right over to join her for lunch. He came home happy as a lark. Another time, I had gone to see the American Ballet Theatre with my wife, and we showed him the program; in it Jackie Kennedy was posing with members of the troupe. He said, 'Isn't that wonderful? Her as famous as a star, and going to see something cultural like that!' He asked me later, 'Do you think she *really* cares about ballet?' 'Sure, Jack,' I said. He seemed relieved: 'Isn't that wonderful?' He would come up and ask me things like, 'Is Leonard Bernstein really that good a musician?' *(Continued on page 153)*

ndrew Armstrong, The Carousel bartender: "You can't write about Jack's life outside the club. There wasn't any." Sherry Lynn (center) and iana Hunter, occasional strippers at the club. "Jack loved children. Children and dogs," Diana says. Ruby paid for an operation for her daughter.
otograph by Carl Fischer

Ava gags, pushes the horn-rims flat against her nose, and pulls us through the lobby. Nobody recognizes her. "Drink time, baby!" she whispers, shoving me toward a side stairway that leads down to The Regency Bar.

"Do you know who *that* was?" asks an Iris Adrian type with a mink-dyed fox on her arm as Ava heads for the bar. We check coats and umbrellas and suddenly we hear that soundtrack voice, hitting E-flat.

"You *sonuvabitch*! I could buy and sell you. How *dare* you insult my friends? Get me the manager!"

Larry is at her side. Two waiters are shushing Ava and leading us all to a corner booth. Hidden. Darker than the Polo Lounge. Hide the star. This is New York, not Beverly Hills.

"It's that turtleneck sweater you're wearing," whispers Larry to me as the waiter seats me with my back to the room.

"They don't like me here, the bastards. I never stay in this hotel, but Fox is paying, so what the hell? I wouldn't come otherwise. They don't even have a jukebox, for Chrissake." Ava flashed a smile in Metrocolor and orders a large ice-tea glass filled with straight tequila. "No salt on the side. Don't need it."

"Sorry about the sweater—" I begin.

"You're beautiful. Gr-r-r!" She laughs her Ava laugh and the head rolls back and the little blue vein bulges on her neck like a delicate pencil mark.

Two tequilas later ("I *said* no salt!") she is nodding grandly, surveying the bar like the Dowager Empress in the Recognition Scene. Talk buzzes around her like hummingbird wings and she hears nothing. Larry is telling about the time he got arrested in Madrid and Ava had to get him out of jail and the student is telling me about N.Y.U. Law School and Ava is telling *him* she doesn't believe he's only twenty-six years old and can he prove it, and suddenly he looks at his watch and says Sandy Koufax is playing in St. Louis.

"You're kidding!" Ava's eyes light up like cherries on a cake. "Let's go! Goddamit we're going to St. Louis!"

"Ava, darlin', I gotta go to work tomorrow." Larry takes a heavy sip of his Grasshopper.

"Shut up, you bugger. If I pay for us all to go to St. Louis we go to St. Louis! Can I get a phone brought to this table? Someone call Kennedy airport and find out what time the next plane leaves. I *love* Sandy Koufax! I *love* Jews! God, sometimes I think I'm Jewish myself. A Spanish Jew from North Carolina. *Waiter!*"

The student convinces her that by the time we got to St. Louis they'd be halfway through the seventh inning. Ava's face falls and she goes back to her straight tequila.

"Look at 'em, Larry," she says. "They're such babies. Please don't go to Vietnam." Her face turns ashen. Julie leaving the showboat with William Warfield singing *Ol' Man River* in the fog on the levee. "We gotta do it. . . ."

"What are you talkin' about, darlin'?" Larry shoots a look at the law student who assures Ava he has no intention of going to Vietnam.

". . . didn't ask for this world, the buggers made us do it. . . ." A tiny bubble bath of sweat breaks out on her forehead and she leaps up from the table. "My God, I'm suffocating! Gotta get some air!" She turns over the glass of tequila and three waiters are flying at us like bats, dabbing and patting and making great breathing noises.

Action!

The N.Y.U. student, playing Chance Wayne to her Alexandra Del Lago, is all over the place like a trained nurse. Coats fly out of the checkroom. Bills and quarters roll across the wet tablecloth. Ava is on the other side of the bar and out the door. On cue, the other customers, who have been making elaborate excuses for passing our table on their way to the bathroom, suddenly give great breathy choruses of "Ava" and we are through the side door and out in the rain.

Then as quickly as it started it's over. Ava is in the middle of Park Avenue, the scarf falling around her neck and her hair blowing wildly around the Ava eyes. Lady Brett in the traffic, with a downtown bus as the bull. Three cars stop on a green light and every taxi driver on Park Avenue begins to honk. The autograph hunters leap through the polished doors of The Regency and begin to scream. Inside, still waiting coolly behind the potted palm, is Celia, oblivious to the noise, facing the elevators, firmly clutching her postcards. No need to risk missing Ava because of a minor commotion on the street. Probably Jack E. Leonard or Edie Adams. Catch them next week at Danny's.

Outside, Ava is inside the taxi flanked by the N.Y.U. student and Larry, blowing kisses to the new chum, who will never grow to be an old one. They are already turning the corner into Fifty-seventh Street, fading into the kind of night, the color of tomato juice in the headlights, that only exists in New York when it rains.

"Who was it?" asks a woman walking a poodle.

"Jackie Kennedy," answers a man from his bus window. ###

"YOU ALL KNOW ME! I'M JACK RUBY!"

(*Continued from page 87*) I told him he was, and he was happy. He didn't like phonies, and he didn't trust himself in sizing up the cultural ones. He knew I read a lot, and he used to ask me about them—or ask me what some big word meant.

"The night before Kennedy's assassination, he was up on the stage to demonstrate a twistboard he was promoting. 'Even President Kennedy tells us to get more exercise,' he said. A heckler shouted, 'That bum!' 'Don't ever talk that way about the President,' Jack shot back. The next day, when he called me all broken up by the assassination, he said, 'Remember that man making fun of President Kennedy in the club last night?' "

What else did he say? "Well, he was crying and carrying on: 'What do you think of a character like that killing the President?' I was trying to calm him down. I said, 'Jack, he's not normal; no normal man kills the President on his lunch hour and takes the bus home.' But he just kept saying, 'He killed our President.' "

"Pappy" Dolsen pokes his head into the little box where we are cramped perspiringly. He eases in, vested, suit-coated, overcoated, and stays for some time without visible discomfort. He is about seventy, a night animal, mothbally with age and wearied by a thousand petty violences; but under the liverish skin his bones still show the blueprint of a handsome man. In the Thirties he ran

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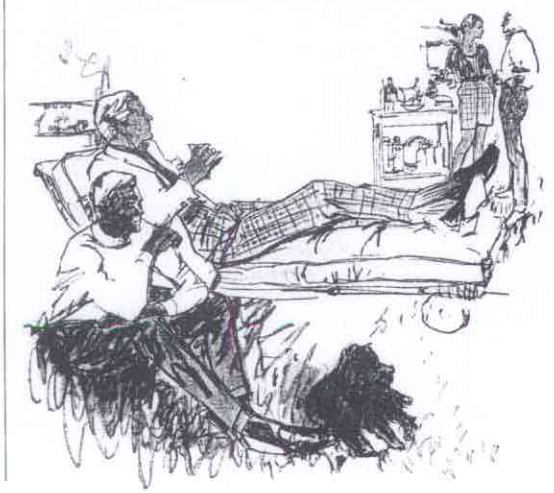

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glamorous, dangerous places, he was like a club owner in some Bogart film—the gentleman tough, on equally good terms with the hoods and the cops and the leading citizens. But after giving up his partnership with Benny Binion (at Pappy's 66) and Abe Weinstein (at the Colony Club), Pappy lost his ambitious clubs out in the suburbs to the creeping local "dry" laws of Texas. Now he is a theatrical agent, booking girls in and out of the strip joints—not really needed around the two Weinstein clubs, but every night making the circuit of those cheap clubs that spread like brushfire along the edge of Dallas—places where the girls strip on the floor, not onstage; where the lights can work little of their magic; where they have little enough to work on in the first place. Pappy goes in, flirts with the studiously coy beginners, creakingly clarkgables them, takes the mike from young M.C.'s. Backstage now at the Theatre Lounge, he tells us how he keeps toughs off with his fists—or with *this* (with many fumblings and snags, he pulls out an ugly toy, a tear-gas gun). Could you beat Jack? "Hell, no. He hit you quick, and never backed up. Even if it wasn't his fight, he would step in, in a second. I remember once I was outside the Baker Hotel and there was some kind of demonstration over the Hungarian revolution. One guy was going to poke me for nothing, but Jack came along just then and in no time flattened this guy and someone else who came up to help him."

You were friends then? "Hell, no. He was always mad at me for not getting him bigger stars. He said I was favoring the Weinsteins, and he tried to get A.G.V.A. [the strippers' union] after me. But I got him his best star, Jada; and he cut me out of my commission on her."

Did that end your dealings with him? "Until the assassination [Jada left him a couple of days before it]. On the day before he killed Oswald, he called me and said, 'I did you wrong, Pappy; but I'll make it up to you. I'm going places in show business, and when I do, you're going with me. I'll call you back tonight.'" That was Saturday? "Yes." Did he call you back? "No." Have you told anyone about this? "Only Barney, on the day after Jack killed Oswald." (Barney confirmed this, but Pappy's memory, we were told, tends to get mixed with his imagination.)

Time for the third show out front. Bill suggests we talk to Diana. Diana Hunter is a champagne girl who worked for Jack five years. She is lustrous-eyed, teen-age-awkward, dishearteningly experienced, with a little-girl voice and fingernails cruelly gnawed; mother of four children, survivor of eight miscarriages, and just out of the hospital from a suicide attempt. "I did the pill bit—seventeen sleeping pills, a pint of whiskey, and twenty kidney pills. My husband left me. I was in Parkland Hospital when they brought Jack in with his cancer. Eva came to see me, crying and hysterical."

Diana is a good champagne girl. No one can help pitying her, doing things for her, helping her in immediate terms (thereby, over the long range, sinking her deeper in voracious spiritual acids). Jack used to say, "Alice, what can I do with Diana when she turns those spaniel eyes on me?" She knows her power, laughs at it and uses it even as she tells us of it. She has a kind of silly innocence that makes her always the seduced one, even for the thousandth time.

The economics of the champagne girl is vital to running a club in Dallas, where the law keeps strip joints like Jack's from serving liquor. The house can supply "setups"—expensive ice-and-mix accommodation for those who bring their own bottles in a bag. (If you arrive without the canonical paper bag, you are given one at the door.) But setups and beer will not give the clubs a working margin of profit; that must come from the second part of the "beer and wine" permit—from champagne. The clubs pay $1.98 a bottle for it, turban the label in the customary towel (never more welcome than here), and sell it for $18.50. The $1.50 change from a twenty usually goes to the waitress as her tip. The champagne girl gets $2.50 for every bottle she persuades "her fellow" to buy. It is her job to get rid of the bottles fast and move on to a second or third with this fellow, or to a second or third fellow. The indispensable instrument for this process is the "spit glass," a frosted glass of "ice water" (i.e. ice) frequently changed. The girl's mouth is simply a ladle for moving the cheap commodity from a thin-stemmed glass to a tall frosted one.

"I was so dumb," Diana tells us, "when I began. I was really *drinking* the stuff. I thought it dishonest not to. Jack had to take me aside and tell me: 'Diana, you're not going to make any money that way. All you'll do is ruin your kidneys. I like you, and I'd like for you to make me some money. So remember: selling champagne is a game, just like chess. The man wants to go to bed with you, and if he does, he wins. You want to get his money, and if you do, and don't give him anything in return, you win.' I've worked in a lot of places since, and that's the best advice I was ever given."

When did you go to work for Jack? "When I was eighteen. I had tried out in Barney's Amateur Night for strippers, but I couldn't dance, so I answered Jack's ad for a waitress. But I was so stupid, like a scared rabbit, I wasn't making any money. Then one day I had to bring my oldest girl into Dallas to the eye doctor." How many children did you have? "Three." You were eighteen? "Yes. I was married at fourteen. I told you I was stupid. Anyway, I knew Jack had Cokes and some food in the kitchen of the club, and I had no money to buy lunch for Lila, so I took her up there in the afternoon. Jack loved children. Children and dogs. He gave her grape soda and pie—Lila remembers that pie to this day. She wrote him a letter to thank him for it. Finally he said to her, 'Go to the kitchen, honey, and play with the dogs,' and he took me over to the bar. 'Diana, we've got to do something about that girl. Her eyes need to be fixed.' 'Why do you think I'm working here, Jack?' 'How much are you making a night?' 'Seven to ten dollars.' 'You'll never make it. Now, I saw you at Barney's, and you'll never be a dancer; and even if you could, I don't need a dancer. But if you go out on the strip circuit you can make $150 a week. I'll get you some lessons, and a wardrobe, and an agent. Then you'll be able to pay me back.' 'For what?' 'How much will your kid's operation cost?' 'Three thousand dollars.' 'I haven't got that; but here's fifteen hundred.' He wrote me a check, then acted as if he were angry: 'Now get the hell out of here and take care of that kid!' So I went out and made enough to pay Jack back." No interest? "No." No favors? "No."

When I made enough to get the operation out of the way, I could quit

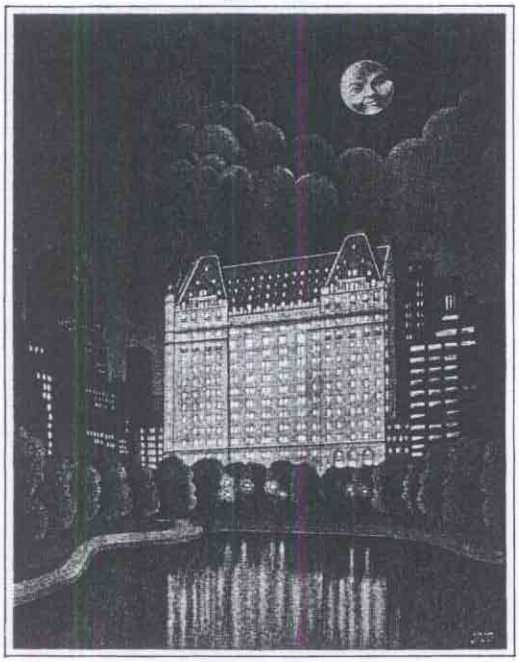
dancing; so I came back to Jack as a waitress. I knew how to make them buy me champagne now. I learned a lot on that trip—what I'm trying to unlearn now. I became a good champagne girl—along with Alice, the best—and I brought a lot of money in for Jack. But he never could have known that when he loaned me the money."

Did you get along with him? "Oh, we fought. He blew up at everyone. He fired me at least three hundred times—seven times in one night. But it didn't mean anything. Once a new girl named Bonnie, dumb as I had been, was following Jack's rules on who got what table. The rest of us ignored them, we had worked out our own system. But she tried to take a table away from me, a champagne party of twelve. So I slugged her. Jack stepped in and stopped us, and then fired me." Why you? "Because she was the new girl, the dumb girl. He always took the side of the underdog. Anyway, I was pregnant; Jack didn't know it, but Alice told the other girls, and they cut Bonnie out of everything. At last she asked them, 'What have I *done*?' and they told her about my three kids, and my going to college in the daytime, and not eating when tuition came around, and being pregnant and all. So she went to Jack and asked him to give me my job back. 'Welcome to the club,' Jack said; 'she got to you, too, eh?' Then he told Andrew to call me; he would never make up after a fight himself.

"When I got back, I was hemorrhaging. I've had eight miscarriages. I needed to go to the hospital, but I didn't have any money. Andrew heard about it and he took a collection for me at the bar. At the end of the night he gave me $150 for the hospital. But at home that night I lost the child—a boy, my first one; I had to cut the umbilical cord myself with a razor. Then I collapsed back into bed, but the afterbirth hadn't come out, and at five in the morning I woke up gushing blood all over the place. I lost four pints by the time they got me to the hospital. I'm Rh-negative, and they needed two more pints than they had; so they called the place where I worked and Jack came right over. It was such an emergency they took both pints from him. He gave blood to lots of people. He went out and never visited me. When I tried to thank him at the club, he just swore at me." How was that? "He wouldn't let us sit down unless we were drinking champagne, but my first night back I was still weak, so before the customers came in I was sitting there and I heard Jack coming up—you could always hear his dogs thumping up the stairs ahead of him. We would all jump up then and pretend to be busy, but this night I figured what the hell, and he stormed right over to me: 'Diana, if you're not tired you can't stand up, then get the hell out of here, you're fired.'" Did you go? "Sure, it was his way of saying I wasn't well enough to work yet. He had a soggy heart, but he covered it up with bluster."

Did he ever hit you? "No. I never saw him hit any girl." He hit Winnie, the girl who operated The Sovereign Club before he took it over from Joe Slatin. "Well, I have my doubts about that. Anyway, she was not one of his girls. He was proud of his girls. We fooled him. He liked the police to come up, to see what a clean club he ran. But I sure got him mad at times." For instance? "Once he was stuck on a Saturday night with only two dancers. He said, 'Diana, I know you're not much as a dancer. You're the only stripper I ever met who needs padded pasties. But I'm really stuck tonight. Can you go on?' I told him I only had my Diana the Huntress act—I did a Greek ballet, then a hunting scene, then a victory dance with one breast bare; I wrote the script myself, that's how I got my name. He said it would have to do, and I went home to get my bow and arrow. After I did the first show that night, Jack came back and said he loved it. He thought it was an act with class. Face it: falling on the floor and rolling around and sticking your tongue out is simply not class! It might be sex, but it's not class. Anyway, the bandleader came to me, very apologetic, and said, 'When you shoot your arrow down the entryway, you're scaring

How to Make Love to a City



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Bill Willis to death. He sits right by that door.' Funny, isn't it? The bigger they are, the more scared they are. But I said I would aim my bow somewhere else. In the second show, I shot it at the back of the stage, and it hit a big gold plaque with a horse on it. Remember, it was Saturday night, our big night, a full house, some standing at the bar; but when Jack saw that, he let out a scream and came shouting across the floor, onto the stage, up to the horse; he pulled out the arrow—I'm dancing all the time—and raged at me: 'Of all the goddam dancers in the *goddam* world I have to get a *goddam* huntress!'

"'Alice' could tell you more stories, but I don't think she will talk to you. Her family didn't know where she worked, and she went away as soon as Jack killed Oswald so no one would talk to her. I don't think anybody ever did. Still, I'll try to get her for you." After much cloak-and-dagger negotiating—phone calls (for which others did the dialing), meetings on neutral ground, refusals, and a final knock on the door at two in the morning—Diana got her to talk to us: no name was to be used but "Alice."

Alice, it turned out, is a shrewd, cool woman who did the real managing of Jack's waitresses while he blustered. Just as there are romantic and realistic *managers* (Jack and the Weinsteins), so are there romantic and realistic *waitresses* (Diana and Alice). A conversation with both girls is tugged continually two ways.

Alice: "Jack was a fanatic about 'my girls.' Now let me tell you: *we* had a *bunch*. We had some who did and some who didn't; we had some who went for girls and some who went for money; we had all kinds. We had some who went for Jack, and if they did they lasted no more than a week. He made us miserable for that week! But we managed to run them all off, because once he got it, that's all he wanted, and they went out the door. All you had to do was hold out against him to stay with him. If you put out with him, you didn't get anywhere. We'd just sit back and smile, and say, 'Well, three more days and two more pieces and we're rid of her.'"

Diana: "Jack expected us to be virgins."

Alice: "Well, not virgins; but not hustling out of his club, either. He thought if they would sleep with him, they weren't good enough to work in his place. The time that man took us all to the Porta O'Call for dinner, we got to work drunker 'n skunks, and all dressed up, but he couldn't get it out of us where we'd been."

Diana: "He only wanted us to go to church picnics."

Alice: "That was the night he fired Tammi for hitting me."

Did he ever set you up with men? Diana: "Never!" Alice: "Well, it was like his putting the make on you himself. He would introduce you to men as if daring you; but I said no, I would get my own men, and I think he was glad I did."

Diana: "He never set me up at all." Alice: "Well, he would introduce you if he wanted to impress people; but he wasn't promising one side or getting paid by the other, he was just getting people together." (Others told us that if a male patron in one party and a female in another were "odd men out," he would try to move them to the same table; he had to be arranging things, matchmaking, meddling.)

Did Jack, wanting class so badly, realize he could never have it as a strip-joint owner? Alice: "No. He thought he ran a very beautiful place." Diana: "He thought that *horse* was beautiful!" Alice: "He couldn't understand it when some people turned down ads for his place. He wanted it to be perfect. He even had his girls followed to make sure they weren't making arrangements to meet the patrons outside."

Was this because he was afraid of the Vice Squad? Diana: "No, it was the class bit." Alice: "He checked us beyond the point of protecting his license." Then why did he introduce girls to policemen who were interested in them? Diana: "He didn't." Alice: "He did too. But he never thought of that as hustling. Not if *he* did it. That was just getting 'my friends' together." Did he do many favors for the police? Alice: "Sure, he gave them free drinks, even after hours. He couldn't do enough for them—including some of the ones who belittled him after his arrest. He thought cops gave the club class!"

Was it a good club? Alice: "Everyone was going up there at the end, even those from other clubs when they got off. Jack was so determined to come up from the bottom and beat his competition." The Weinsteins? "Yes." Was he doing it? Alice: "He was on the verge, at the end." Diana: "Oh, we were beating hell out of the other clubs!" But they say Jack was in financial trouble. Alice: "I guess he was personally, but we were packing them in. We sold an awful lot of champagne. I used to make $500 some weeks. It was a bad night for us to make under $60." Diana: "Jack just liked to see that room fill up. And we had a team. Jack would fire one of us, and we'd all quit. We moved the bus-station girls right on back to the station." How would you do that? Alice: "Get them to sleep with him. If one refused, we'd kick in and *pay* her to. We paid them $50 or $100, and that finished them." Diana, did you donate to these funds? "Of course! That was the only way to keep things stable around the club. We all knew how to please Jack and get our way." Alice: "Sure, buy him a piece. Then, the first time she did something wrong in her work, he'd say, 'Get your ass out of here! We want high-class girls.'"

Weren't there any girls who refused to sleep with him and refused to go along with you? Alice: "One. But I fixed her. I asked a friend on the Vice Squad to tell Jack she was a prostitute. Jack had told me I would go before this girl did: she was a nice girl. But pretty soon he came up and said, 'Alice, did you know that girl was hooking?' 'No!' 'Yep, she was. I had to let her go.'"

What's this about his drifters? Diana: "Oh, he'd help anyone who came along and needed food or a place to stay. He'd put them up on the cot in the club." Alice: "He would cuss them out for not working, but he fed them all the same. And if he read about anyone in trouble, he used to send things to the victims."

We hear you could egg him on. Alice: "Oh, I was *good* at that. One man had been ugly to the girls, so I grabbed his money out of his hand. He said he was going to kill me, but I got to Jack first and said this fellow was being nasty. If they asked for trouble, we would make them buy us champagne or get Jack after them. He would stick up for his girls." Diana: "We called it planting the seed. Just suggest something to him, and he jumps to conclusions. He was so suspicious. He was always afraid someone in the next group was talking about him."

Alice: "One time he came in and those dogs had messed all over the club. It was near opening time, and I said, 'Jack, you better clean up after your dogs. I'm not going to.' 'Okay.' Then Buddy, the young M.C., said he'd help; 'But you take the soft ones, Jack. I'll help you with your dog shit, but only the hard ones.' Jack reared up and roared at him, 'Don't you ever talk like that around these ladies. Don't you *ever* say that!' 'My God, Jack, what did I do? I just said dog shit. What am I *supposed* to say?' 'Use a little finesse! Say. . . .' He snapped his fingers in the air, reaching for a word. 'Alice, tell him what that word is I'm thinking of . . . oh yes, I've got it. *Crap*. From now on you say dog *crap*.'"

Did you know Jada? Alice: "Sure. She tried to horn in on our fellows, and sell champagne, and take our men. One night she sat down where I had been and collected the tabs for my sales. I told Jack, but he only said, 'The waitress gave her the tabs? That's your fault.' So I was plotting against her, but Jack got rid of her before I had to." How much money was involved with these tabs? "Oh, not much." Two-fifty? "No, more than that. But not much." It was the principle of the thing? Both together: "That's right!"

What happened to Jada? "Well, she would get down on that tiger skin of hers and she'd . . . well, she'd lay it." That's right! What's that word? Oh yes—say *lay*! "Yeah wouldn't Jack love my finesse? Anyway, she would lay the rug, then climb up against her pole and lay it, and then 'flash'—pull her G-string way out; till Jack finally cut the lights out on her. She yelled *so much* at him that night!" Right from the stage? "Right there. And he yelled back. And pretty soon he'd cut the lights on again to see where she was." What were they yelling? "Oh, m— f— and what a you. He fired her, and she took i down to Judge Richburg on a pea bond."

Diana was fired three hundred times. Alice, how many times were you? "Not many. I could handle Jack. He could throw the rages; but I threw them just as good. Once he really blew up at me and told me to clear out forever. I went out and sat on those damn stairs, crying. After a while, he started down them. I expected him to throw me out, but he just went on by. In a little while, he came back up with a pizza and gave it to me. 'I thought you might be hungry.' It was his way of apologizing."

We understand he used to take coffee to the boys in the parking lot and sandwiches to the men at the dry cleaners where he got his shoes shined. Alice: "Yes, he always wanted to feed people. He would never let anyone else pick up the check when we went for coffee. Once, though, George Senator was cooking hamburgers in the back of the club and he put one on for me. Jack came into the kitchen, bitchin' as usual. I loved him dearly, but, face it, if he ever came into the club and he wasn't bitchin' we would have rushed him to the hospital. So he saw the hamburgers, and he said, 'What the hell, George, are we running a restaurant?' 'No, but I put one on for Alice.' 'Well, take it off.' Then he saw me standing there. He mumbled to George to go ahead and cook it, but I told him where he could put his hamburger and went out into the club. He followed me and said would I please eat that damn hamburger, and when I said no, he shouted toward the kitchen, "George, put on ham-

burgers for everyone in the house!' Poor George had to cook hamburgers all night.

"Once he threw a party for us after the show. George cooked up the big turkey we couldn't raffle off—no one who won it wanted to lug it away. Jack had rented a hotel suite for the night, and here comes George down the corridor with the hot turkey. But Jack stopped him, because Milt Joseph had crashed the party, as usual. 'I'll be damned if I'm going to feed that character,' he said. So we all had to wait till Milt left before we ate our cold turkey. He couldn't stand Joseph, who came from his old neighborhood in Chicago."

It is after one in the morning. Benny has become fluorescent for that last *Ifanmy* of the evening; now Tammi is doing her one-side twitch (the "Xmas" side, not the "Merry" one) to Bill's sustained drum roll. We get our coats from the all-American boy.

Out on the streets of Dallas, it is good to breathe air instead of champagne or smoke. Diana, back inside, is emptying her life into a spit glass; Benny is becoming the human equivalent of his own green cigar; Nikki and Tammi try to forget the day when a stomach becomes un-veil-able, a "loose ass" un-net-able; and Bill Willis "takes liberties" up in his drummer's perch—meditative bug in a dismal sycamore.

Out on the streets of Dallas, one encounters a city of promoters. The main industry is banking, and the main bank has a fourteen-story neon sign. It is a town full of imaginative middlemen scrambling for the big one. Jack Ruby was, to the bigtime promoters, a "foreigner." But he was not out of place on the Dallas streets. He always had a new scheme brewing —pizza ovens, British blades, twistboards, a new entertainer, a new club, a new advertising campaign. "He was always a-churnin'" we heard from many as their impression of Jack Ruby nodding and handshaking his way down the street.

"He never stuck with any of these projects," Barney told us. "The pizza oven he was pushing went over well. I've got one here. But he had moved on to something else by the time it became established." Ruby cruised the streets expectantly; if one angle does not work, and work fast, try another. Rebuffed here, go there, keep moving. The big deal is somewhere out there if one only gets in its way. Meanwhile, make contacts. "Whenever I drew up a contract for him," said Henry Klepak, the lawyer who managed his club purchases, "he wanted to know what my *connections* were. He thought law was a matter of who you knew. I tried to tell him I don't draw up contracts to please connections, but he thought I was just being modest."

Most of his bustling was done to promote his clubs, especially The Carousel. "You can't write about Jack's life outside the club," Andrew Armstrong said. "There *wasn't* any. Even when he was outside, he was at the newspapers or the radio stations trying to get more publicity; he was handing out passes to the club, or thinking of some new scheme to push it."

Andrew is a slim sober Negro, articulate, immaculate; Jack's bartender, second-in-command at The Carousel. "He wanted me to be the manager when it came to firing someone—not when it came to making decisions." Didn't he ask your advice? "Oh, yes, he would stand at the bar sketching ads for the next day's paper, and he asked my ideas then. He put a lot of time into those ads, he thought he was pretty good at them. Taking them in was a big thing for him." (Bill Willis says that when the show was finished Thursday night—actually Friday morning, toward the dawn of Kennedy's visit—he asked Jack if he planned to see the parade. The answer was: "Maybe. I don't know. I have to get some ads in.")

"He was proud," Andrew continued, "of his ad for Tammi. Barney had billed some girl as 'The Teacher Turned Stripper,' and Tammi was suing a man at the time, so Jack wrote an ad for her as 'The Stripper Turned Teacher'—teaching this guy not to break the law. When a new act was going on, he would get too nervous to watch it. He went off in the back and asked me, later, how it went. And, as I say, he tried to have me do the firing. 'What do you think of so-and-so?' he'd say. 'I think she's all right.' 'Well, I don't. Cut her loose.' '*You* cut her loose; you're the one that doesn't like her.'" Why did he want *you* to fire them? "He didn't have the heart to take a person's job away. Half these people, if I had fired them, he would have taken back." (There was a drunken pianist he could not get along with but could not fire; the band told Jack his toes had been frozen and amputated in a Korean prison camp. Jack shook his head and said, "Just like the Jews in the concentration camps." The tipsy musician was untouchable after that.) "Then, when Jack had fired someone, he would get to thinking about it and want them to come back, but he would never call them. He made me do it." We hear he used to make up arguments with food. "Well, he was always bringing food to people. He'd come up here every other day with sandwiches for me. I told him, 'Jack, I don't want these.' I never ate a one of them. But he kept on bringing them to me anyway."

Jack went out with the night people after his club closed around two in the morning. He often ended his day, near dawn, at the *Times Herald* office reworking his next day's ad. After such a night, Jack rose late; but he would get to the club around noon to meet Andrew and check the last night's receipts. "He was never satisfied. If we had a thousand-dollar night, he would still say, 'What can we do to bring more people in?' If he couldn't get to the club, he would give me a call to see how things were. I would say, 'Okay here; where are you?' Sometimes he'd be way out in some Negro district where there had been a flood or something. I'd say, 'What are you doing out there?' 'Oh, nothing, just driving around.' But I found out what he did those days from one of the bums who slept on the cot in back. He told me he had been picked up by Jack way out somewhere. 'And what do you think he was doing?' the guy asked me. 'He was giving money to some kids that had been burnt out.' After that I began to notice that, after Jack read a newspaper, if you picked it up the way he left it, there would likely be news of some local disaster on that page."

Such excursions were not usual for Jack. After he came to The Carousel around noon, he normally spent his afternoon "a-churnin'" up and down Commerce Street. The nucleus of Dallas is very small. Once he had parked his car in the garage under the club and taken Sheba upstairs, he could go almost anywhere he wanted on foot. Down at one end of the street,

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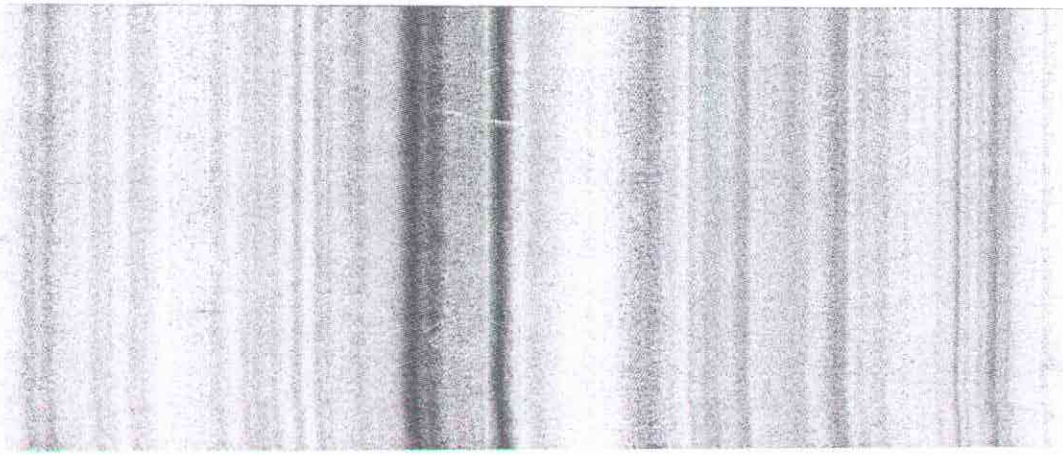

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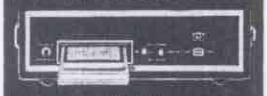

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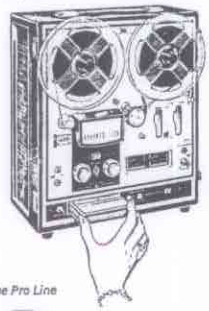

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he might drop in to see Max Rudberg, a bail bondsman Jack met ten years before the assassination when he was getting one of his girls out of jail. Since then, Max's wife and Eva have become good friends. "I used to see him at the Shereth Israel Synagogue," Rudberg said. "He was a great admirer of Rabbi Silverman."

Rudberg, an imperturbable little elf, is wedged in a cubbyhole office which a plug-in heater makes an oven. A processor of little miseries, he floats on his sense of humor above the shabbiness around him. Dilapidated humans are lined up in the hall outside his hole, men who cannot make bond for their petty crimes, men glad to sit there in the darkness. Rudberg knows what it is all about, that it is a matter of the little blows, delivered one by one, unintermitted. "Jack had a good heart. If any of his girls ever called on him, he came. He put up money for the worst sort of risks. He was a soft touch.

"He used to stop in all the time. Whenever he came to the courthouse, just around the corner, he would 'make the rounds,' dropping in to see everyone he knew. Just a few days before the assassination, he was down here to fix some bad checks an employee had passed, and he came in here. He was all excited about Jada, his big-name stripper. She had hauled him in on a peace bond the night before, claiming she was afraid to go back to the club and get her clothes. There was a lawyer in here with me at the time, so Jack gave us a blow-by-blow description of his appearance before Judge Richburg. 'Didn't I do right?' he would say. 'Could a lawyer have done better?' He wanted us to praise him. He had to be accepted. He was a *meshugana*."

Judge Richburg is a specialist on peace bonds—the story in Dallas is that he granted one woman a bond against her husband for breaking wind. He hastened to correct that story for us: "I gave it to her because her husband wouldn't bathe but three or four times a year." His most famous recent bond was Marina Oswald's against her second husband. Andrew told us about the night he and Jack had to appear before the judge: "Jada claimed Jack had hit her, but Alice, the washroom attendant, was right there, and she said no such thing happened. Judge Richburg was a circus, finding everybody in contempt every other sentence, talking on and on about his farm. We all came back to the club *howling* at him." Even Jada? "Sure. Jack fired her a little after that."

We asked Rudberg why he thought Jack killed Oswald. "Well, everyone was saying the sonvabitch needs killing, and Jack was anxious to please. He happened to be by the City Hall, sending money to that stripper, just like he always did, and he was bound to poke his head in and see what was happening. Wherever there was a crowd, he couldn't possibly pass it by. Then, as I say, he made the rounds wherever he was. After that, it was just a question of two nuts being in the right place at the right time." (Bill Willis said: "At the club, after the first shock, we all said, 'Well, it figures. Jack thought while he was downtown he might as well kill Oswald, too.' ")

Moving up Commerce Street from the courthouse, Jack would stop in at the Doubleday store; he liked to check the new diet books and visit with a man there who patronized his club. Today, the man says that he hardly ever went to The Carousel; that Jack came in because he admired his education; but that he himself did not like to associate with a person like Ruby.

Up near the club, Jack would put himself in the way of temptation against his diet at a nearby delicatessen; he usually left with sandwiches or rolls, which he carried to the Enquire Shine and Press Shop with him. He would glance at the papers lying there while he had a shine, and give out buns to his friends—if there was anything left, he ran it up to the club for Andrew. Still making his rounds, he stopped by the hotels; he knew all the doormen, and wanted them to direct visitors toward The Carousel.

He haunted the newspaper offices. A. C. Greene, of the *Times Herald*, told us that when Jack came in with his advertisements, he would visit the columnists and the entertainment editor, trying to pass off items from his ad as bits of news. "He even came to us in the editorial section and tried to persuade us that his stripper, Jada, deserved an editorial because she had a college degree. I don't think she did; but even if she did, what editorial point could be made of that? I guess he thought it would prove that education leads to success!"

Jack liked to visit the office of Gordon McLendon, who bills himself as "the old Scotchman" and plays teenage atrocities on his "top forty" radio station KLIF. Jack thought McLendon one of Dallas' great intellectuals; he had been especially struck by a radio editorial McLendon put on the air after Stevenson was spit on in Dallas. This, said the editorial in effect, had put a blot of shame on the city. Jack, who had an unreciprocated passion for Dallas, used to quote that broadcast reverently. Asked, after his arrest, to name his best friends, Jack put McLendon among the six he mentioned—along with Andrew Armstrong and George Senator.

Mitch Lewis, McLendon's assistant, says he tried to protect Gordon from Jack's clogging attentions. "But he did get to Gordon, I forget how, with his damn twistboard. In fact, when I met Jack in the crowd of newsmen outside Captain Fritz's office, the day Kennedy died, he came up to me and wanted to know what Gordon was going to do about the twistboard idea. I remember thinking that was a hell of a thing to talk about at the time." Wasn't Jack interested in what was going on at City Hall? "Oh, he was excited by the cameras and lights. He liked to hang around newsmen. When Marina and Marguerite Oswald came by, I was jostled up close to them and so was Jack. I happened to see him when he first looked at them, and his eyes *glazed*. I think he was impressed that these frumps, one of them in a babushka, could suddenly be made the center of attention."

Did you know Jack well? "Yes, he was always pestering me, when I was with the Dallas *Morning News*, and even more when I came here. He wanted us to advertise his strippers on the air. I tried to tell him our station is all disc-jockey shows for the young folk. We can't plug burlesque shows to teen-agers. But he said his club was different. His star, Jada, was trained in ballet. He said she had studied psychology, and was a descendant of John Quincy Adams, and I don't know what all." (Bill Willis said he helped Jack frame an ad claiming Jada was a granddaughter of Pavlova.) "'Mitch,' he would say, 'you're a writer, and she's a good subject for a book.' After she quit Jack, Jada came around to ask me if I would ghost a book about all the famous men she had gone around with. When she heard what Jack had done, she came running back to town to grab some of that publicity. She had quit a week or so too soon." (We asked Bill Willis if he thought Jada was an opportunist. "Man, she was no dope. She couldn't dance worth a damn, so she paid me ten dollars a week for the privilege of bawling me out in public whenever she missed a step—as if it had been my fault.")

Does Mitch Lewis like Jack? "No, he was always glancing over my shoulder to see if there was some bigger name he could talk to. He was a small-time whiner, whining because we didn't give him enough publicity. His suits were always ten years out of style."

McLendon's office is just a couple of blocks from the Statler, which was one of Ruby's favorite spots. He knew all the front personnel; he liked to drive up with friends—sometimes in Jada's gold Cadillac—and be greeted by the doorman. His old pal Leo Torti now runs the men's shop in the basement of the hotel, and his close friend Joe Cavagnaro is sales manager. Cavagnaro is brawny and well-dressed, soft-voiced but emphatic. "I met Jack in 1955. I had just come to Dallas, and I ate in the Lucas B and B Restaurant next to The Vegas. One day Jack walked in and said hello; we talked awhile, then Jack picked up my check. We became very close. I used to help him out at The Vegas, taking the cover charge at the door on Fridays and Saturdays. I even took the club's money over to the night-deposit slot, so I carried his gun, which was in the money bag. I never took it out, though." Where did he keep the money bag? "When it wasn't in the club, it was in his car trunk." Were you on his payroll? "Oh no, I did it as a favor to Jack. I just liked being with him. So did other young fellows who have become quite successful, like Heinz Simon and Leon Nowak. We were his friends; still are. We used to go around with him, servicing his pizza ovens, getting things for his clubs. He was fun to be with. He would take us to breakfast after the clubs closed, and treat us all. It was a good dance club, The Vegas, a bit tough but fun. Trini Lopez sang there when he was just getting started.

"Jack made his customers toe the line. I had a friend go to The Carousel with his wife. Jack had a gimmick—he would put a man up on the stage and have the stripper start undressing him. It didn't get very far; when the fellow's coat and tie were off, the M.C. would take a Polaroid picture and come on later threatening to blackmail him. Eventually, he would hand over the picture. Jack chose the men who were put up there carefully—they were ones he knew, or who were with their wives; not drunks. Even so, when Jack pushed my friend onstage he whispered to him, in a cold voice, 'Don't touch.'

"After I married, I didn't go to his clubs, except when my wife and I happened to be downtown at night; but he came out to visit us often. My wife would make him cheeseburgers—he loved them. And when my boys were born, he became very fond of them. He would bring his dogs out to play with them. He gave us one of Sheba's puppies; we called it Henry. The boys still think a lot of Jack." What did they think when they heard he had killed Oswald? Cavagnaro grins, a bit embarrassed: "They were proud of him. We tried

to explain to them that what he did was wrong, but they were glad that Mr. Ruby got the man who killed the President. You know how kids are.

"When my mother and her sister came to visit us, Jack took them out to lunch. They were crazy about him. He was always very polite and gentle with them. And with his girl friend, Alice Nichols." Who was she? "A secretary at an insurance company; she's still there. Jack dated her, on and off for eleven years. She was a very nice, handsome woman, and he had an almost exaggerated respect for her." Did she love him? "I think so." Why were they never married? "He told me he promised one of his parents, I think his father on his deathbed, never to marry a gentile." (Mrs. Nichols, a shy widow, told the F.B.I. that Jack said he could not marry her because he was not worthy of her.)

Did you see many fights at The Vegas? "Sure, some people come to clubs like that itching to start trouble. If that's what they wanted, Jack took care of them. But he never looked for a fight. I only saw him hunt out a fight one time. The Hilltoppers were out at Memorial Auditorium, and I went to visit an old schoolmate of mine, Eddy Crowe, in the troupe. When I got to the dressing room, Jack was waiting outside the door, ready to jump Eddy. I asked him why; he had seen the show and he was going to beat up the guy who told the Jew joke. I told him there was no malice in the inoffensive Catholic and Jewish stories the Hilltoppers told, but he didn't like *any* racial or religious jokes. I finally got him cooled down.

"Though I didn't see him much at The Carousel, he dropped in here at least three times a week to have coffee with me. Once a week or so he would ask me to help him phrase a letter—he was writing a lot to the strippers' union claiming the Weinsteins violated union laws. When we finished working over the letter, he would dictate it to my secretary. He came in for coffee the day Kennedy was shot. He had been at City Hall, and he was writing an ad to say his club would be closed for three days. He asked me what *we* were going to do. I told him, 'Jack, you can't just close a hotel! People have to have a place to eat and sleep.' But he expected the whole city to close down. He was upset that Dallas would be shamed. I remember his telling me how much the Stevenson incident would hurt the convention business.

"When I was asked to testify at the change-of-venue hearing, there was some talk that the national corporation wouldn't be happy at my calling Jack a good friend there in the courtroom. My wife and I talked it over, and decided I had to give up my job if it would help Jack. He would have done the same for me." Do you think others in Dallas had this kind of pressure put on them? "Sure. I saw some important people in his clubs, people who would now deny they ever went there."

Was Jack's word good? "Like steel. Of course, you couldn't believe him when he said he was going to meet you at a certain time. He was always late. He would get caught talking to someone; and if he stopped talking to one person, he would start right up with someone else before he could get out the door. He seemed always to be on the run—glancing at a paper (he always had one with him), jumping up to leave, saying he was late for another appointment (he probably was)—but he hated to break off any conversation. He was a compulsive talker, even about the most personal things."

Would he boast of sexual conquests? "No. He was concerned it would get back to Alice. He never did anything that might hurt her." How did you hear about his murder of Oswald? "I had brought my two boys downtown to go to the Cathedral. We pulled up at the hotel—I was going to give them some milk and doughnuts before Mass—and we could see the crowd just up the way. The people were kept across the street, which was blocked off, and there was an armored car in the City Hall driveway. My boys—they were three and four then—wanted to go see what was happening (we had been listening to the car radio); so we started walking. Just as we came up, we heard the shot. It could have been a backfire, but someone came out shouting, 'He's been shot!' I grabbed up my boys to get them out of there. If only I had been on the other side of City Hall!"

As the day wore on, Ruby sometimes drove to The Vegas and "made the rounds" there—B and B Restaurant (though he had been feuding with Pete, the owner, just before the assassination and stayed out), Phil's delicatessen, Kaye's liquor store. The Kayes, old friends of Jack, said he would bring his dogs over and say hello; he was known in the neighborhood as a soft touch for bums and winos; he let people who didn't even have enough to pay the cover charge come into his club and hear the music, though they could buy nothing. The Kayes believe he shot Oswald to become a hero.

One afternoon a week Jack invariably made it to McLean Hair Experts for a treatment. "He was always late; and he stayed a long time, past closing, to get more attention from the girl who was working on him. He always wanted me to reassure him that he could keep what was left of his hair."

By six in the evening, Jack was at the Y.M.C.A. He belonged to the Health Club, which some men join to avoid being approached by homosexuals. Jack was not known at a neighboring fairy-rendezvous, and he did not linger at the Y. He worked out with the weights, showered, and was ready for a night at the club by seven.

He liked to attend local affairs. Perhaps his favorite entertainment was boxing. A policeman friend said he used to come down the aisle just as the lights went up between preliminaries and the main event, shaking hands, greeting people, handing out cards, telling jokes. He had a bantam-cock way of carrying himself; he tilted his head to one side, or perked it up, or nodded with almost a pecking motion, like some bright-eyed bird. "He always thought his next deal would be the one to make him a big man."

Sunday morning, November 24, 1963: 223 South Ewing Street—a concrete-block barn decorated at each end in the pastels that paint stores seem to unload on motel owners. Wings are built out at right angles from both barn ends, enclosing a swimming pool. The second-story rooms are reached by a gallery, so that every room opens on the court. The modern motel is much like a Shakespearean inn, with a swimming pool where the stage was.

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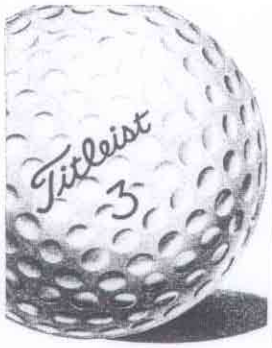

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riage or a better job. The manager is a young girl too, Doris Warner, who lives in the ground-floor apartment nearest Ewing Street. Up the stairs, on the gallery, the first apartment one reaches is 207, where Mr. Ruby lives. He was drawn here by the swimming pool (where he splashes in a bathing cap, since Mr. McLean has warned him about chlorine in the hair); before this, he had to impose on a friend and swim in a hotel pool supposedly reserved for residents.

Ruby has brought other tenants in. Tammi True, one of his strippers, came for a while, with her children. George Senator, one of the hard-up people who lived on the cot in back of Ruby's club, moved here when his British blades began to catch on. At first he roomed with Stanley Corbat in 206. But Corbat got married, and Senator's chronic money troubles came round again, so on November 1 Ruby let him move in with him. He has let others use the extra bedroom in 207, including homeless strippers. Ruby is rarely "at home." His home is the club; and it was part of his bustling, oddly impersonal benevolence to find people places to live. If you needed anything, you mentioned it at your risk to Jack Ruby. He would press suggestions on you till you found your home, or car, or whatever—or until you feigned you had.

Sunday morning, at eight-thirty, the phone rings. George Senator is not in the apartment. Ruby paws his way out of sleep toward the phone and answers muzzily. Sheba stirs, too, and jumps off the bed. There is a picture of her dachshund sire, "big Clipper," over the bed. Ruby is having bad luck with his sleep these days. Yesterday, he got to bed at six a.m., only to have the current transient at The Carousel, Larry Crafard, wake him with an eight-thirty phone call. He answered that call so blisteringly that Crafard put what little he owned in his pockets and moved on—to Michigan, as F.B.I. men later discovered.

With this caller, Ruby is more patient; indeed, ineffectually so. His voice flares up, irritated, but gentles again when he remembers he is talking to a gentle, aging Negress.

"This is Elnora" (Elnora Pitts, who cleans his apartment on Sundays).

"Yes, well, what—you need some money?" Ruby has loaned money to "Eleanor," as he calls her, and she thinks he is referring to this. But he went to sleep with money on his mind. Sunday is payday for his employees, who get paid when they come to work. But the club has been closed since Friday—the only nights it has been closed in its history—and his staff will not come in at the regular time. These are people who cannot go an extra day without their thinly distributed money. Two of the girls have already been after him for money—last night, when he was too disturbed to come to grips with the problem.

"I was coming to clean today."

"Coming to clean?" What has that to do with payrolls?

Mrs. Pitts always calls ahead, so Ruby can clear the dogs out; she fears dogs. Today she tells him she cannot come in the morning. Should she come later?

"Well, yes; you can come, but you call me!"

"That's what I'm doing now, calling you so I won't have to call you again."

"And you're coming to clean today?"

"Yes." (Long pause.) "Who am I talking to? Is this Mr. Jack Ruby?"

"Yes. Why?"

"Shall I come around two?"

"You call me before two, before you start."

"Well, what do I have to call you again for?"

"Well, so I can tell you where the key is and the money."

Ruby leaves change and bills scattered all over the tables and bureau tops, and Mrs. Pitts refuses even to touch those: "I don't dust them because I don't—by him being a Jewish man, I don't want him to say I taken the money." She is very sensitive on the point. Ruby has to tell her which money is set aside for her. (He owns antennae for sensing others' fear of racial rebuff.)

As usual, he cannot sleep after the call. Others, this morning, want to linger underwater in their sleep world, but Ruby is anxious to break the surface. He feels History all around him; he has been a demon of energy ever since that moment on Friday when the announcement momentarily stilled him (he sat in the *Morning News* building, numbed and staring fixedly).

First, to the papers; George brought it in before he left. Are the ads there? Yes. "Carousel closed, Vegas closed." How about the other clubs? You might know! They are reopening. There should be some way of forcing them to do the decent thing. They want to take advantage of the flow of people into Dallas—reporters, TV crews, investigators, the curious, the photographers—all those people he has been giving Carousel passes to since Friday. (When will they ever be used?) It is frustrating. The assassination has made people unwilling to talk about the twistboard, too—though he did get the *Times Herald* staff interested in it yesterday. There should be some way of riding History's wave to success. But all it has done so far is make Ruby and his partner Ralph Paul lose their money. (Ralph was right about one thing—losing a weekend is serious for a club like ours. He wanted me to stay open, and it *is* his money I am losing. But I just couldn't—not after what happened.) What happened comes back to him like a blow. Of *course* he had to close the clubs; why didn't everybody else see that? Why were *they* open?

Coffee. Squeeze a grapefruit (his current health food). Turn on the TV. What is happening? He has not yet promoted any private schemes this weekend, but he put *himself* well forward. He got those scoops for KLIF. Gordon will *have* to notice that; he was credited with it on his own station. Already Ruby is getting known!

At what cost? The careful masks and thin controlled voices on the television screen remind him of the numbness that washes, periodically, across his buzz of opportunistic instincts and drowns their chatter. What else is in the paper? The funeral arrangements for Kennedy ("He read about my mother's funeral in the newspaper and came to it"). A picture of the motorcade; the rifle; the rifle's wielder—he had stood not three feet from Ruby Friday night when he was shown to him and to the other reporters. (I would have thrown him out of my club, the smirking punk; yet here he is basking in attention, enjoying it, *enjoying* what he did to Jackie. And to Caroline.)

"My Dear Caroline" (the letter in the paper begins):

"Caroline, you must have a lot of courageous blood in your veins." [Like the Jews; Jews have guts.] ("You will cry. My children did. My wife did. And I did.) . . . Mentally sick and acutely evil men are very difficult to understand. . . ."

Yes, sick and evil, the kind Ruby roughs up and throws out; the kind he has grown up with, been forced to clear endlessly from his path, his besieged escape route from the ghetto. They would have smothered him, the sneerers, had he let them, coming at him from all sides. But he rose above them, took the play from them, hit out always at that sneer. He throws the newspaper down, too blur-eyed to read further. *("If you picked it up the way he left it, there would likely be news of some local disaster on that page.")*

Poor Caroline, poor Jackie. *("He was the girls' protector.")* Coming to Dallas for this. How can she ever face Dallas again; at the trial, for instance? How can Dallas face her? *("The Stevenson incident would hurt business.")* God, that sonvabitch needs killing! That's what they all say. Harry Olsen is right. He should be cut in little bits. *("We called it planting the seed. Just suggest something to him. . . .")*

It is after nine, and City Hall is swarming with newsmen. Chief Curry said last night they would not miss anything if they came by ten in the morning, but few believed him. They thought he was moving Oswald early, and meant to throw them off the track. Yet nothing has happened; maybe he *was* telling the truth. Inside Captain Fritz's office, question after question chips at that smug facade but cannot splinter it. The sneer acts as a bulwark here. In certain company, it could be a bull's eye.

George Senator returns—a puffy man of fifty, with a whipped-cream fluff of curls on top. Unlike Ruby, he was married, and has a son—the marriage, like everything else in his life, failed. Failure lends to his natural geniality the compliance people feel protective toward. No one dislikes George; nor respects him. They feel sorry for him. At the moment, he comes in carrying freshly tossed laundry; he has been working the washing machine downstairs.

Ruby shows him the letter to Caroline; says Jackie should be spared a return to Dallas; says that punk should be killed before he gets to trial. *("Of course, he always talked big. He was always going to beat our ass.")* George nods sympathetically. It is a comment he has heard many times in the last two days, from many lips. The TV drones mercilessly on, making the incredible inescapable. It *did* happen: look at the world telling itself, over and over, that it did. Ruby goes into the kitchen for more grapefruit and to scramble eggs. Senator cooks for people at The Carousel, and is considered an excellent chef. But Ruby is delicate about his food, accustomed to fixing minimal fare for himself on small stoves or hot plates. He has always lived in "a room" or rooms, not caring much which rooms. He has risen when others are at work, slept when they are getting up. South Ewing is simply a cot for him, or a dressing room attached to the swimming pool. His "home" was a place of raving foreigners, who could not even speak English—a crazy mother, a brutal, drunken father—a place to get out of. He has been getting out ever since. He wants no "home."

Ten-nineteen a.m. The phone in the apartment rings again. At this

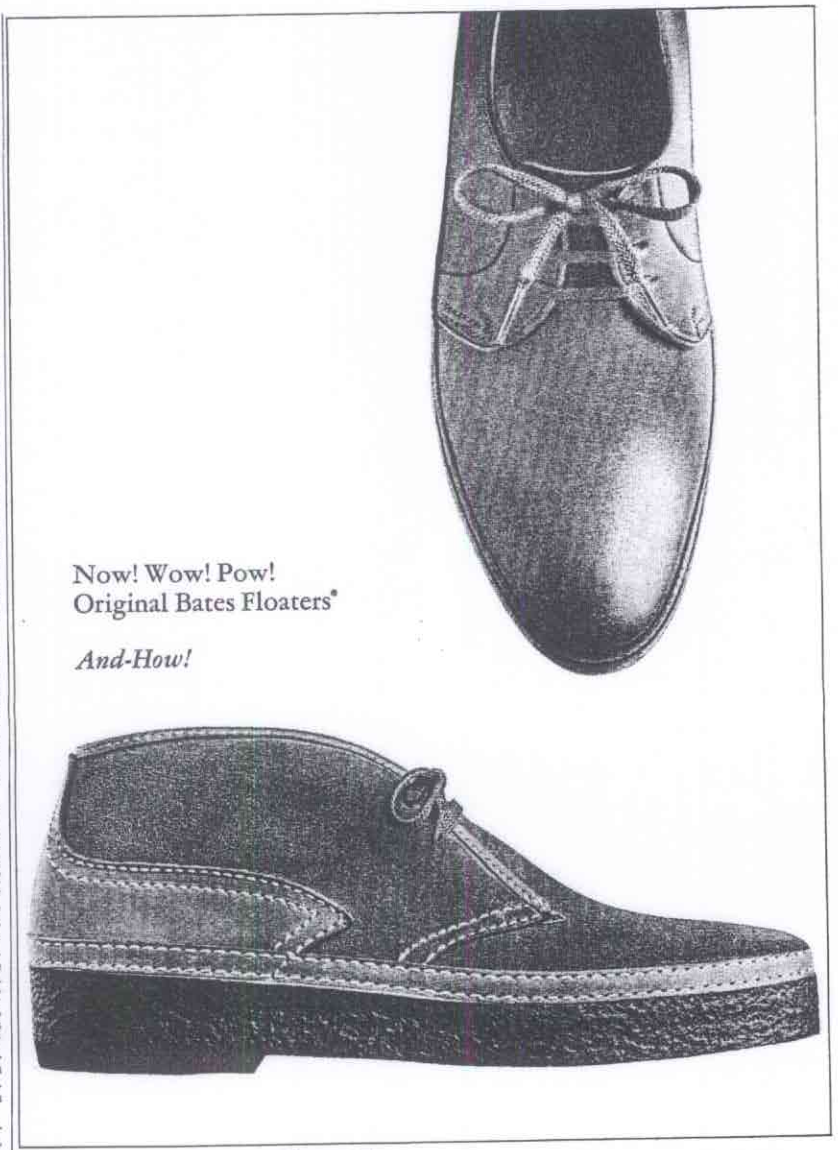
very moment Chief Curry is telling the newsmen that Oswald will be moved in an armored car (the urgent call went out to the Armored Motor Service half an hour ago, and the driver has been hauled from the Sunday School class he was teaching). Ruby answers, "Hello." "This is Lynn again." In Fort Worth. He gave her five dollars last night, when she came over to work and found the club still closed. She has no salary coming; it was all advanced to her long ago. But she and her husband must pay something on their rent and groceries or they cannot stay, cannot eat. They *have* to have twenty-five dollars.

Ruby remembers how angry he got, last night, at her phone call for money—how could she think of anything but the President's death! (He said this to her on the same day he demonstrated the twistboard to *Times Herald* employees. (He used to get angry at Eva for being so unpatriotic as not to pay her poll tax—which Ruby had not paid for four years.) He remembers, too, his storm of anger at poor Larry. He is angry at the world these days. (Larry! That's right! There's no one to feed the dogs. Sunday is Andrew's day off. I have to feed them. Poor Clipper.)

Lynn needs the money at once. They can't eat till they get it. All right. Can she get to the Western Union office in Fort Worth? Yes. "It will take me about twenty or thirty minutes to get dressed, and then I will go on down. I have to go near there anyway, to feed the dogs and let them out."

It is almost ten-thirty. The newsmen are getting restless; they had come to believe the ten-o'clock moving time. Ruby stretches his weight-lifter's arms, lifting the weight of full consciousness. Like many night people, he wakes up slowly, at no set time, against no regular deadline. He is used to dressing leisurely. This is the last morning he will be able to. Every morning after this, for the rest of his life, he will rise early, prodded against his protests to face increasingly empty days from their very outset. Today, though, not even Lynn's call can hurry him. Not even the thought of his hungry dogs.

First, a shower. Ban deodorant. McLean's hair lotion. (Eva will pick it up for him the next three years.) He studies and rubs, combs and studies. Disposing his remains of hair almost strand by strand, he achieves a slightly off-center part—a hairstyle very popular with the men of Dallas. The elaborate asymmetry of these few lines that cross his scalp rears thin barriers against the Enemy—Baldness, an enemy all the more dangerous because potentially comic. The one thing Ruby does not want to be is a clown. One of his recurrent key words is "dignified." Dignity is at issue as, after scrutiny, he moves two hairs across the divide, right to left, strong side to weak.



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Must be at one's best when meeting History. He lathers up and shaves, once; British blade, the kind George was pushing; good product. He lathers again, and shaves slowly back and forth from every angle. Ruby has a heavy beard; any shadow of it would accentuate his jowliness. Even in jail, he will shave twice every day (still with a British blade, locked into the razor with a key the guard retains). His hands are hairy too, battle-scarred; chewed off at one point, that stump on his left hand. He has a ring on that hand, winking at him as he pulls his face back and forth to turn curves into planes for his blade's razing; not a big ring by Texas standards, though it has three diamonds in it. A recent acquisition. No one will remember a star sapphire among Ruby's "characteristics."

He studies himself in the mirror, challenging, hoping, asking approval from that face as he does from all other faces. He has brows that hood his eyes—Lloyd Nolan brows. Nose too big for Nolan, though; and too many chins, despite his sweating in the Y. (Chin up, eyes down, tie the Windsor knot, silk tie.) The eyes keep returning to his face. They do not rest easily on one thing, but slide on, always, wary of blows and wistful for "the big one." Eyes of someone forever being moved on (*"He was always afraid someone in the next group was talking about him"*). Eyes

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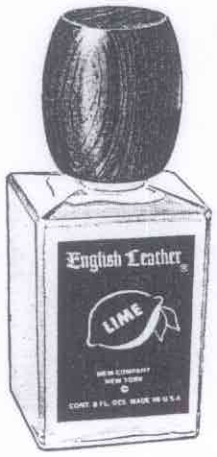

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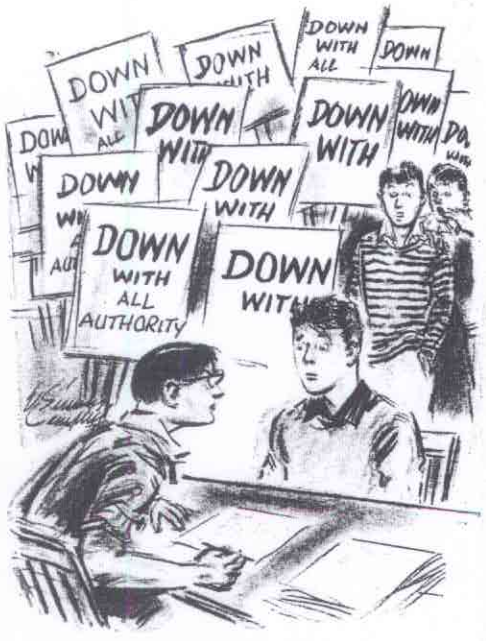
of a promoter (*"He was always glancing over my shoulder to see if there was some bigger name to talk to"*). Eyes ready for challenge (*"You learn to be a jungle walker"*). Always in motion, they belong to a man always moving, looking for the next spot to jump, watching where the play is, ready to take the play away.

Flitting eyes, distrustful—fixing other eyes desperately in his conversation, loath to break off, lonely but afraid. Apprehensive about tenderness, which he shows provisionally, where it seems most safe, with a self-protective grouchiness (*"Get the hell out of here and take care of that kid"*). How much can he risk? Not much: surely benevolence toward bums; sex with the bus-station girls; love for brothers and sisters, as long as they are absent (too near, *they* too are dangerous, and must be abused); extravagant devotion to his parents—from the very moment that they died; vaguely warm companionship with a widow kept safely at a distance by "respect." Love slows the reflexes of jungle walkers. Even bums and bus-station girls can mock. Only the dogs stay loyal. It is safe to love them. Or is it? Leo Torti remembers the time when Ruby said, "Look at that dog. I actually love him, do everything I can for him. I wonder if the sonvabitch hates my guts."

Move your eyes, moving man, time to move. Suck in the gut. Dark suit jacket. Glasses in the pocket. Neat grey hat, name stamped in gold inside. Home is what the hat is, a moving marquee, its message not reaching the outside. No overcoat. Ducking in here and there and back out, he would have to shed and don and carry and check it. A coat is like affection, too unwieldy, slowing everything; impedes the swing of tightened shoulder (*"Jack was a first-puncher"*). Ruby owns no overcoat.

He'll be needing money. There is some locked in the closet ($131.41), more scattered around the apartment ($124.87). Not enough to meet the entire payroll. Besides, I have to treat the boys—and many of the boys are here now, newsmen from everywhere! Need my roll. I can do better than the sandwiches I bought them yesterday—that's what I do *everyday* for my friends. Get the money and gun from the car. (*"Whenever he was carrying the money, he kept his piece handy."*)

He is pacing the rooms and mumbling to himself. Hard to remember all he has *to* do today. Hard to get the load of consciousness up in one weight-lifter's snatch. Why should he? In everything there is to be done, what can he *do*? There is no displacing that dead center of his numbness. No bringing a dead man back. No way to un-kill, erase the memory from Jackie's mind, spare Caroline. Senator watches him pace, hears him mutter, but makes out no words. Ruby's friends, asked what actor could play him in a movie, turn invariably to types like Marion Brando, Telly Savalas, Ralph Meeker—men with fists for tongues, who mush out *s* to *sh*, blunt *th* to *t*, *t* to *d*. Ruby's lisp bothers him; he tries to talk slowly, to correct it ("as if he had had a few drinks and was being careful how he spoke," says Andrew). In prison he will practice over and over, pronouncing the names Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. But when he is excited, the lisp and the ghetto accent fill his mouth with the thickening bitter porridge of his past; syntax disappears; he babbles. This morning he paces and babbles a full five minutes, all confused plans (what



"They're throwing him out of the movement—he had an 'Up With' sign!"

do I tell Eleanor, how to pay Andrew and the others?) the numb hurt (poor Caroline, my hungry dogs) and hate (Dallas, the rifle, the punk) and excitement (a real reporter, "The Only Three-Runway Club in Dallas With Jack Ruby").

"George, I'm taking the dog down to the club."

Ruby's car is his traveling office; the "office" in the club is home to a succession of bums. Even his files and "securities" are wheeled and on the move. There is nothing fixed or settled about Ruby. He houses transients because he is one. The car is white—a two-door Olds, a 1960 model; musn't be flashy with the I.R.S. after him (as if jukeboxes were taxable "entertainment"). Sheba takes the back seat, which she keeps in a proprietary shabbiness. Ruby pulls his little transistor out of the glove compartment and flicks it on; turns it down a minute to talk with a neighbor, out at the end of the drive; then enters the Thornton Freeway (which runs right by his apartment). It is almost eleven. The armored car is on its way to City Hall. Andrew is arriving at the club, despite the fact that it is his day off—things are too unsettled; he has to find out what is going on; he is shocked to see the dogs have not been fed. Joe Cavagnaro is putting his boys in the car for Mass. Forrest Sorrels, of the Secret Service, is being allowed to question Oswald.

Ruby does not stay on the Thornton Freeway, veers, instead, left along Industrial Boulevard to the point where it meets Main, tugged insensibly toward Dealey Plaza, as thousands will be in future months and years. Tomorrow, and for the next three years, Ruby himself will be one of the Plaza's attractions, when he lives above it in his prison corridor. He dips, now, under the Stemmons Freeway—where Kennedy, approaching from the other side, was hit. Rising out from the underpass, Ruby slows his car, snagged in the cobweb of trajectories already being spun by conjecture and hypothesis. It is scarred air he drives through. To the left, the wreaths. But up by Houston Street, a crowd turns from the wreaths and is facing the jail (Ruby's future home, the most settled dwelling he will ever have). Oswald must be in there, transferred by now from Chief Curry's City Hall to Sheriff Decker's Courthouse. The radio is vague about the time of transfer, but Ruby heard yesterday it would take place at ten.

On up Main, still reversing Kennedy's course, past Sanger's on the left, Neiman-Marcus on the right. Ten blocks, to Harwood, where City Hall is—in the same block as the only Western Union that is open on a Sunday. There are four or five people talking to a policeman as Ruby drives past the rabbit hole in City Hall that lets police cars underground to park. On the other side of the building, an armored car has just jockeyed with difficulty backward into the small mouth of the exit. Ruby hugs the curb to see what is going on (*"He had to be in on everything"*). There is still something down there—TV crews, perhaps packing up their equipment (*"He liked to hang around newsmen"*). Now he must get back to the left lane; he wants to pull into a parking lot across the street. But a moving bus blocks the other eastbound lane beside him; he cannot race ahead of the bus or ease in behind it in time to make the turn. He slows till he is even with the lot, waits for the taillight of the bus to clear, then swings hard left into the lot from the far-right lane (*"He was a spastic—he acted suddenly"*). Ruby—who is almost superstitious about the law, reverencing it and tempted to break it and feeling remorse about it afterward—has just committed his penultimate infraction of the law.

The lot is on the corner of Main and Pearl, directly facing the Western Union office. Sheba jumps into the front seat and rustles in last week's newspapers (*"He always had a paper with him"*). Stay here, girl. He puts the transistor in the glove compartment. No need to lock the doors. He opens the trunk, his file cabinet and bank and transient home's attic, throwing the keys down in the front part of this dreary treasure chest, and rummages through it. Receipts, junk, money; a moldering holster he never uses (it came with the gun); brass knuckles in the money bag, where he keeps his weapons. (Take the gun now. God! How I'd like to use it on that character!) The money is in two places. He takes the bigger amount ($2,015.33) and leaves the smaller ($837.50). He puts the gun in his right-hand pocket, the money in his left; it is one motion, the two go together. Slams trunk. (Damn! Forgot to pick the keys back up. My head is a hurricane these days.)

It's all right, though—extra trunk key in the glove compartment. He keeps it there always, with his wallet. George Senator has never seen a wallet on Ruby or in his room—it is good only for the license he needs when driving. Ruby saves his pockets for Carousel cards, and twistboard literature, and pictures of his girls. The glove-compartment key is there so Ruby can get to his second key ring—farther back in the trunk, in a box—if he mislays the first. Bill Willis remembers talking one night in the garage under The Carousel: "I told him I keep my extra keys under the hood, in case I lose my pocket set, and Jack said he kept a spare set in the trunk."

(I'll get out the keys when I come back. Over the street. Still those four or five people at the other end of the block. I wonder why?) Into Western Union. At the long counter one customer is ahead of him.

Oswald is pulling on a sweater in Captain Fritz's office. Ruby adjusts his glasses—bifocals, he wears them as little as possible—and prints Little Lynn's maiden name on the form: Karen Bennett. However, he neglects the bottom of the form; Doyle Lane, the clerk, must ask for his address, and writes it in: 1312½ Commerce. Not the apartment house. That is not home, there is no home; The Carousel comes closest. Lane copies the address, and other information, a second time; this is the receipt he will give to Ruby. The minutes click by now. Lane stamps the receipt: 1963 Nov 24 AM 11 16. Ruby puts his glasses away, hooking one of its dark wings on his breast pocket, while Lane writes a duplicate of the receipt, to keep in the office; writes it rapidly, with only a glance or two at the other slip of paper; copies the address the third time, wrong, 1313½; stamps the second receipt: 1963 Nov 24 AM 11 17. A new minute has cogged itself up in the machine, a controverted minute that men will haggle over and cling to and question. Ruby takes his copy and puts it in his pocket.

(Must get the keys out, drive Sheba to the club. The dogs need food and an airing; then leave Sheba with them; can't have her waiting for me in the car all day while I mix with the other reporters. But those

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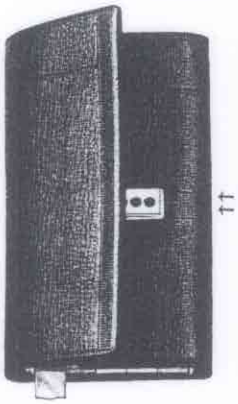

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people are still there, just down the street. Looks like the same ones, not just passers-by. Well, it will only take a minute to find out what's happening.) *"He always made the rounds."* He turns left, west on Main.

Something strange is going on. A car is nosing out of the ramp, and this is an entrance door only! Ruby quickens his stride.

History has always broken her date with Jack Ruby before now, despite his careful efforts to arrange a meeting. In fifty-three seconds, she will keep it. A block over, on Commerce Street, Joe Cavagnaro has pulled up in front of the hotel, his boys in the car with him. "If I had been on Main Street, it would never have happened. The minute Jack saw my kids, he always picked them up. And he would never let them see violence." No, Jack saw too much of it when he was a kid. Cavagnaro kept him from hitting Eddy Crowe outside the dressing-room door. History will not be cheated, though; Joe is a block away when Ruby waits outside the door for Oswald.

The entrance to the ramp is narrow—twelve feet, six inches—just wide enough to let a car turn in (so narrow that the armored car eased clumsily into its counterpart on Commerce Street, and could not back down; low clearance blocked it). The policeman who had been in the middle of the Main Street ramp must move aside, and the knot of gazers with him. They back toward Harwood Street, to the driver's side of the car, away from the approaching Ruby. The car that is surfacing must turn left to circle the block and move up one-way Commerce Street. It is meant to lead the armored car in what, by a sudden change of plans, will be a decoy caravan. In Dallas, turning left on a two-way street is illegal for a car that comes out of a driveway or a parking lot. The policeman on guard here does not know what is happening. He leans down to the driver, just as the car's nose reaches the curb and points left, poised for the illegal turn. The driver tells the guard what he is going to do and, as they talk, Ruby arrives. The car's taillights have just cleared the entrance to the ramp. He will keep his date in less than fifty seconds *("He was never on time")*. Ruby glances down, sees lights, does not break his stride *("Jack was a reactionary—he reacted fast")*, but turns smoothly left, and down *("He plunged into things")*. As he is about to reach the line of men at the bottom, he hears a cry: "Here he comes!" The brightest TV lights blink on, turn the glow in City Hall's belly to a flare *("He used to come down the aisle just as the lights went up between preliminaries and the main event")*. "He's coming out!" He? The character? Ruby's shoulders tighten instinctively, a jungle walker's reaction when the natural enemy is near.

Just as he reaches the line of people, Captain Fritz's Stetson bobs into view, brilliant in the camera glare. At that moment, Ruby is looking straight ahead, on camera, though he does not know it. He stands in the penumbra of those lights *("He always wanted to be at the openings and closings of shows")*. At the edge. How short a step to the center. Like Marguerite and Marina *("His eyes glazed")*.

Detective Leavelle, a movie Texan, moves the human chain of handcuffed men toward the car. He wears a white Stetson and white suit—the good guy *("Hell, man, Dallas is still a shoot-out town")*. He dwarfs the young man beside him, tense in his dark sweater—the bad guy, face logy with fatigue and bruises, jaws faintly dusted with morning growth. Tomorrow Ruby will tell his old friend Buddy Walthers, "He looked just like Corky Crawford!"

The orange stab of light in this dark place turns Oswald's face to the side, for a moment—toward the dim figure just arrived. Some will later claim he looked at Ruby, looked *for* him—but he could not see in these first seconds of the dazzle. The glare makes him tighten his lips further, in a slight grimace *("There's nothing to do with the smirk but mess it up, right now.)* Ruby pushes through the line *("Jack shouldered the priest aside and came straight at me")*. No one has a chance of stopping him now *("Before I even got started, Jack stepped between us and nailed him")*, but one policeman raises his arm *("Don't ever stop me, I might lose my nerve")*. As usual, his first act is decisive—dead on target *("Jack was a first-puncher")*. He mates in one move *("You have to take the play away")*. The job is done.

Sergeant Pat Dean, who cleared the basement an hour ago, thinks, "My God, a cop has killed him" *("He liked to do the policemen's job for them")*. When police swarm toward him, Ruby the scuffler does not try to take *this* play. They are friends, they'll understand *("He usually did the wrong thing for reaching his goal")*. But why are they so rough? Don't they know he's on their side, just like on South Ervay, fighting at the side of Blankenship and Carlson? He came to their rescue. Why turn on him? *("He wanted to help, and he only got in the way")*. They must know I did it for Jackie *("Jack, I don't want you to hit him")*. For Dallas *("Even if it wasn't his fight, he would step in, in a second")*. For Caroline *("Diana, we've got to do something about that girl")*. They must see that: "YOU ALL KNOW ME!" *("Mr. Ruby got the man who killed the President")*. "I'M JACK RUBY!" ###

This is part one of a two-part article on Jack Ruby. The second part will appear in June.

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PUBLISHER'S PAGE

(Continued from page 6) tenth camera work and nine-tenths the thought and planning and care that must have preceded the actual clicking of the shutter. Certainly that was the case with some of the group-confrontation photographs that were almost more remarkable for the feat of having assembled the subjects in one time and place than for the mere mechanical fact of having photographed them together. Such group pictures as the *Decisive Dozen*, *The Unknockables* and *The Lost Generation*, and those two historic groupings of "the Irish Mafia" on the steps of the White House and of the unique assemblage of jazz figures on the steps of a Harlem flat building are surely among the most remarkable photographs ever published of anybody anywhere, but not so much as photographs as of triumphs of logistics. The same could be said, though fewer people were involved, for the feat of getting Floyd Patterson and Cassius Clay together in New York at midnight for another front-cover photograph. And speaking of logistics, it was no cinch to get Edward Steichen, Jimmy Durante and James A. Farley together in the rain out at Jones Beach and then to bring back,