Belli Quits ABA, Slaps At Dallas

SAN FRANCISCO, March 20 (UPI) — Attorney Melvin Belli today called Dallas "the murder capital of the world" and said that if Jack Ruby had been tried elsewhere he would not have been convicted of killing Lee Harvey Oswald.

Belli also said at a press conference that he was resigning from the American Bar Association and was formally withdrawing as Ruby's counsel "at the request of the family."

The San Francisco lawyer said that Dallas juries have returned death sentences in as little as three and seven minutes and that when Ruby's jury deliberated more than two hours, one Dallas newspaper bannered the fact.

The Dallas Times Herald on Saturday used a banner headline that said "Jury finds Ruby guilty, assesses death penalty." A secondary headline in smaller type added: "Jurors ponder slayer's fate over two hours."

Belli said that there is no automatic review of death sentences in Texas as there is in California. This means that "there is an automatic death penalty unless the defendant has funds," he said.

He called the Ruby jury "self-satisfied and smug" and said that when it announced its verdict "something welled up in me."

Belli's remarks after the verdict was announced were called "intemperate and abusive" by American Bar Association President Walter E. Craig, who said the ABA was investigating them as possible violations of the ABA's code of ethics.

Ruby's Appeal Charges 36 Errors by Judge

DALLAS, March 20 (AP) Jack Ruby's lawyers took their first steps today on the long appeals route in an effort to save him from the electric chair.

They claimed that Judge Joe B. Brown made 36 errors in rulings and asked a new trial. The new trial motion is a technical preliminary to taking the case to the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals.

A Dallas jury convicted Ruby, 52, of murder with malice Saturday and set his punishment at death.

The defense claimed during the month-long trial that the girlie club operator shot Lee Harvey Oswald during a mental blackout triggered by grief over the assassination of President Kennedy.

Defense lawyer Phil Burleson filed today's motion with the clerk of Judge Joe B. Brown's court. Brown, who presided at the trial, was out of town. He has 50 days from the time of the verdict to rule on the defense motion.

Burleson said Percy Foreman, newly appointed chief defense counsel, authorized the filing of the motion, which was signed by Foreman, Burleson and Joe Tonahill. Tonahill and Burleson were two of Ruby's original lawyers.

Forming the heart of the motion were these alleged erroneous rulings by Brown:

1. Failure to move the trial out of Dallas. The defense said Dallas citizens were too emotionally involved with the case to be jurors.

2. Permitting eleven persons who viewed the slaying of Oswald on television to sit as jurors. Texas law forbids witnesses to be jurors.

3. Denial of a pre-trial sanity hearing.

4. Admission of police officers' testimony that contained statements made by Ruby after his arrest.