By Bob Jackson, © 1963 Dallas Times Herald; inset photo of Jack Ruby by Associate

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Jack Ruby by Rudy Maxa

Did Dallas Cops Help?

When Jack Ruby killed Lee Harvey Oswald in the basement of the Dallas City Jail, one question loomed: how did he and his gun get there? In a book later this year, Seth Kantor, 52-year-old investigative reporter in Washington for the Detroit News, will name several members of the Dallas police force he alleges aided Ruby in his dark mission.

For Kantor, *The Secret of Jack Ruby* is a project fourteen years in the making. A Dallas Times Herald reporter in the late Fifties and early Sixties, Kantor knew Ruby as a character around town. And when John Kennedy was assassinated, Kantor was there, traveling with the White House press corps for Scripps-Howard. At Parkland Hospital, waiting for word of the President's death, Kantor felt a tug on his jacket. It was Ruby, who expressed shock at the shooting and asked Kantor if he should close his burlesque houses for a few days as a gesture of respect. Ruby later denied to Warren Commission member Gerald Ford that he was at the hospital that day and the commission took his word over Kantor's testimony to the contrary, a conclusion that still riles the reporter.

In 1974 Kantor decided to learn more about the man who killed Oswald. His 101,000-word manuscript offers no basis for the theory that Oswald and Ruby were acquainted, a favorite opinion of assassination conspiracy buffs.

"Ruby was not involved in a plan to kill JFK," Kantor says, "but he became involved in a plot [to kill Oswald] over the weekend after Oswald's arrest. My contention is that Ruby was led to the Dallas City Jail, helped in. He didn't come in the Main Street ramp as he claimed, he came in an unguarded stairway that led right into the basement. My thesis is that Dallas cops had two strong reasons for revenge: first, they considered Oswald a cop killer because he shot J. D. Tippit, and, second, he was an avowed Marxist so they felt he was clearly representing a foreign country such as Cuba or Russia. Among 1100 Dallas police, there were a few who felt Oswald didn't deserve a trial at all. If someone would come in and do it for them . . .

"The Warren Commission didn't say it, but Ruby had ready access to the police station that weekend. He made frequent trips there after Oswald was arrested Friday and all day Saturday," Kantor says. "And he managed to station himself [with a gun] outside the Dallas County Jail at 4 p.m. on Saturday when there was a preliminary plan to move Oswald from the city jail. He posed as a reporter for a local radio station, but the police changed their plan because of heavy traffic—they feared Oswald would get trapped in a traffic jam."

Footnote: Conspiracy buffs point to four possible groups that might have arranged Kennedy's death: Cuba's Castro, anti-Castroites, organized crime or right-leaning financiers. Kantor dismisses Castro's involvement but notes a history of contact between the Dallas police and the underworld. *The Secret of Jack Ruby*, due out by mid-year, suggests if organized crime had reasons to want Oswald dead, they could have easily worked through the police; and Ruby was well-known in both mob and cop circles.