



Associated Press

Jack Ruby at his 1965 sanity trial. Another picture, A3.

## Blood Clot In Lungs Kills Him

**Insisted to the End  
He Was Not a Part  
Of Any Conspiracy**

By Richard Harwood  
Washington Post Staff Writer

Jack Ruby, the most celebrated executioner of the decade, died of a massive blood clot yesterday at the Parkland Memorial Hospital in Dallas.

He was, in his own troubled mind, "just a nobody from the ghettos of Chicago" until Nov. 24, 1963. On that day, before a television audience of tens of millions, he murdered Lee Harvey Oswald who had 48 hours earlier, the Warren Commission later concluded, assassinated President John F. Kennedy in the streets of Dallas.

By his bizarre act, Ruby secured for himself a dubious place in American history and made more credible the unproved hypothesis that the President's murder was the product of a conspiracy.

### Dies While Asleep

Ruby's death at 10:30 a.m. yesterday was more serene than the 55 years of his life. He was asleep when he stopped breathing in the same hospital in which both Oswald and President Kennedy died.

The cancer that riddled his body and put him beyond medical salvation was discovered Dec. 9, when he was taken to the hospital from the Dallas County Jail. He was so ravaged by the disease that he looked, one of his lawyers said, like "a man of 80 years."

In his last weeks he was incoherent much of the time and was tortured, his brother Earl reported, by the delusion that millions of American Jews were being executed in retaliation for his impulsive act of

violence against Oswald.

### 'I Hear Them Screaming'

He was told by his brother, "That is not true, Jack. It is not true."

"Don't tell me! Don't tell me!" the stricken man replied. "I hear them screaming from the basement every night."

He had  
his life  
imagined  
Chicago, b

had deserted from the Czarist army in Russia in 1898, and an illiterate, mentally disturbed mother.

His whole childhood had a nightmarish quality. He grew up in a dilapidated Jewish-Italian neighborhood, where little boys became street-fighters to survive.

His sister, Eva, called him "Sparky" because of his quick temper and his brawling habits. By the time he was 10, said his brother Earl, "he was always getting into fights and winnin' em." His father, in those years, drank heavily, worked rarely, and not infrequently assaulted his wife with his fists. She was later confined to a mental institution.

When Ruby was 12, welfare authorities placed him in a foster home, although he later rejoined his parents and got an eighth grade education before he quit school.

Thereafter he lived by his wits on the streets, as a peddler, a ticket scalper and odd-jobs boy. During the Depression he sold newspapers in San Francisco, and later returned to Chicago as an organizer for the Junkyard Workers Union.

Ruby was drafted in 1941 at the age of 30, was trained as an aircraft mechanic, but never left the United States. After he was mustered out, his sister Eva invited him to come to Dallas as her partner in the nightclub business. They opened two striptease joints, one of them, "The Carousel," which Ruby managed until his rendezvous with Lee Harvey Oswald in the basement of the Dallas police station more than three years ago.

### Sought Place in Sun

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seedy, after-hours club, Ruby tried for a place in the sun. He changed his name from Rubenstein to Ruby, ingratiated himself with policemen and newspaper reporters and became protective, in his own fashion, of the girls who worked in his club.

On at least 15 occasions, he beat up people who offended him and customers who got out of line. Once, the Warren Commission discovered, he pistol-whipped a man severely. On another occasion, he threw a customer down the stairs at his club.

For all that, he desperately wished to "be liked," to have "class" and distinction, to prove something to himself and to the world. That, in any case, is how his family, his friends, and his lawyers explained him. His murder of Oswald, he declared, was intended as much as anything to "show the world that Jews have guts."

He also said at the time that he had great admiration for Kennedy and deep sympathy for his widow and children.

Whatever his motives, he made his history on Nov. 24, 1963. A little before 11 a.m. he went to a telegraph office near the Dallas police headquarters to send \$25 to a stripper down on her luck in Fort Worth.

From there he walked to the basement of the city jail, where a large crowd of reporters and policemen were as-

sembled to witness Oswald's transfer to another jail.

Ruby slipped through the crowd and faced Oswald from a distance of only a few feet as he came through an office doorway.

### Dead in 2 Hours

Ruby darted forward and fired one shot into Oswald's stomach from a .38 caliber Colt revolver. The time was 12:20 p.m. Within less than two hours Oswald was dead and Ruby was in a jail cell.

In the aftermath, of that incredible moment, Ruby was convicted of murder in 1964 and was sentenced to death in the electric chair. But last October his conviction was overturned and a second trial was scheduled for February of this year in Wichita Falls, Texas.

In the days before his death,

Ruby insisted as he had insisted since Nov. 24, 1963, that he was not part of any conspiracy, that Oswald was a total stranger, and that he acted out of motives he himself could not explain.

The Warren Commission agreed with Ruby's story. But that was not the unanimous reaction. Profound doubts arose and the belief that Ruby and Oswald were joined in a conspiracy gained wide currency, especially overseas.

In his statement to the Warren Commission, Ruby said, "All I did was walk down there, down to the bottom of the ramp (below the police station) and that's when the incident happened—at the bottom of the ramp. . . . It happened in such a blur that . . . before I knew it I was on the ground. The officers had me on the ground. . . . I can't recall what happened from the time I came to the bottom of the ramp until the police officers had me on the ground."

Elmer Gertz, one of Ruby's unpaid lawyers, said he was satisfied that this was a faithful account of what happened. "When he shot Oswald," said Gertz in Chicago yesterday, "he was in a blackout. He knew he shot Oswald, but he had no real memory of the experience."

One of Ruby's last requests was to be given a new lie detector test to prove his story. But it was denied. Instead, Ruby made a tape recording in which, according to his brother, he said: "I'm not hiding anything. I'm not protecting anybody. There is nothing to hide, no one to protect. Believe me." As for Oswald, he "had never known him or seen him before."

### Blood Clot in Lungs

At the hospital yesterday, Dr. Earl Rose, the Dallas County health examiner, said the blood clot that took Ruby's life was in his lungs, and may have been brought on by his cancerous condition.

"Cancer robs the body of energy and vitality," he said. "This led him to be bedridden. Tumors themselves may predispose to cloth. He developed a blood clot in the leg . . . This breaks loose and travels and causes death."

Dr. Rose and Dr. Eugene Frankel, who treated Ruby at the hospital, said his cancer was so widespread it probably could not have been

stopped, even if there had not been a clot.

"The autopsy findings showed extensive tumor involvement of both lungs and the regional lymph nodes," said Dr. Rose. "The tumor had traveled to his liver."

Dr. Frankel said, "Yesterday he was quite comfortable. In the evening there was some increase in shortness of breath, bringing up the question of a condition change. He received oxygen."

"This morning, he awoke, had his bath and seemed very jovial and comfortable. He ordered eggs for breakfast. He had a seizure this morning between 9:10 and 9:12 a.m. (CST) and was not responsive after that."

Since Dec. 9, Ruby had lost 20 pounds, the doctors said.

When he died, 20 persons, including members of his family, were at his bedside.

He will be buried in Chicago.

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Photo © 1963 by The Dallas Times and Bob Jahn  
 Study Ruby's hand and position of gun as position of  
 The famous picture of Lee Harvey Oswald grimacing after being shot by Jack Ruby in the Dallas police station.

**RUBY**—From Page A1

*Det. Krave's hand x Oswald, Obviously already shot  
 If Ruby had pulled trigger he would have got James' fingers.*

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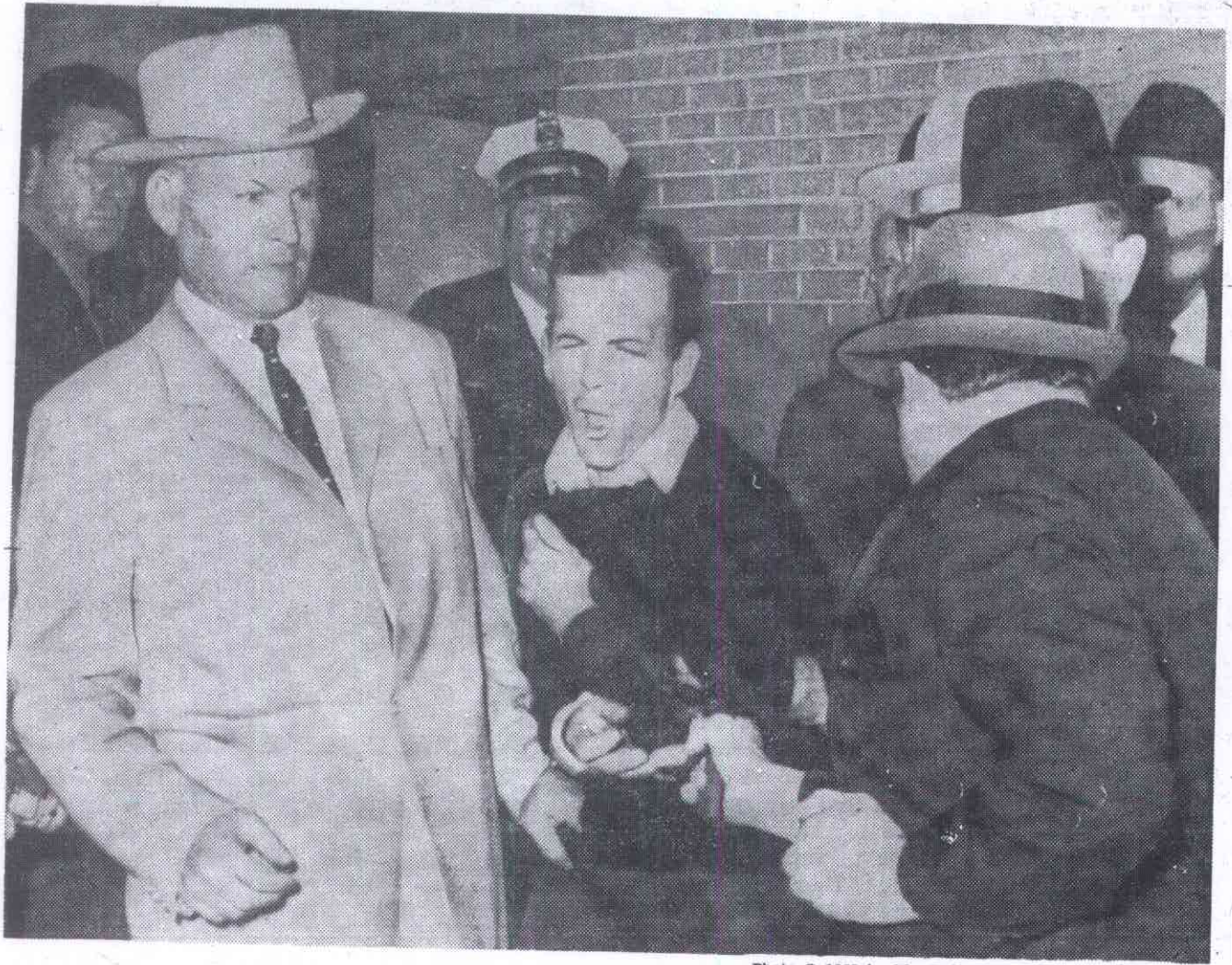


Photo © 1963 by The Dallas Times and Bob Jackson

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