

'No One To Protect, Believe Me'

Dallas, Jan. 3 (AP)—Jack Ruby denied it to the edge of death. But even his family could not help asking, because so many other people seemed to be asking, whether he really acted alone, and not as part of a conspiracy, to kill the accused assassin of President Kennedy.

And so, near the end, Earl Ruby asked his brother again, as he had many times before:

"Are you sure, Jack, there was nothing else?"

And Jack Ruby answered, according to his brother:

"I'm not hiding anything. I'm not protecting anybody. There is nothing to hide, no one to protect. Believe me."

As he lay in his guarded room in Parkland Memorial Hospital, stricken with cancer, Ruby often seemed to be begging the world to believe he would take no secrets to the grave.

He also was tormented by hallucinations in which he imagined that millions of American Jews were being slain in a pogrom as punishment because he, a Jew, silenced the alleged killer of a President.

Ruby could be rational on certain levels and wholly irrational on others, according to those closest to him. For example, he might be watching a football game on television and something would touch him off—like a penalty. Worse is being done to the Jews, he would say.

Ruby insisted that he alone, without plan or prompting, shot Lee Harvey Oswald.

He swore also that rumors of secret meetings relating to the President's assassination, the killing of J. D. Tippit, the Dallas policeman, and the slaying of Oswald, were lies invented by "momserem," a Yiddish epithet.

These details of Ruby's last days came from his brother, Earl, a Detroit business man; Elmer Gertz, a Chicago attorney prominent on the legal team which won reversal of the death sentence given to Ruby in 1964, and, through them, from other members of the family.

The Ruby murder trial and the Warren Commission report supported conclusions that Ruby acted alone in the shooting of Oswald—a shooting witnessed by a television audience of millions of Americans Sunday, November 24,



Jack Ruby hears death verdict in Dallas courtroom

1963.

But a boiling controversy about the Warren report has produced various theories of conspiracies—some of which give Ruby a hidden role. However, Gertz said:

"He simply could not conceive that people could not see that he not only acted alone but that they could take this and twist it into a premise for giving him a role in a plot against the President, a man he worshipped."

Ruby sought no forgiveness for shooting Oswald, Gertz said. He explained:

"I don't think Jack mentioned

his name more than a few times in the many times I saw him, and then it was as if Oswald was a figure beyond his comprehension. Jack saw himself as a kind of instrument. He did not have the delusion that God told him to do it, or that he was an instrument of any people, but that it happened without his conscious will."

But Ruby sought forgiveness from America's Jews. He was convinced that his crime had triggered a pogrom in which Jews were being transported to Dallas and tortured to death in the basement of the Dallas Jail.

"That is not true, Jack. It is not true," Earl Ruby told him. And so did many others whom he ordinarily trusted.

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

Ruby also complained that his cancer was induced secretly in jail. When he experienced difficulty breathing early in December and was taken to the hospital, it was thought that he had pneumonia. He took this as proof that mustard gas was seeped into his cell. When his condition was diagnosed as cancer, he was certain it had been injected into him.

However, his family praised the treatment Ruby received in Parkland, although they complained that his condition had been neglected or brushed off as "hamming it up" in jail.

Ruby spent his last day in a large private room which had one wall dominated by a wide window. A nurse and two deputy sheriffs were always on duty. Ruby spent hours watching television, especially football games.

On Saturday afternoon, December 17, he felt so good, he motioned for his sister, Eileen, to come to his side.

"Eileen, do me a favor," he asked.

He handed her a list for pastrami, corned beef, kosher dill pickles, rye bread, lox, cream cheese, green onions, and bagels.

"The doctors didn't object," Gertz said. "Of course, Jack couldn't hold that food down, but to deny it to him would be like denying a condemned man his last meal."

Near the end, his mood—according to the family—changed to one of "black despair."

And he whispered that he did not want to die far from home. Home, for Ruby, was Chicago, the city of his birth.

To his brothers and sisters, Ruby was to the end, a "fine, sympathetic, generous man."

Though they were convinced his shooting of Oswald was an impulsive act and that he did it entirely alone, they, too, were con-

fused by all the rumors and arguments.

During such fleeting moments of doubt, they would ask if there were any others who might also have been responsible.

Gertz and Earl Ruby said Ruby was fully aware of the controversy about the Warren report.

"He knew of the incredible constructions by various critics in which it was hinted that there were secret meetings, that Jack might have had connections with Oswald, or with J. D. Tippitt [the police officer Oswald was also accused of killing]," Gertz said.

One day in December, Gertz asked Ruby: "Jack, tell me, did you know Tippitt? People keep on saying you knew him."

3 Tippitts On Force

"First of all," Ruby said, "there were three Tippitts on the Police Department. The one who was shot I never knew, never heard of. One of the other Tippitts I knew."

"What about Oswald? Was he ever in your night club; did you ever meet him or see him?"

"The first time I ever saw Oswald was in the jail after he was arrested. I never saw him in my club and I never met him before in my life," Ruby said.

Ruby, a strip-tease club operator who generally viewed accomplished and cultured people as inhabitants of a remote world, had an uncharacteristic reaction to a meeting with Chief Justice Earl Warren June 7, 1964.

Lent His Glasses

During the interview, according to Gertz, Warren asked Ruby to read something.

"I can't. I don't have my glasses," Ruby replied.

Warren removed his spectacles and handed them over. Ruby then read the passage without difficulty.

Months later, Gertz asked Ruby what he thought of the Chief Justice.

"But He's So Naive"

"Oh, he's such a wonderful man," Ruby answered, and then, added confidentially, "but he's so naive."

Gertz said, "I asked him, 'Why do you say that?' and all he did was shrugged his shoulders."

Transcripts of the Warren interview show Ruby repeatedly saying he had more to tell, but that he would have to be taken from Dallas. He wanted to go to Washington. One critic of the Warren report, Mark Lane, has inferred something sinister from the fact that Ruby was not taken from Dallas.

"The things he said to me in utmost secrecy were things that

could be said anywhere, Dallas or Washington," Gertz said. "I could not enter his mind, but I am certain to my satisfaction that there was no more to tell. Jack confabulated. He tried to insinuate knowledge."

"For example, when he shot Oswald, he was in a blackout. He knew he shot Oswald, but he had no real memory of the experience. The same thing is true about his explanation of why he shot Oswald. He said he did it because he wanted to spare Jacqueline Kennedy the ordeal of have to come back to Dallas for a trial. That was something he confabulated."

Offended His Pride

It offended his pride to be called insane, so what he attempted to do is show that he knew from memory details about something when indeed it was something he learned about later."

Did Ruby have appreciation of the calamity he caused history by shooting Oswald?

"As for the impact on history, that was much too sophisticated a concept for him," Gertz said. It really did not register in any meaningful way with him."

Believes It True

Until he fell ill of cancer, Ruby's lawyers planned a defense that they were convinced would have spared him the electric chair and perhaps set him free.

Their opinion was that Ruby would be found guilty of murder without malice and possibly receive as punishment a one-year suspended sentence.

Gertz, who like the other lawyers served without fee, was asked if he was satisfied that Ruby died telling the truth?

"Yes," he said.

Bulletins Trace Deaths In Dallas

Dallas, Jan. 3 (AP)—Here are texts of momentous bulletins issued from Parkland Hospital on the deaths of the three principal figures in the John F. Kennedy assassination:

"President Kennedy died today at 1 P.M. at Parkland Hospital." (from Malcolm Kilduff, presidential press aide from Trauma Room 1 November 22, 1963.)

"Lee Harvey Oswald died in surgery at 1:33 P.M. today at Parkland Memorial Hospital." (from the hospital November 24, 1963.)

"Jack Ruby expired at 10:30 this morning at Parkland Memorial Hospital in Dallas." (from the hospital today).