

From Newspaper Revision -

Did Jack Ruby Keep Death Watch In Dallas?

By James L. Moore

The nation was stunned and on edge. The eyes of a planet were focused on a sprawling white medical complex known as Parkland Memorial Hospital, waiting to hear whether the President of the United States was dead or alive.

Newspaper reporter Seth Kantor didn't have a lot of time to think about his own feelings that day; he was a newsman and he had a job to do. At 1:27, Kantor hung up the phone and wound his way through the main entrance, about 100 yards from where he had phoned.

As the reporter walked through a small doorway, he felt someone tugging at his coat. He turned, hoping whatever it was wouldn't take long—he didn't want to miss the official statement. The man behind him was Jack Ruby.

"Hi, Jack," Kantor said; he had met the short, balding nightclub owner before and Ruby was familiar to him. He also knew Ruby was a talker and he was trying to figure a way to get out of a conversation. "Should I close my places for the next three nights, do you think?" Ruby asked. "I don't know, Jack, what's everyone else doing? Just follow the competition." With that, Kantor turned and went on to the pressroom.

Ruby wandered about outside in the press of people who were craning their necks for a glimpse of anything unusual. Standing next to Ruby was a woman named Mrs. Wilma Tice.

Another man came up and slipped Ruby on the shoulder.

"How are you doing, Jack?" he said. "When I first noticed him," Mrs. Tice recalls, "was when this man walked up to him, because I thought this was a detective or something, because he had a suitcase. I was standing about three feet from them. At that point, Jack turned around and started talking to him. At the time, he was facing right toward me."

Apparently, the Warren Commission felt this testimony was dangerous and intended to destroy it by claiming, "The only other person besides Kantor who recalled seeing Ruby at the hospital . . . had never seen Ruby before, allegedly saw him only briefly then, had an obstructed view and was uncertain of the time."

But this statement is an outright lie. Mrs. Tice's view was not obstructed, but was a full front-face view from a distance of only three feet.

And the Commission was ignoring the fact that there was another witness—the "detective" with the suitcase—who, for reasons unknown, chose not to come forward with his story.

Another individual in the crowd made the remark that Governor Connally had been shot in the kidney, and Mrs. Rice recalls Ruby saying, "Well, couldn't someone give him a kidney?" "Who the hell would give him a kidney?" someone replied.

"I would," Ruby answered. Ruby never called his friend by name and the friend never mentioned Jack's last name. The conversation took less than five minutes and the stranger left.

Then, in April 1964, Mrs. Tice was injured in an auto accident and hospitalized. The Jack Ruby trial was in progress. When the guilty verdict was returned, Mrs. Tice, having followed the trial closely, made a phone call which changed her life.

"Well, I called Eva Grant, Jack Ruby's sister, she said: Eva had flown down from Chicago for the trial. "It was no more than a sympathy call. And when I called her I didn't get her on the phone, I got Eileen (another sister) on the phone."

"She said they were so shocked and all torn up, and I said, yes, it was quite a shock to me that Ruby would take another life when two days before I saw him wanting to save Governor Connally's life by giving a kidney."

Apparently, Ruby's actions also made no sense to his sister, who replied, "Oh, he's sick, he's just sick. He's been acting peculiar ever since this thing happened."

Mrs. Tice continues her story: "Eileen asked if she could come out and talk to me, if she could come out to the house. So she and Eva came out and two newspaper reporters came along."

"Did you know that Jack himself has denied very vehemently he was out at the hospital?" Mrs. Tice was asked. In the vigorous questioning that followed, Mrs. Tice stuck to her story that it was Jack Ruby she had seen at the hospital. Ruby's sisters both denied that their brother had been there.

Shortly after April 21, 1964, when she was no longer confined to bed, a newsman



Jack Ruby said he was willing to give his kidney to save Gov. Connally's life. Two days later he committed the first televised murder, gunning down Lee Harvey Oswald.

claiming to be from WFAA-TV in Dallas called at her home and wanted her to repeat her story and pose for pictures.

"Mrs. Tice told him the same story," claims an FBI report, "and he advised her not to talk about this. Mrs. Tice does not know why he gave her such advice, although she refused to permit her picture to be taken by this man or anyone else."

The phone call must have been effective, for Mrs. Tice and her family fled Dallas in terror, going to St. Louis, Mo.

The incident at Parkland Memorial Hospital is puzzling. Why did Ruby "very vehemently" deny being there, despite the statements of two eyewitnesses, including one who had known him before?

Who was the mystery man with "the suitcase" who appeared to Mrs. Wilma Tice to be a detective?

Who was it who told Mrs. Tice to keep her mouth shut about what she had seen? The answers probably lie smoldering in Jack Ruby's grave—along with dozens of other answers to the questions surrounding the crime of the century.