

RUBY, Jack Leon. (? , 1911-January 3, 1967), assassin, was born Jacob Rubenstein in Chicago, Illinois, the son of Joseph Rubenstein, a carpenter, and Fannie Turek Rutkowski, Yiddish speaking Polish-Jewish immigrants. The fifth of eight living children he grew to manhood in the midst of poverty in a violent slum, his father an irregularly employed alcoholic and his mother suffering from intermittent mental disease. Amid constant family tumult he finally completed the eighth grade. He was quick tempered, impulsive, a street brawler, and emotional.

A nobody who aspired to be somebody he possessed neither the means nor the natural resources to achieve his goal. In this respect he was not much different than non-Jews born into unhappy families whose parents could not make a living. So Ruby began making a living anyway he could; he became a creature of society and his tainted environment as he sought to rid himself of their hobbling restraints. He did not have the ability to become a real gangster, but was a hanger-on at pool halls, gymnasiums, and local establishments. He looked to others to do what they wanted him to. The overriding ^{desire?} factor of his life was to have others like him. He failed at every project or business enterprise he undertook throughout his life.

In the 1930s he engaged in street peddling, selling of racing sheets, and running sales promotions. From 1937 until 1940 he worked as a union organizer for Local 20467 of the Scrap Iron and Junk Handlers Union. He then sold novelties and punch boards for gambling until drafted into the Air Force in 1943. Upon discharge in 1946 he sold novelties until 1947 when he moved to Dallas, Texas. The same year he changed his name.

With rocky finances he ultimately became owner of the Carousel Club, a sleazy night club featuring striptease acts. Chaos marked his finances and taxes. He was noted for a volatile temper and sudden violent acts. He was a police fan,

buff?

making friends of officers and in other ways ingratiating himself to those in positions of visible power.

He had earned several minor arrests, traffic tickets, and license violations, and had charges made against him. Some charges were serious. The Dallas District Attorney Henry Wade turned his Ruby files over to the FBI where they disappeared (Wade). One of the files carried a letter from the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Ruby had a dog named Sheba whom he sometimes referred to as his wife, e. g., a rabbi related he once remarked "'this is my wife'--and pointed to one of the dogs" (Kaplan and Waltz, p. 275). The SPCA's concern was Ruby was treating her that way. It had reason to believe it.

(?)

Another complaint charged that at a fair Ruby publicly fondled the breasts of girls entering puberty, remarking to friends, "I'm just breaking them in to come to work for me."

Under pressure the FBI grudgingly admitted contact with Ruby to enlist him as a criminal informant, but that he did not make the grade. It refused to release its records. The process of recruitment would have generated Criminal Informant files ^{unification} serial 137 on the contact, enlistment, pay, and results ^{and entered file at} both at the Dallas Field Office as well as FBI Headquarters.

The November 22, 1963, death of President John F. Kennedy gave Ruby a serendipitous opportunity to be a somebody. The time frame and act negate a conspiracy. At 10:00 a.m. on November 24, ^{announced} the police broadcast they would move Oswald from the city jail to the county jail for better security. ^{They was delayed because} As they proceeded a postal inspector ^{debayed at} who had left church services ^{wanted} on pang of conscience to complete his interrogation of Oswald ^{Arrive past transferring Oswald} arrived and delayed the transfer. Only at 11:15 did the authorities know when they would effect the move by descending the elevator into the basement and waiting van. At 11:17 ^{7/1} a.m., Ruby stopped ^{telegraphed \$25.00 by} at the Western Union ^{was opposite} building adjacent to the police station to send money to one of his strippers, an act ^{whose office}

The ^{is} ~~and~~ time unequivocally sustained by witnesses and documents. He then walked ^{and with about} into the station basement ^{in the area, as Oswald, is believed to} just as 70 or more police officers emerged with Oswald. ^{DeBarber}
James Russell Smith
 At 11:21 a.m. Ruby shot Oswald, ^{with one fatal shot} who died on the way to the hospital.

9 The killing unleashed a torrent ^{conspiracy} of speculation that a conspiracy had existed to ~~kill President Kennedy~~. In the aftermath federal officials launched a massive investigation of Ruby, while at the same time focusing on holding Oswald up as the lone assassin. The official investigation "found no evidence that . . . Jack Ruby was part of any conspiracy, domestic or foreign," (Warren Report, p. 21), a conclusion embraced by responsible critics.

No solid reason exists to believe that Oswald and Ruby had ever seen each other, let alone conspired together. The rumors of it are unconfirmed and without sense. ^{Ruby's act alone meted any assassination trial. That accounts for the} At the same time no credible evidence links Oswald to the murder of ^{subsequent controversies and for its ending and being a very disenchanted with} President Kennedy, thus rendering Ruby's act singularly damaging to the national ^{government. This is reflected in all the military polls. In killing Oswald Ruby prevented} inquiry into the murder by falsely affirming in the most spectacular manner ^{the trial at which evidence would be admitted and tested} possible Oswald as the true assassin. Ruby's historical role was to deny the nation and history a trial of Oswald.

The presumptions that the Mafia or the Central Intelligence Agency or Cuba was behind the assassination through Ruby are mythologies that spurns known and indisputable facts. Dallas treated Ruby well in jail and his oft cited remark to Chief Justice Earl Warren of the Commission investigating the crime that if taken to Washington he would talk was prattle from a mind increasingly irrational. A psychiatrist who evaluated him for his defense counsel reported that Ruby had serious psychiatric problems and was "not now capable of cooperating intelligently in his own defense" (West).

Dallas tried Ruby for murder, found him guilty, and sentenced him to death, an unusual act in a city where the typical sentence for gunshot murder was eight years. Appeals overturned the sentence in October 1966. While he awaited a

second trial Sheriff Bill Decker noted he was ill and ordered him examined. The ~~hospital to which the President had been taken there~~ ^{and was transferred to the Parkland} ~~Dallas doctors detected~~ ^{were detected} advanced stages of cancer, apparently of the brain. He ~~lived only a few weeks.~~ ^{soon died of} A responsible autopsy affirmed the findings. The historical question will forever linger ^{and this of} of whether the illness had been of such long duration ~~to have controlled~~ ^{to} his behavior in 1963.

Bibliography: Ruby left few papers and gave a half-dozen different dates for his birth, but all in the year 1911. A vast federal collection of documents related to Ruby compiled by the assassination investigations is in the National Archives. The Texas Court of Inquiry left files. The papers of most major figure involved in the investigation contains material on Ruby, including at the federal level Gerald Ford, Richard Russell, John Sherman Cooper, Earl Warren, Lyndon B. Johnson, and Allen Dulles and at the local level Texas Attorney General Waggoner Carr. The psychiatric report of Dr. L. J. West is in the Cooper papers as is that of Dr. R. L. Stubblefield. The papers of critic and scholar Harold Weisberg, Frederick, MD, to be deposited in Hood College, contain essential files, along with his correspondence with District Attorney Henry Wade, his notes and aide memoirs on the Wade files and Ruby. The Warren Commission *Report* (1964) discusses him throughout and includes a biography, pp. 779-806, while its 26 volume *Hearings and Exhibits* (1964) contains essential exhibits and witness testimony. The House Select Committee on Assassinations ¹⁹⁷⁹ *Report* and 12 volumes of reports and testimony (1979) represent the ineptness of the second major federal investigation.

Almost every book on the assassination of JFK discusses Ruby, most superficially and with scholarship distorted by theories. Four volumes on the trial itself that also discuss his life are, Melvin M. Belli and Maurice C. Carroll, *Dallas Justice* (1964), John Kaplan and Jon R. Waltz, *The Trail of Jack Ruby* (1965),

Ruby
w/...

Garry Wills and Ovid Demaris, *Jack Ruby* (1968), and Elmer Gertz, *Moment of Madness: The People vs. Jack Ruby* (1968). Most of the volumes discussing Ruby are flawed by mythology, such as Renatus Hartogs and Lucy Freeman, *The Two Assassins* (1965) Seth Kantor, *The Ruby Cover-Up* (1978) and Mark Lane, *Rush to Judgment* (1966). A representative refutation of the speculators is in the objective refutation of Lane by Gertz, pp. 507-543, and Wills and Demaris, pp. 160-167, 280-246. The best approach to President Kennedy's assassination is through Harold Weisberg's *Whitewash* (1965) and *Never Again* (1995) and Sylvia Meagher's *Accessories After the Fact* (1967).