

Jack Ruby Denies Knowing Oswald

By JACK LANGGUTH

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DALLAS, Jan. 21 — Jack Ruby denied today that he had ever met Lee H. Oswald before killing him.

Ruby spoke distraughtly as he appeared at a bail hearing, which ended abruptly at noon when his attorneys withdrew their request that he be released on bond.

At an impromptu news conference Ruby also denied that he went to Cuba five years ago to sell supplies to the Government of Fidel Castro.

He said he visited Cuba early in 1959 for a brief vacation. His plan to export goods to that country collapsed earlier for lack of financing, he explained.

He charged that details of his trip as presented by the prosecution, had been "fabrications."

Ruby's description of the Cuban episode was jumbled and difficult to follow. He was posing for photographers before the hearing, when reporters questioned him.

The attorney at his side, Joe H. Tonahill, made no attempt to stop him from answering.

Pale and agitated, Ruby recalled that the United States was on harmonious terms with Cuba at his visit. Jack Paar, the television performer, and other entertainment figures were in Cuba about that time, he said.

Knowing that Cuba was "a new country opening up," he said, he previously tried to communicate with a Houston businessman about exporting such products as fertilizer and jeeps to the island, "but I never got to first base."

"I wanted to get out of the beer business, to be honest with you," the 52-year-old night club proprietor added.

He said he had gone to Cuba by way of New Orleans. In Havana, he went on, he stayed at the apartment of a friend, L. J. McWillie.

He said the Cuban police had questioned him extensively — "they have a little Gestapo there."

Denies He Was Angry

He said he had learned that "the United States didn't like the idea of helping Castro."

Asked about previous contacts with Oswald, the accused assassin of President Kennedy, Ruby declared:

"I never spoke to Lee Oswald in my life. I never saw him or knew of him."

Ruby, who is charged with killing Oswald last Nov. 24, became more nervous and excited as he spoke. Unexpectedly, he said:

"The word angry is not in my vocabulary. I was more remorseful than angry."

Asked what he had meant, he said that after the assassination of President Kennedy he had often been described as angry.

Ruby was asked how he had felt when the President was killed.

"Look at him," Mr. Tonahill said. "That will tell you."

Ruby was swallowing repeatedly; he had become pale and was trembling; tears came to his eyes.

He replied in a high, choked voice: "I can't understand how a great man like that can be lost." Mr. Tonahill cut off further questions.

The defense was understood to have expected that Judge Joe B. Brown would deny the request for bond. The lawyers withdrew the petition to avoid beginning the case with a setback that would have implied, under Texas law, that Ruby might receive the death penalty.

As the hearing ended they filed a brief requesting that the trial be moved outside Dallas.

"Rightfully or wrongfully," the defense argued, "the Dallas community has been blamed for the assassination of the President. Rightfully or wrongfully, the Dallas community has been blamed for allowing the shooting of the assassin."

"Representatives of the Dallas community have expressed self-recrimination feelings. Within Dallas County it is the Dallas community, not Jack Ruby, that is on trial."

Refers to 'Animosity'

The brief also cited a "general animosity" against Ruby, "incited and aided by adverse publicity," as a reason that he could not receive a fair trial in Dallas County.

Twenty-one other reasons were given, including "anti-Semitism against Ruby, sparked by publicity that his name had been changed from Rubenstein, and "adverse local press stories carrying innuendos of conspiracy between Ruby, Oswald and Communists."

An 18-page list of quotations on the case by Dallas area newspapers was appended to the brief.

After a consultation with Henry Wade, Dallas District Attorney, and Melvin M. Belli, Ruby's chief defense attorney, Judge Brown said he would consider the petition for a change of Venue Feb. 10. The opening of the trial was set for Feb. 17.