

## RUBY COURTROOM COLOR

BY RELMAN MORIN

DALLAS MARCH 14 (AP)—FOR JACK RUBY, FATE WAS A RAP ON THE DOOR OF THE JURY ROOM, REPEATED THREE TIMES.

WHEN THE DOOR WAS OPENED, MAX CAUSEY, 35, A STOCKY, SANDY-HAIRED ELECTRONICS TECHNICIAN, WAS WAITING THERE. ABOUT TWO HOURS EARLIER, HE HAD BEEN ELECTED FOREMAN OF THE JURY IN RUBY'S MURDER TRIAL. HE HELD A SHEAF OF PAPERS IN HIS HAND.

"WE HAVE A VERDICT," CAUSEY SAID TO THE BAILIFF.

THE ELECTRIC CLOCK IN THE COURTROOM SHOWED 11:34 A.M. (CST.).

AT 12:20, RUBY CAME IN, FLANKED BY HIS GUARDS.

SEVERAL WITNESSES IN HIS TRIAL, RELATING SOME INCIDENT, SAID OF HIM, "HE SEEMED TO BE IN A TRANCE." OR, "HE HAD A FIXED STARE."

THIS WAS THE WAY HE LOOKED JUST BEFORE HE HEARD HIMSELF SENTENCED TO DEATH IN THE ELECTRIC CHAIR--IN A TRANCE, STARING, BLANK-FACED, A MECHANICAL MAN.

HIS LIPS WERE PURSED, PRESSED INTO A TIGHT LINE. THAT WAS THE ONLY SIGN OF FEELING, IF IT WAS A SIGN OF ANYTHING.

INSTANTLY, HIS THREE ATTORNEYS--MELVIN BELLI, JOE TONAHILL AND PHIL BURLESON--CROWDED CLOSE TO HIM. THEY KNEW, OR STRONGLY SUSPECTED, THAT RUBY WAS ABOUT TO BE FOUND GUILTY OF THE CHARGE OF MURDERING LEE HARVEY OSWALD. THEIR WHISPERED WORDS WERE INAUDIBLE.

PROBABLY THEY WERE REASSURING HIM, TELLING HIM THAT, WHATEVER THE VERDICT, IF CONVICTED, THEY WOULD APPEAL.

RUBY CONTINUED TO STARE STRAIGHT AHEAD. HE DIDN'T SPEAK. BUT HE NODDED HIS HEAD, SLIGHTLY.

IN A REAR CORNER OF THE COURTROOM, TO THE RIGHT OF JUDGE JOE B. BROWN'S BENCH, A TELEVISION CAMERA WAS TR

IN A REAR CORNER OF THE COURTROOM, TO THE RIGHT OF JUDGE JOE B. BROWN'S BENCH, A TELEVISION CAMERA WAS TRAINED ON THE SCENE. OUTSIDE, TELEVISION NETWORKS PREPARED TO BROADCAST THE READING OF THE VERDICT.

ONE OF RUBY'S SISTERS, MRS. EILEEN KAMINSKY, CAME IN, WALKING RAPIDLY, AND TOOK A SEAT TOWARD THE REAR OF THE COURTROOM. SHE WAS WEARING DARK GLASSES. IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY WHETHER SHE GLANCED AT HER BROTHER.

THE WIVES OF BELLI AND TONAHILL ENTERED TOGETHER. THEY LOOKED WORRIED.

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A LOW MURMURING FILLED THE COURTROOM UNTIL THE JUDGE ASCENDED THE BENCH. HE IS A BIG MAN, WITH A LEONINE HEAD, A MANE OF GREY-BLACK HAIR.

THE ROOM BECAME UTTERLY STILL.

DIST. ATTY. HENRY M. WADE, WHO HAD BEEN LEANING AGAINST THE RAIL OF THE JURY BOX, AN UNLIT STUB OF A CIGAR IN THE CORNER OF HIS MOUTH, TOOK HIS SEAT AT THE PROSECUTION TABLE.

BELLI, FOR THE FIRST TIME WITHOUT A NECKTIE, AND WEARING A BLACK SPORTS SHIRT, TURNED FROM A CLUSTER OF REPORTERS WITH WHOM HE HAD BEEN SPEAKING, AND TOOK HIS SEAT. ALL THE OTHER LAWYERS SAT DOWN.

THREE SPECIAL GUARDS, SEATED IN THE FRONT ROW OF THE PRESS SECTION, LEANED FORWARD, TOWARD RUBY. INSIDE THE ATTORNEYS' RAIL, THREE OTHERS --WHO HAVE BEEN DETAILED TO ESCORT HIM IN AND OUT OF THE ROOM FOR FOUR WEEKS--TURNED SO THEY COULD WATCH THE CROWD.

RUBY'S EYES BLINKED ONCE OR TWICE. HE TURNED HIS HEAD SLIGHTLY TO THE LEFT, TOWARD THE JUDGE. THERE WAS A FAR-AWAY LOOK IN THEM.

A BAILIFF HANDED BROWN A SHEAF OF PAPERS, ON ONE PAGE OF WHICH THE VERDICT WAS WRITTEN.

IN AN EVEN, COLORLESS VOICE, HE READ THE VERDICT:

"WE, THE JURY, FIND THE DEFENDANT GUILTY OF MURDER WITH MALICE AND ASSESS THE PENALTY AT DEATH."

IT WAS OVER. LONG DAYS OF TURMOIL, ARGUMENT, SHOUTING, HOT WHITE LIGHTS FOCUSING ON THIS SCENE OR THAT--ALL WERE TELESCOPED INTO A SINGLE, STUNNING INSTANT.

RUBY, THE OBJECT OF IT ALL, REACTED LIKE "A MAN IN A TRANCE," WITH "A FIXED STARE."

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