

RUBY JUDGE TO LET TV COVER VERDICT

Disregards Wide Objections
to Cameras in Courtroom

By JACK LANGGUTH

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DALLAS, March 13 — Judge Joe B. Brown decided today to permit live television coverage of the delivery of the verdict in the Jack L. Ruby murder trial.

He thereby disregarded widespread objections to cameras in the courtroom.

When Ruby's case was first assigned to his court, civil leaders in Dallas succeeded in dissuading Judge Brown from televising the entire proceedings.

Those who protested his original plan said they found the judge impatient with their demand for restrictions on publicity.

"He just couldn't wait to get on television," one source said. "He kept saying, 'This is for posterity.' Apparently he couldn't hold out any longer."

Spokesmen for the television industry said the judge's decision gave the networks their first opportunity to televise a courtroom proceeding "live" on national television.

Ruby's shooting last November of Lee H. Oswald, the accused assassin of President Kennedy, was also viewed on television as it happened.

One Camera Planned

Judge Brown will allow one television camera, at the rear of the courtroom. The Columbia Broadcasting System won a coin toss among the three networks for the right to use its camera.

The transmission will be sent on one cable to New York, where it will be shared with the National and American Broadcasting Companies.

The camera will be turned on as the jury files down the narrow, winding metal staircase from the deliberation room. It will be cut off immediately after the verdict is read because the judge believes there may be an uproar in the courtroom as reporters leave to file their stories.

The reaction outside the courthouse today to Judge Brown's decision was generally one of disapproval.

Angus Wynne Sr., a lawyer, said he opposed any television in the courtroom.

Mr. Wynne recalled that he had warned the judge before the trial began that Melvin M. Belli and Joe H. Tonahill, defense attorneys, were "trying the case by public opinion."

Mr. Wynne said he had suggested at the time that Judge Brown put an end to defense news conferences inside the courtroom.

Sam Bloom, whose advertising agency has handled press arrangements for the judge, said,

"I think it's very unfortunate that the trial was not continued as it was started."

In every state but Texas and Colorado, the courts follow No. 35 of the Canon of Judicial Ethics of the American Bar Association.

The canon states that photographs or broadcasting "detract from the essential dignity of the proceedings, distract participants and witnesses in giving testimony and create misconceptions in respect thereto in the mind of the public and should not be permitted."

In the absence of a Texas statute, the decision on television is left to each judge.

In 1954, the judge in the Harry Washburn murder case permitted the trial to be carried in its entirety "live" in the Waco area where it was being held. The verdict was later reversed, but not because of the presence of the television cameras.

Billie Sol Estes' attorney, John Cofer, protested when the bankrupt financier's trial on fraud charges began before television cameras in Tyler, Tex.

After one day, District Judge Otis Dunagan worked out a substitute procedure. A camera was mounted unobtrusively in the courtroom within a box, with a slit for the lens.

The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals recently rejected Estes' contention that the television coverage constituted grounds for reversal.

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