

T

EB67FX (BELLI HEE XXX HERE)

RBY

20 JULY 1964

713 PPS

(FX OUT)

BELLI

SAN FRANCISCO, JULY 20 (AP)-ATTORNEY MELVIN M.BELLI FILED A \$5 MILLION LIBEL AND SLANDER SUIT TODAY AGAINST ZALTER E.CRAIG, PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION.

THE SUIT CHARGED THAT CRAIG, A 54-YEAR-OLD PHOENIX LAWYER, MADE FALSE STATEMENTS ABOUT BELLI IN CONNECTION WITH BELLI'S DEFENSE OF JACK RUBY.

THE SUPERIOR COURT SUIT NAMED 20 CO-DEFENDANTS, IDENTIFIED AS "JOHN DOES," AND CLAIMED THEY AND CRAIG HAD "SOUGHT TO VILIFY AND DEFAME" BELLI BECAUSE OF A "PERSONAL ANIMUS AND ILL WILL" TOWARD HIM.

THE SUIT ASKED FOR \$3 MILLION GENERAL AND \$2 MILLION PUNITIVE DAMAGES.

BELLI CHARGED THAT CRAIG TOLD A NEWS CONFERENCE AND A MEETING OF LAWYERS IN SAN FRANCISCO THAT HE HAD BEEN "UNETHICAL" IN CALLING RUBY'S GUILTY VERDICT "A VICTORY FOR BIGOTRY AND INJUSTICE."

"LAWYERS DO HAVE THE SAME RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF SPEECH IN A DEMOCRACY AS LAYMEN AND NEWSPAPERMEN," THE SUIT DECLARED. "TO ALLOW THE PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION TO CHARACTERIZE THE EXERCISE OF FREEDOM OF SPEECH FOR A LAWYER . . . AS UNETHICAL IS AN ABUSE OF POWER. . ."

THE SUIT ATTRIBUTED TO CRAIG THE STATEMENT THAT BELLI WOULD MAKE A "VIRCUS" OUT OF THE TRIAL OF RUBY, KILLER OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S ALLEGED ASSASSIN, HARVEY LEE OSWALD.

THAT STATEMENT, B

Z

A "CIRCUS" OUT OF THE TRIAL OF RUBY, KILLER OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S ALLEGED ASSASSIN, HARVEY LEE OSWALD.

THAT STATEMENT, BELLI CHARGED, WAS "IN UTTER AND COMPLETE DISREGARD OF A HUMAN BEING'S LIFE" AND "AN ATTEMPT WRONGFULLY TO DISCREDIT" CERTAIN EVIDENCE.

BELLI SAID THE STATEMENT DAMAGED HIS REPUTATION AND HARMED RUBY'S DEFENSE AND PENDING APPEAL.

EB68FX

THE SUIT SAID CRAIG, WHO WAS NOMINATED BY KENNEDY TO A FEDERAL DISTRICT COURT JUDGSHIP IN ARIZONA, "SHOULD HAVE BEEN MINDFUL OF THE IMPARTIAL HIGH POST TO WHICH HE HAS BEEN SO NOMINATED."

CRAIG WILL ASSUME THE JUDGSHIP NEXT MONTH WHEN HE COMPLETES HIS TERM AS PRESIDENT OF THE BAR ASSOCIATION.

HE HAS BEEN NAMED BY CHIEF JUSTICE EARL WARREN TO REPRESENT OSWALD'S INTERESTS BEFORE THE WARREN COMMISSION INVESTIGATING KENNEDY'S ASSASSINATION AND OSWALD'S SLAYING.

MM/MH713PPS NM