

RUBY LAWYERS (290)

DALLAS, MARCH 17 (AP)-THE LONG DISPUTE--INVOLVING ABOUT 20 LAWYERS--ABOUT LEGAL REPRESENTATION FOR JACK RUBY WILL REACH A NEW HIGH POINT FRIDAY.

DIST. JUDGE JOE B. BROWN ANNOUNCED TODAY HE WILL HOLD A HEARING TO DETERMINE WHETHER JOE TONAHILL WILL CONTINUE TO REPRESENT RUBY, SENTENCED TO DEATH FOR THE SLAYING OF LEE HARVEY OSWALD, PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S ASSASSIN.

RUBY HAS BEEN REPRESENTED BY A LONG LINE OF LAWYERS WHO CAME AND WENT, SOME LEAVING AFTER DISPUTES WITH RUBY'S FAMILY.

TONAHILL AND PHIL BURLESON WERE ON THE ORIGINAL TEAM THAT DEFENDED RUBY. THE THIRD, MELVIN BELLI OF SAN FRANCISCO, WAS DISCHARGED SHORTLY AFTER A JURY CONVICTED RUBY.

TEN DAYS AGO, JUDGE BROWN APPOINTED BURLESON AND TONAHILL TO REPRESENT THE FORMER STRIP JOINT OPERATOR AT HIS SANITY HEARING MARCH 29.

RUBY'S FAMILY HAS LONG SOUGHT TO DISCHARGE TONAHILL FROM THE DEFENSE STAFF. TODAY, TONAHILL RESTATED HIS PLANS TO REMAIN ON THE STAFF UNLESS REMOVED BY LEGAL ACTION.

LAST FEB. 17, TONAHILL STATED HIS POSITION AS THIS:

"I CAN'T LEGALLY OR MORALLY QUIT HIM. ANY DOCUMENT HIS BROTHERS AND SISTERS GOT HIM TO SIGN IS WORTHLESS BECAUSE HE IS INSANE."

THE FRIDAY HEARING WILL CONSIDER AN AFFIDAVIT WHICH RUBY SIGNED ASKING THAT TONAHILL BE DISMISSED FROM HIS DEFENSE TEAM.

RUBY IS EXPECTED TO APPEAR IN COURT AND THERE IS A POSSIBILITY HE WILL BE QUESTIONED BY JUDGE BROWN.

THE JUDGE, WHO PRESIDED AT THE ORIGINAL TRIAL, SAID EARLIER THIS WEEK HE WOULD REMOVE TONAHILL IF THAT IS WHAT RUBY WANTS.

THE TEXAS COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS, HIGHEST STATE COURT IN CRIMINAL MATTERS, DECLINED TO HEAR RUBY'S APPEAL FROM THE DEATH SENTENCE UNTIL THE QUESTION OF RUBY'S SANITY HAS BEEN DECIDED. THIS RESULTED IN THE SETTING OF THE SANITY HEARING FOR MARCH 29.

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