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By Tom Johnson

Dallas, Tex., March 17 (AP)- Jack Ruby technically became a federal prisoner today as lawyers petitioned a U.S. district court judge to transfer the complicate case to federal jurisdiction.

"As of now, it's a federal case and Ruby technically is a federal prisoner," said Asst. Dist. Atty. Bill Alexander.

Although the full implications of the action were not clear late today, it's conceivable that the federal court may hold Ruby's fate in hand for an undetermined period.

U.S. Dist/ Judge T. Whitfield Davidson held an afternoon closed court session with lawyers for Ruby and for the state of Texas. The session was recessed until 2 p.m. Friday so that controversial defense lawyer Joe Tonahill of Jasper, Tex., could be present.

Asst. U.S. Atty. Tim Timmins, who was present at today's session, said that by Judge Davidson's very consideration of the case, jurisdiction passed from state to federal court.

District Judge Joe B. Brown, Ruby's murder trial judge, said that the case "is now out of my jurisdiction. Judge Davidson has it."

The state court judge added, "Until he (Davidson) takes some action, I will hold everything in abeyance."

Judge Brown said that his understanding is that the federal judge has taken jurisdiction at this time only over the question of whether Tonahill shall represent Ruby.

"He cancelled my hearing on the attorney question tomorrow," Judge Brown said.

Defense lawyers had petitioned Judge Davidson to do the following:

-- Transfer a proposed sanity trial for Ruby to federal court from state court.

-- Transfer Jack Ruby to federal custody pending further order of the federal court.

-- Enjoin the state of Texas and state courts from taking any further action in the case pending further order of the federal court.

A Ruby defense lawyer -- Sam Houston Clinton of Austin -- filed an 18-point motion in federal court today charging that the defendant's constitutional rights had been violated by recent rulings of Judge Brown.

The motion said the appointment of Tonahill to the defense team constituted one of the violations. It listed as another, Judge Brown's refusal to disqualify himself from the Ruby sanity trial.

Ruby was sentenced to death March 14, 1964, for his slaying of Lee Harvey Oswald, assassin of President Kennedy.

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