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By Tom Johnson

DALLAS, March 31 (AP)- Jack Ruby, killer of President Kennedy's assassin, said today he has given up hope.

Speaking almost in riddles, the one-time girlie-joint operator was asked if he has lost hope.

"I sure have," Ruby said.

Reporters pressed him about whether he expects to be executed in the electric chair, and he would only reply, "Well, you figure it out."

And for the first time, he clearly stated remorse for shooting down Lee Harvey Oswald on Nov. 24, 1963, two days after Oswald killed Kennedy.

Asked if he regretted shooting Oswald, Ruby said:

"Yes, many, many times."

Ruby talked to reporters in his frequently cryptic manner as he was brought into court for a hearing.

The hearing was to question defense lawyers on the reason for their delay in appealing a habeas corpus hearing. Legal maneuvering is being held up pending the appeal to the Texas Criminal Appeals Court.

Ruby, 55, looked better than at most of his court sessions. His color had improved and he had gained weight.

He did not appear at all hopeful of his future. A jury sentenced him to death, but a multitude of appeals have been filed.

"This thing has all been set (sic) and dried from the moment I walked down that ramp," he said today.

Ruby walked down a ramp of the city hall and shot Oswald as he was being taken from the jail in the city hall en route to the County Jail.

Ruby has been in jail since except for court appearances and for psychiatric tests.

Ruby was surrounded as usual by eight to ten deputies.

Asked if all hope was gone, Ruby said, "It sure is. This will be over sooner than you think."

"This is all just a farce," he added.

The habeas corpus hearing seeking Rubb's freedom was held last September. The defense claimed Judge Joe B. Brown~~xxx~~ Sr., who heard the murder trial, was writing a book about it and therefore had a special interest in the case.

Lawyer Phil Burleson of Dallas has said the delay has been caused by errors in the record.

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