

Hot-Tempered Texan

Jack Ruby

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DALLAS, Oct. 5 — Jack Ruby, the man who shot Lee Harvey Oswald in Dallas in November, 1963, has been described by his friends as a semi-illiterate hothead.

Although outwardly a gregarious, nattily dressed individual, he lived in a gloomy apartment cluttered with old boxes and newspapers. And a close friend said he brooded in the privacy of his rooms. He loved animals, especially dogs, but could not establish a close relationship with more than one or two humans.

Many of his acquaintances dodged him because he would lurch out at them in vile language or suddenly strike them with his fists.

Ruby was an accomplished brawler, and would not hesitate to tangle with men six inches taller and 50 pounds heavier than his 5 feet 9 inches and 175 pounds. Nor would he back away from disputes with men smaller than he or with women.

"Jack was always fighting," said one of his sisters.

Since being sentenced to death in March, 1964, Ruby has spent much of his time in the Dallas County Jail drawing and decorating pictures of nude women and playing solitaire under the watchful eyes of jailers.

Although his attorneys said he was insane when he shot Oswald, assassin of President Kennedy, one of Ruby's principal interests has been to prove that he is not now insane, a contention that was upheld in a state court on June 13, 1966.

Ruby has also taken part in the appeals of his death sentence, hiring and dismissing attorneys as the legal complexities of his case have become more and more ensnarled. Today, the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals upset his conviction and ordered a new trial.

A Natty Dresser

Several of the jailers who have conducted the 24-hour-a-day watch on Ruby have become convinced that he has grown tired of the role he has been cast in since the day he shot Oswald, the assassin of President Kennedy.

Although he still dresses in a neat and natty fashion, and still talks very rapidly, in recent months Ruby has appeared to be pale and his talkativeness has appeared to be forced.

Before he shot Oswald to death before a nationwide television audience, Ruby was a loud and boisterous man who used his fists as well as his tongue to express a seemingly



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wide displeasure with life in general.

He was born in Chicago in 1911, the exact date undetermined. During his life, he used a half-dozen or more birth dates.

He was the son of immigrant Jews from Poland and was named Jacob Rubenstein, when he changed it on Dec. 30, 1947, after moving to Dallas.

Ruby, the fifth of eight children, was reared in a Chicago ghetto. His father, an unemployed carpenter for the last 30 years of his life, was frequently drunk. And his

mother had delusions, including one that for years she had a fishbone stuck in her throat. She regularly went to a doctor for treatment of the non-existent fishbone.

When he was 11 years old, Ruby and two younger brothers and a younger sister were taken from the family and put into a foster home for a short time because of the frequent fights between his parents.

After being returned home, he did not stay long, roaming the streets of Chicago with neighborhood gangs. He learned to street brawl, many of his fights being prompted by other ruffians referring to Jews in a derogatory fashion.

Later, when he was running cheap night clubs in Dallas, Ruby would fight patrons who slurred Jews.

He was always hot-tempered and was called "Sparky" when he was a boy because of his temper. Being called by his nickname provoked more than one fight itself, according to a sister, Mrs. Eva Grant.

Ruby left school in the eighth grade and sold tip sheets at race tracks, fell in with gamblers and in general drifted around the country.

After serving as a private first class in the Air Force during World War II, Ruby came to Dallas, where Mrs. Grant was operating a nightclub.

As a nightclub owner, Ruby had a special fondness for police officers, giving them cards entitling them to special prices.

Ruby never married, although he had an 11-year romance with a Dallas divorcee, who says she refused to marry him because of his hot temper, among other things.

One of Ruby's clubs, the Carousel Club, features striptease dancers and had other burlesque features. A number of his former employes told the Warren Commission, which investigated the assassination of President Kennedy, that Ruby was a bad boss, that he frequently refused to pay them and that he used obscene language toward them and sometimes struck them.

Ruby was his own bouncer at his clubs and frequently beat patrons whose conduct he disapproved of. He was arrested several times in Dallas on assault charges.