

A Biography of Jack Ruby

In this appendix the Commission presents a biography of Jack Ruby. Although criminal proceedings involving its subject are pending in the State of Texas, the Commission has decided to include this rather detailed account of Ruby's life and activities for several reasons. Most importantly, the Commission believes it will permit a better evaluation of the evidence on the question whether Ruby was involved in any conspiracy. Furthermore, the Commission believes that in view of the many rumors concerning Ruby the public interest will be served by an account which attempts to give sufficient material to provide an impression of his character and background. The Commission's desire not to interfere in the pending proceedings involving Ruby necessarily limits the scope of this appendix, which does not purport to discuss the legal issues raised during Ruby's trial or his possible motive for shooting Oswald.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Jack Ruby, born Jacob Rubenstein, was the fifth of his parents' eight living children. There is much confusion about his exact birth date. School records report it as June 23, April 25,¹ March 13, and, possibly, March 3, 1911.² Other early official records list his date of birth as April 21 and April 26, 1911.³ During his adult life the date Ruby used most frequently was March 25, 1911.⁴ His driver's license, seized following his arrest, and his statements to the FBI on November 24, 1963, listed this date.⁵ However, the police arrest report for November 24 gave his birth date as March 19, 1911.⁶ Since the recording of births was not required in Chicago prior to 1915, Ruby's birth may never have been officially recorded.⁷ No substantial conflict exists, however, about whether Jack Ruby was born in 1911.⁸

Ruby has one older brother and three older sisters. The oldest children, Hyman and Ann, were born shortly after the turn of the century,⁹ before their parents arrived in the United States.¹⁰ The other children were born in Chicago. Ruby's sister Marion was born in June 1906¹¹ and his sister Eva in March 1909.¹² Ruby also has two younger brothers and a younger sister. Sam was born in December 1912,¹³ Earl in April 1915.¹⁴ The youngest child, Eileen, was born in July 1917.¹⁵ At least one and possibly two other children died during infancy.¹⁶

Jack Ruby's father, Joseph Rubenstein, was born in 1871 in Sokolov, a small town near Warsaw, Poland, then under the rule of Czarist Russia.¹⁷ He entered the Russian artillery in 1893.¹⁸ There he learned

the carpentry trade, which had been practiced by his father and at least one brother¹⁹ and he picked up the habit of excessive drinking that was to plague him for the rest of his life.²⁰ While in the army,²¹ he married Jack's mother, Fannie Turek Rutkowski;²² the marriage was arranged, as was customary, by a professional matchmaker.²³ According to his oldest son, Joseph Rubenstein served in China, Korea, and Siberia, detesting these places and army life. Eventually, in 1898, he simply "walked away" from it and about 4 years later he went to England and Canada, entering the United States in 1903.²⁴

Settling in Chicago, Joseph Rubenstein joined the carpenters union in 1904 and remained a member until his death in 1958.²⁵ Although he worked fairly steadily until 1928, he was unemployed during the last 30 years of his life.²⁶ The only other group which Joseph Rubenstein joined consisted of fellow immigrants from Sokolov. His daughter Eva described this group as purely social and completely nonpolitical.²⁷

Jack Ruby's mother, Fannie Rubenstein, was probably born in 1875 near Warsaw, Poland.²⁸ She followed her husband to the United States in 1904 or 1905, accompanied by her children Hyman and Ann.²⁹ An illiterate woman, she went to night school in about 1920 to learn how to sign her name.³⁰ She apparently failed in this endeavor, however, for an alien registration form, filed after about 35 years in the United States, was signed by an "X".³¹ Although she apparently learned some English, her speech was predominantly Yiddish, the primary language of the Rubenstein household.³² Still, Mrs. Rubenstein felt strongly that her children required an education in order to better themselves. She frequently argued about this with her husband, who had received little, if any, formal education and firmly believed that grammar school training was sufficient for his children.³³

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH (1911-33)

In 1911, when Jack Ruby was born, his family resided near 14th and Newberry Streets in Chicago, the first in a series of Jewish neighborhoods in which the Rubensteins lived during his childhood.³⁴ In 1916, the Rubensteins lived at 1232 Morgan Street, where they apparently remained until 1921.³⁵ This was the fourth residence in the first 5 years of Jack Ruby's life.³⁶ Earl Ruby described one typical neighborhood in which the family lived as a "ghetto" with "pushcarts on the streets."³⁷ His sister Eva characterized it as "below the middle class but yet it wasn't the poorest class."³⁸ The family generally lived near Italian sections, where there were frequent fights along ethnic lines.³⁹

The Rubenstein home was marked by constant strife and the parents were reported to have occasionally struck each other.⁴⁰ Between 1915 and 1921, Joseph Rubenstein was frequently arrested because of disorderly conduct and assault and battery charges, some filed by his wife.⁴¹ In the spring of 1921, Jack Ruby's parents sep-

arated.⁴² In 1937 Mrs. Rubenstein reported that she had desired a divorce 15 years earlier, but her husband had been opposed to it.⁴³ The predominant causes of the separation were apparently Joseph Rubenstein's excessive drinking and Fannie Rubenstein's uncontrollable temper. She resented her numerous pregnancies, believed her husband to be unfaithful, and nagged him because he failed to make enough money.⁴⁴

Psychiatric Report

Young Jack soon showed the effects of parental discord. On June 6, 1922, at the age of 11, he was referred to the Institute for Juvenile Research by the Jewish Social Service Bureau. The reason for the referral was "truancy and incorrigible at home."⁴⁵ On July 10, 1922, the institute recommended to the bureau that Jack be placed in a new environment where his characteristics might be understood and where he might be afforded the supervision and recreation that would end his interest in street gangs.⁴⁶ In March 1923, the institute advised the bureau that "placement in a home, where intelligent supervision and discipline can be given" was appropriate.⁴⁷

The institute's psychiatric examination, which served as a basis for these recommendations, took place in 1922, prior to the advent of many techniques and theories of modern psychiatry,⁴⁸ but it is the most objective evidence of Jack Ruby's childhood character. According to the psychiatric report, Jack was "quick tempered" and "disobedient."⁴⁹ He frequently disagreed openly with his mother, whom he considered an inferior person with whose rules he did not have to comply.⁵⁰ Jack told the institute's interviewer that he ran away from home because his mother lied to him and beat him.⁵¹ Although Mrs. Rubenstein was severe with her children, she was described as totally incapable of coping with them "because of their delinquencies, i.e., principally their destructive tendencies and disregard for other people's property."⁵² His mother's "extreme temperament" and quarrelsomeness were cited as possible causes of Jack's "bad behavior."⁵³

Self-administered questionnaires revealed that Jack felt his classmates were "picking" on him and that he could not get along with his friends.⁵⁴ They also indicated that, although Jack described himself as a good ballplayer, he did not belong to any clubs and was not a member of any athletic teams.⁵⁵ Jack's psychiatric interviewer reported:

He could give no other good reason for running away from school except that he went to amusement parks. He has some sex knowledge and is greatly interested in sex matters. He stated that the boys in the street tell him about these things. He also claims that he can lick everyone and anybody in anything he wants to do.⁵⁶

The interviewer noted that during "mental tests" he reacted quickly, often carelessly, and his attention was apt to wander so that he had to be reprimanded.⁵⁷

A letter recommending the boy's placement in a more wholesome environment stated:

He is egocentric and expects much attention, but is unable to get it as there are many children at home. His behavior is further colored by his early sex experiences, his great interest [in sex] and the gang situation in the street. From a superficial examination of his mother who was here with him, it is apparent that she has no insight into his problem, and she is thoroughly inadequate in the further training of this boy.⁵⁸

Recognizing that the sketchiness of the case record precluded complete diagnosis, Dr. Raymond E. Robertson, currently the superintendent of the institute, reported nonetheless that it seems "firmly established * * * [that] his unstable and disorganized home could not provide Jack with the necessary controls and discipline."⁵⁹

Placement in Foster Homes

On July 10, 1923, a dependency hearing involving Jack, his younger brothers Sam and Earl, and his sister Eileen, was held in Chicago's juvenile court.⁶⁰ The petition alleged that the children were not receiving proper parental care. They had, until then, been in their mother's custody, living on Roosevelt Road, the border between Jewish and Italian districts.⁶¹ The juvenile court made a finding of dependency. It appointed the Jewish Home Finding Society guardian with the right to place the children in foster homes, and it ordered Joseph Rubenstein to pay the court clerk \$4 per week for the support of each child. On November 24, 1924, this order was vacated, which apparently signified the termination of the guardianship and the return of the children to their mother. On April 8, 1925, the case was continued "generally," meaning that it was inactive but could be reactivated if the court so desired.⁶²

Despite court records, the exact circumstances and length of time that Jack Ruby lived away from home are not entirely clear. Records indicate that Jack, Sam, Earl, and Eileen Rubenstein were wards of the Jewish Home Finding Society "for a short time in 1922-23."⁶³ However, Jack and Eileen stated they spent about 4 or 5 years in foster homes.⁶⁴ Earl testified that he and Sam were originally sent to a private foster home and then lived on a farm for a little more than a year, while Jack was on a different farm "some distance away." Subsequently the three brothers lived together in another foster home.⁶⁵

Subsequent Home Life

When Jack Ruby returned to his family, the unit was still disordered. His father remained apart from the children at least until 1936 and perhaps until a few years later.⁶⁶ Mrs. Rubenstein's inability to manage her home, which had been reported by the Institute for Juvenile Research in 1922, apparently continued. For example, in 1937 Marion Rubenstein observed that her mother "has never been any kind of a housekeeper, was careless with money, and never took much interest in the children's welfare * * * she was selfish, jealous, disagreeable, and never cared to do anything in the home but lie around and sleep."⁶⁷ Dr. Hyman I. Rubenstein, the son of Joseph Rubenstein's brother, recalled that Jack Ruby's mother ran "an irregular household" and appeared to be "a rather disturbed person of poor personal appearance with no incentive for cleaning or cooking."⁶⁸

Mrs. Rubenstein's domestic shortcomings were accompanied by symptoms of mental disease. In about 1913, 2 years after Jack was born, Mrs. Rubenstein began to develop a delusion that a sticking sensation in her throat was caused by a lodged fishbone.⁶⁹ Each month Hyman, her oldest child, took her to a clinic. And each month the examining doctor, finding no organic cause for discomfort, informed her that there was nothing in her throat and that the sensation was but a figment of her imagination. According to Hyman, this practice continued for a number of years until Mrs. Rubenstein tired of it.⁷⁰

In 1927, Mrs. Rubenstein once again began to visit clinics in connection with her fishbone delusion. Three years later, a thyroidectomy was performed, but she subsequently said it did nothing to relieve her discomfort.⁷¹ According to the Michael Reese Hospital, whose clinic she had visited since 1927, Mrs. Rubenstein was suffering from psychoneurosis with marked anxiety state.

By order of the county court of Cook County, Mrs. Rubenstein was committed to Elgin State Hospital on July 16, 1937.⁷² She was paroled on October 17, 1937, 3 months after her commitment.⁷³ On January 3, 1938, the Chicago State Hospital informed Elgin State that the family desired that she be readmitted to the mental hospital. The family reported that she was uncooperative, caused constant discord, was very noisy, and used obscene language.⁷⁴ A State social worker observed that Mrs. Rubenstein refused ever to leave the house, explaining that her children would have thrown her things out had she left. Mrs. Rubenstein rebuffed a suggestion by the social worker that she help with the dishes by stating that she would do nothing as long as her "worthless" husband was in the house.⁷⁵ She was readmitted on January 14, 1938.⁷⁶

Mrs. Rubenstein was again paroled on May 27, 1938, and was discharged as "improved" on August 25, 1938.⁷⁷ She stayed in an apartment with Marion, and her separation from the rest of the family apparently ended most of the difficulties.⁷⁸ Subsequently, Jack Ruby's

parents were apparently reconciled, since their alien registration forms, filed in late 1940, indicated that they both resided at Marion's address.⁷⁹

Fannie Rubenstein was admitted to Michael Reese Hospital on April 4, 1944, as a result of a heart ailment. Her condition was complicated by an attack of pneumonia and she died at the hospital on April 11, 1944.⁸⁰ Hyman testified that, perhaps because she favored the education of her children and they recognized her difficulties in rearing them during a turbulent marriage, they all remembered Mrs. Rubenstein with warmth and affection.⁸¹ The evidence also indicates that Jack, notwithstanding his earlier attitudes, became especially fond of his mother.⁸² Following his wife's death, Joseph Rubenstein stayed with the children in Chicago, where he died at the age of 87, on December 24, 1958.⁸³

Education

Records provided by the Chicago Board of Education revealed that Jack Ruby attended Smyth Grammar School from October 24, 1916, through the 1920-21 term, completing kindergarten to grade 4B.⁸⁴ He repeated the third grade.⁸⁵ During the 1921-22 school year Jack finished the fourth grade at the Clarke School; he attended Schley School for the 1924-25 term, when he completed the sixth grade. Ruby's relationship with the Institute for Juvenile Research and the Jewish Home Finding Society may explain the lack of academic records for the 1922-23 and 1923-24 school years. While there is some uncertainty about Ruby's education subsequent to September 1925,⁸⁶ it seems likely that he completed the eighth grade in 1927, when he was 16. Although Jack Ruby and others have stated that he attended at least 1 year of high school,⁸⁷ the Chicago Board of Education could not locate any record of Ruby's attending Chicago high schools.⁸⁸ Considering the absence of academic records and Jack's apathetic attitude toward school,⁸⁹ the Commission deems it unlikely that his education extended into high school.

Records of the Institute for Juvenile Research revealed that, as of June 1922, Ruby had no religious education outside the public school system.⁹⁰ However, according to their children, Jack's parents made some effort to inculcate in them a desire to adhere to the tenets of Orthodox Judaism. Jewish dietary and festival laws were observed and several of the children accompanied Joseph Rubenstein to the synagogue.⁹¹ Earl Ruby stated that all the boys received some Hebrew school training until the breakup of the Rubenstein home in 1921.⁹² However, Hyman Rubenstein testified that the instability and economic necessities of the household and the children's relationships outside the home frustrated the religious efforts of Ruby's parents.⁹³

Activities

Born in a home that disintegrated when he was 10 and boasting no substantial educational background, Jack Ruby early found himself

on Chicago streets attempting to provide for himself and other members of his family. An avid sports fan, he, together with many of his friends, "scalped" tickets to various sporting events.⁹⁴ He also sold numerous novelty items and knickknacks, particularly those connected with professional and collegiate athletics. Even in his youth, Ruby declined to work on a steady basis for someone else.⁹⁵

According to his brother Hyman, Jack Ruby's only legal difficulty as a youth resulted from an altercation with a policeman about ticket scalping. Hyman, then active in local politics, was able to have charges arising out of the incident dropped.⁹⁶ Ruby has indicated that during the depression he served a short jail sentence for the unauthorized sale of copyrighted sheet music.⁹⁷

The only other member of the Rubenstein family who appears to have had any difficulty with the law while a youth was Hyman. On May 1, 1916, Chicago's juvenile court declared Hyman incorrigible, a term covering a wide range of misbehavior. Because of the absence of informative court records and the lapse of time, the misconduct that occasioned this proceeding could not be ascertained, but Hyman is not known to have encountered subsequent difficulty.⁹⁸ Some of Ruby's childhood friends eventually became criminals;⁹⁹ however, Hyman Rubenstein, his sister Mrs. Eva Grant, and virtually all of Ruby's friends and acquaintances who were questioned reported that he was not involved with Chicago's criminal element.¹⁰⁰

The evidence indicates that young Jack was not interested in political affairs.¹⁰¹ Hyman was the only Rubenstein to participate actively in politics. Sponsored by various political officials, he became a sidewalk inspector and warehouse investigator for 8 years. On one occasion, he obtained a permit for Jack to sell novelties from a pushcart located in a business district during the pre-Christmas buying rush. Eventually the complaints of enraged businessmen led licensing authorities to declare that a mistake had been made and to revoke Ruby's permit.¹⁰²

Temperament

The evidence reveals striking differences of opinion among childhood friends and acquaintances of Jack Ruby about whether he possessed violent tendencies. Many persons stated that he was mild mannered, quiet, and even tempered.¹⁰³ Former welterweight champion Barney Ross, whom Jack Ruby idolized from the inception of his boxing career,¹⁰⁴ stated that Ruby was "well behaved," was never a troublemaker, and was never involved with law-enforcement agencies.¹⁰⁵ Another friend, who became a successful businessman on the west coast, said that, as a youth, Ruby never started fights even though he was adept with his fists.¹⁰⁶ Other friends declared that he would, if at all possible, avoid clashes.¹⁰⁷

But many other friends and acquaintances recalled that he had a hot temper and was quickly moved to violent acts or words.¹⁰⁸ One friend explained that in the "tough" Chicago neighborhood where they lived, self-defense was vitally important and added that Ruby

was fully capable of defending himself.¹⁰⁹ Another friend described Ruby as quick tempered and, though unlikely to pick fights, willing to accept any challenge without regard to the odds against him.¹¹⁰ Young Jack also interfered in fights, particularly when the person he was aiding appeared to be taking a severe beating or in a disadvantageous position.¹¹¹ Others reported that he had the reputation of being a good street brawler.¹¹² One school friend recalled that when Jack argued vehemently about sports, he occasionally used a stick or other available weapon. He reported, however, that after Ruby's anger subsided, he reverted to his normal, likable character.¹¹³

From early childhood, Jack Ruby was called "Sparky" by those who knew him.¹¹⁴ According to his sister Eva Grant, the nickname derived from the way Jack wobbled when he walked. He was thought to resemble the slow-moving horse called "Sparky" or "Sparkplug" depicted in a contemporary comic strip. Mrs. Grant testified that her brother became incensed when called "Sparky" and that from the time he was about 8 years old he would strike anyone calling him by that name.¹¹⁵ A childhood friend also recalled that Jack hated the nickname and would fight when called by it.¹¹⁶ Mrs. Grant was unsure whether the nickname "Sparky" did not also result from his quick reaction to the taunts of young friends.¹¹⁷ Hyman Rubenstein thought that the nickname derived from Jack's speed, aggressiveness, and quick thinking. The many accounts of Ruby's lightninglike temper lend credence to the theory, widely held, that his nickname was connected with his volatility.¹¹⁸

YOUNG MANHOOD (1933-43)

San Francisco (1933-37)

Jack Ruby reported that in about 1933, he and several Chicago friends went to Los Angeles and, shortly thereafter, to San Francisco.¹¹⁹ Although there is evidence that he stayed there until 1938, 1939, or 1940,¹²⁰ Ruby stated that he returned to Chicago in about 1937,¹²¹ and this appears to have been the case.¹²² Eva Grant testified that Ruby went to the west coast because he believed employment would be available there.¹²³

Eva, who married Hyman Magid in Chicago in 1930,¹²⁴ was divorced in early 1934, and in about June of that year joined her brother Jack in San Francisco. She and her son, Ronald, shared an apartment with him. In 1936, Eva married Frank Granovsky, also known as Frank Grant, in San Francisco, and Ruby shared a four-room apartment with them and Ronald for a short while.¹²⁵

Occupations and Activities

Ruby stated that when he and his friends arrived in Los Angeles, they sold a handicapper's tip sheet for horseraces at Santa Anita race-

track which had just opened.¹²⁶ Eva Grant testified that Ruby also worked as a singing waiter in Los Angeles, but made very little money.¹²⁷

When the group moved to San Francisco, Ruby continued to sell "tip" sheets at Bay Meadows racetrack.¹²⁸ Subsequently, he became a door-to-door salesman of subscriptions to San Francisco newspapers.¹²⁹ Although there is some evidence that he ultimately became chief of his crew and had several people working under him,¹³⁰ other reports indicate that this is unlikely.¹³¹ Eva Grant testified that she also sold newspaper subscriptions but was less proficient than her brother and relied upon him for advice and support.¹³²

Although virtually all his San Francisco acquaintances knew Jack Ruby as "Sparky,"¹³³ there is no evidence that he engaged in violent activities in San Francisco or was reputed to possess a vicious temper. One friend, who stated that he resided with Ruby and Eva for about a year, described him as a "well-mannered, likable individual who was soft spoken and meticulous in his dress and appearance."¹³⁴ Another friend described him as a "clean-cut, honest kid,"¹³⁵ and the manager of a crew with which Ruby worked stated that he had a good reputation and appeared to be an "honest, forthright person." The crew manager reported that Ruby associated with a sports crowd, some of whose members were involved with professional boxing, but not with criminals. He added that Ruby had a personal liking for law enforcement and would have wanted to become a police officer had he been larger physically.¹³⁶

One friend reported that although Ruby always associated with Jewish people, he never exhibited great interest in religion.¹³⁷ Ruby met Virginia Belasco, granddaughter of the prominent playwright and actor, David Belasco, in about 1936 at a dance at the Jewish community center in San Francisco. Miss Belasco stated that while a teenager she saw Ruby socially on several occasions between 1936 and 1941.¹³⁸ The only other evidence concerning Ruby's social activities while in San Francisco is his statement to his long-time girl friend, Alice Nichols of Dallas,¹³⁹ that while in San Francisco he met the only other woman, Virginia Fitzgerald or Fitzsimmons, that he ever considered marrying.¹⁴⁰

Chicago (1937-43)

Jack Ruby stated that following his return to Chicago, he was unemployed for a considerable period.¹⁴¹ However, when his mother was admitted to Elgin State Hospital in 1937,¹⁴² she reported that he was employed as a "traveling salesman" apparently living away from home.¹⁴³ Although there is conflicting evidence about his ability to earn a comfortable living,¹⁴⁴ he apparently was able to maintain a normal existence¹⁴⁵ and required no financial assistance from his family or friends. He continued to be a so-called "hustler," scalping tickets and buying watches and other small items for resale at dis-

count prices.¹⁴⁶ One of his closest Chicago friends stated that Ruby's sales and promotions were "shady" but "legitimate."¹⁴⁷

Labor union activities.—Ruby reported that in "about 1937" he became active in Local 20467 of the Scrap Iron and Junk Handlers Union.¹⁴⁸ At this time, his friend, attorney Leon Cooke, was the local's financial secretary.¹⁴⁹ Records provided by the Social Security Administration indicate that Ruby was employed by the union from late 1937 until early 1940; ¹⁵⁰ he worked as a union organizer and negotiated with employers on its behalf.¹⁵¹

On December 8, 1939, the union's president, John Martin, shot Cooke, who died of gunshot wounds on January 5, 1940; Martin was subsequently acquitted on the ground of self-defense.¹⁵² Although a Jack Rubenstein is mentioned in the minutes of a union meeting on February 2, 1940,¹⁵³ and Ruby is reported to have said after Cooke's death that he wanted to "take over" the union,¹⁵⁴ the evidence indicates that Ruby was so upset by Cooke's death that he was unable to devote himself further to union activities and left its employ.¹⁵⁵ Ruby reported that after Cooke's death he adopted the middle name "Leon," which he used only infrequently, in memory of his friend.¹⁵⁶

Since Ruby was the ultimate source of all but one of these accounts,¹⁵⁷ other descriptions of Ruby's separation from the union cannot with certainty be deemed inaccurate. These reports indicated that Ruby might have been forced out of the union by a criminal group, or might have left because he lacked the emotional stability necessary for successful labor negotiations ¹⁵⁹ or because he felt he was not earning enough money with the union.¹⁶⁰

Although the AFL-CIO investigated the ethical practices of local 20467 in 1956, placed the local in trusteeship, and suspended Paul Dorfman, who succeeded Martin and Cooke, there is no evidence that Ruby's union activities were connected with Chicago's criminal element.¹⁶¹ Several longtime members of the union reported that it had a good reputation when Ruby was affiliated with it ¹⁶² and employers who negotiated with it have given no indication that it had criminal connections.¹⁶³

Subsequent employment.—In 1941, Ruby and Harry Epstein organized the Spartan Novelty Co., a small firm that sold in various northeastern States small cedar chests containing candy and gambling devices known as punchboards.¹⁶⁴ Earl Ruby and two of Jack Ruby's friends, Martin Gimpel and Martin Shargol, were also associated in this venture. The group had no fixed addresses, living in hotels.¹⁶⁵

Late in 1941, Jack Ruby returned to Chicago, where he continued his punchboard business through the mails.¹⁶⁶ Following the December 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor, he and several friends decided to design and sell plaques commemorating the Day of Infamy. However, the venture was impeded by Ruby's perfectionistic approach to details of design which resulted in numerous production delays.¹⁶⁷ By the time Ruby's copyrighted plaque ¹⁶⁸ was finally ready for sale, the market was flooded with similar items.¹⁶⁹ At about this time,

Ruby also sold busts of Franklin Delano Roosevelt.¹⁷⁰ In late 1942 and 1943, Ruby was employed by the Globe Auto Glass Co.¹⁷¹ and Universal Sales Co.¹⁷²

Although one of Ruby's acquaintances at this time described him as a cuckoo nut on the subject of patriotism,¹⁷³ the evidence does not indicate that Ruby's promotion of "Remember Pearl Harbor" plaques and Roosevelt busts was motivated by patriotic or political considerations. Rather, the sale of these items was, to Ruby, just another commercial venture, but he might also have considered these sales "a good thing."¹⁷⁴ Numerous friends reported that Ruby had no interest in political affairs during this period,¹⁷⁵ although he greatly admired President Roosevelt.¹⁷⁶

Other activities.—The evidence indicates that Ruby led a normal social life during these years. Virginia Belasco stated that while Ruby was selling punchboards in New York during November 1941, he entertained her each weekend.¹⁷⁷ Other reports indicate that Ruby fancied himself a "ladies' man," enjoyed dancing, almost always had female accompaniment and was "very gentlemanly" with women.¹⁷⁸

Ruby, with several friends, frequently attempted to disrupt rallies of the German-American Bund.¹⁷⁹ One acquaintance reported that Ruby was responsible for "cracking a few heads" of Bund members.¹⁸⁰ Apparently he joined in this activity for ethnic rather than political reasons. The young men in the group were not organized adherents of any particular political creed, but were poolhall and tavern companions from Ruby's Jewish neighborhood who gathered on the spur of the moment to present opposition when they learned that the pro-Nazi and anti-Semitic Bund movement was planning a meeting.¹⁸¹ Hyman Rubenstein testified that Ruby would fight with any person making derogatory comments about his ethnic origins, and others have stated that Ruby would fight with anyone he suspected of pro-Nazi or anti-Semitic tendencies.¹⁸²

During this period Ruby, though temperamental, apparently engaged in no unusual acts of violence. However, he did interfere on several occasions when he thought someone was treated unfairly. A friend who described Ruby as "somewhat overbearing regarding the rights and feelings of others," reported that Ruby fought two college students who insulted a Negro piano player.¹⁸³ Another friend reported that Ruby had a "bitter" fight with a man who was abusing an older woman.¹⁸⁴

Maintaining his friendship with Barney Ross, and still an ardent sports fan, Ruby associated with various figures in the boxing world and regularly attended the fights at Marigold Gardens.¹⁸⁵ He frequented the Lawndale Poolroom and Restaurant, a rallying point for the anti-Bundists and chief "hangout" of many of Ruby's friends.¹⁸⁶ In addition, Ruby, described as a "health nut"¹⁸⁷ who earnestly contended that he could hit harder than Joe Louis,¹⁸⁸ exercised at several athletic clubs.¹⁸⁹

Despite Ruby's participation in "shady" financial enterprises, his association with a labor union subsequently disciplined by the AFL—

CIO, his participation in violent anti-Bund activities, and his connection with a poolroom, the evidence falls short of demonstrating that Ruby was significantly affiliated with organized crime in Chicago. Virtually all of Ruby's Chicago friends stated he had no close connection with organized crime.¹⁹⁰ In addition, unreliable as their reports may be, several known Chicago criminals have denied any such liaison.¹⁹¹ The Commission finds it difficult to attach credence to a newspaper reporter's contrary statement that his undisclosed "syndicate sources" revealed Ruby was connected with organized crime and confidence games.¹⁹² Ruby was unquestionably familiar, if not friendly, with some Chicago criminals,¹⁹³ but there is no evidence that he ever participated in organized criminal activity.

MILITARY ACTIVITIES (1943-46)

In September 1941, Jack Ruby was apparently classified 1-A¹⁹⁴ and declared eligible for the draft. Subsequently he appeared before a local board and was reclassified 1-H or 3-A.¹⁹⁵ Between August 31, 1941, and November 19, 1942, when it was abolished, the 1-H classification applied to registrants who had reached their 28th birthday and were, therefore, no longer liable for service.¹⁹⁶ The 3-A deferment applies to persons whose entry into military service presents financial hardship to dependents. Because of the length of time involved and the destruction of local draft board records, Ruby's precise status or the reason for his deferment could not be ascertained.¹⁹⁷ According to one somewhat unreliable report, Ruby, immediately prior to his physical examination, feigned a hearing disability and occasionally wore a hearing aid.¹⁹⁸ Hyman Rubenstein, who testified that Jack was deferred because of economic hardship since he was "the only one home," specifically denied the truthfulness of this allegation.¹⁹⁹ Early in 1943, Ruby was again classified 1-A, and, following an unsuccessful appearance before his appeal board, he was inducted into the U.S. Army Air Forces on May 21, 1943.²⁰⁰ Jack was the last of the Rubenstein brothers to enter the service. Previously, Earl had enlisted in the Navy, Sam was in Army Air Force Intelligence and Hyman was in the field artillery.²⁰¹

Except for 5 weeks in Farmingdale, N.Y., Ruby spent his military days at various airbases in the South.²⁰² He received the basic training given all recruits and advanced training as an aircraft mechanic.²⁰³ On August 2, 1943, he passed marksmanship tests with the .30 caliber carbine and the .45 caliber submachinegun, but failed with the .30 caliber rifle. On February 10, 1944, he earned a sharpshooter's rating for his firing of an M1 .30 caliber carbine. His character and efficiency ratings, when determined, were excellent.²⁰⁴ After attaining the rank of private first class and receiving the good conduct medal, Ruby was honorably discharged on February 21, 1946.²⁰⁵

Two persons who recalled Ruby while he was in the Army Air Forces asserted that he was extremely sensitive to insulting remarks about

Jews.²⁰⁶ When, during an argument, a sergeant called Ruby a "Jew bastard," Ruby reportedly attacked him and beat him with his fists.²⁰⁷

There is conflicting evidence about the zeal with which Ruby performed his military duties. One associate indicated that Ruby, who at 34 was the oldest in his group, always worked harder than the others to prove that he could keep up with them.²⁰⁸ Another recalled, by contrast, that Ruby had "no liking for work" and carefully avoided situations requiring him to dirty his hands.²⁰⁹ However, there is no basis in the record for the inference that Ruby was in any way anti-American.

Ruby frequently expressed to some fellow soldiers his high regard for Franklin Delano Roosevelt.²¹⁰ Two independent sources reported that he cried openly when informed of Roosevelt's death in April 1945.²¹¹ This did not indicate any sudden political interest, however, since none of his known military associates reported such an interest, and Ruby's admiration for President Roosevelt anteceded his military days.²¹²

While in service, Ruby is reported to have continued his promotional ventures. One person recalled that in 1944, Jack received punchboards and chocolates from someone in Chicago and peddled these items through the base to make extra money. This person also indicated that Ruby enjoyed card and dice games in or near the barracks.²¹³

POSTWAR CHICAGO (1946-47)

Following his discharge from the Army Air Forces in February 1946, Jack Ruby returned to Chicago. He joined his three brothers, who had previously been discharged from the service,²¹⁴ in the Earl Products Co. Earl Ruby testified that he was the sole investor in the enterprise, but each brother received an equal ownership interest on his return from the service.²¹⁵ The company manufactured and sold small cedar chests and distributed punchboards.²¹⁶ In addition, it made aluminum salt and pepper shakers, key chains, bottle openers, screwdrivers, and small hammers.²¹⁷ Sam supervised the manufacturing end of the business, while Earl managed the office and advertising.²¹⁸ Jack was in charge of sales, but the company was small and he had no subordinates.²¹⁹

Because insufficient profits led to frequent arguments, Hyman soon left Earl Products.²²⁰ Jack, who stayed with the company through most of 1947, had many disputes with his brothers because he insisted on selling the products of other companies, such as costume jewelry, and he did not like traveling outside the Chicago area. Earl and Sam finally purchased Jack's interest, paying him more than \$14,000 in cash.²²¹

Although there is some evidence to the contrary,²²² it is unlikely that Ruby was in the nightclub business in Chicago during the postwar period. Many who have reported this may have mistaken him for Harry Rubenstein,²²³ who was convicted of manslaughter and op-

erated several such establishments.²²⁴ None of Jack Ruby's close friends or relatives indicated that he was in the nightclub business.

Following his return from the Army, Ruby was described as ready to fight with any person who insulted Jews or the military.²²⁵ Earl Ruby testified that on one occasion in 1946, Jack returned from downtown Chicago with his suit covered with blood. He explained at that time that he had fought with a person who had called him a "dirty Jew or something like that."²²⁶

Other evidence indicates that Ruby's personality was not substantially changed by his military experience. One person who met him in 1947, reported that Ruby was a "fashionable" dresser.²²⁷ He continued to be described as soft spoken,²²⁸ although he was also known as hot-tempered.²²⁹ Ruby worked out regularly at an athletic club,²³⁰ and one friend regarded him as a "Romeo," who was quite successful in attracting young women.²³¹

DALLAS (1947-63)

The Move to Dallas

During World War II, Ruby's sister, Eva Grant, visited Dallas.²³² Having operated a restaurant on the west coast and considering it a lucrative business, she arranged, near the end of 1945, to lease a building under construction in Dallas, which she ran as a nightclub.²³³ Part of the financing for this establishment, the Singapore Supper Club, was provided by her brothers. Jack Ruby, who apparently obtained the money from Earl Products, sent \$1,100 as a down-payment on the lease, Earl contributed about \$1,500, and Hyman paid for more than \$2,000 worth of equipment.²³⁴

Before she opened the Singapore in 1947, Eva Grant engaged in the sale of metal products.²³⁵ In that year she met Paul Roland Jones, who allegedly was seeking customers for iron pipe and whom she referred to Hyman Rubenstein.²³⁶ Jones had, at about that time, been convicted of attempting to bribe the newly elected sheriff of Dallas.²³⁷ On October 24, 1947, he was arrested for violating Federal narcotics statutes.²³⁸ Jack Ruby had visited Dallas early in 1947 to help Eva Grant manage the Singapore,²³⁹ and 5 days after Jones' arrest, Jack and Hyman Rubenstein were interrogated in Chicago by agents of the Bureau of Narcotics.²⁴⁰ The brothers admitted knowing Jones but denied awareness of his connection with narcotics. During the 2 years in which Jones was appealing his conviction he and other criminals frequented the Singapore Club, then operated by Jack Ruby.²⁴¹

Intensive investigation to determine whether Jack Ruby was criminally or otherwise connected with Jones' narcotics violation leads the Commission to conclude Ruby probably was not involved.²⁴² A search of the files of the Bureau of Narcotics disclosed no record that either Hyman or Jack had been prosecuted by Federal authorities in 1947.²⁴³ Jack, Hyman, and Eva denied participating in any narcotics activities.

Jones and his coconspirators also denied that Jack was a participant.²⁴⁴ One of Jones' confederates reported after the shooting of Oswald that although Jones "propositioned" the two brothers concerning narcotics, they refused to participate.²⁴⁵ Moreover, when one of the conspirators was arrested with 48 pounds of raw opium in his possession, he implicated Jones and another person, both of whom were convicted, but he did not implicate Jack Ruby or his brother.²⁴⁶

Late in 1947, Ruby established permanent residence in Dallas.²⁴⁷ Shortly after shooting Oswald, Ruby stated that he returned to Dallas at Eva Grant's request, to help her operate the Singapore Supper Club.²⁴⁸ However, on December 21, 1963, he reported that although association with his sister had been the purpose of his initial visit to Dallas, he returned there because of the failure of his "merchandising deals" in Chicago.²⁴⁹ These factors, in conjunction with his separation from Earl Products,²⁵⁰ probably motivated Ruby's move to Dallas.

A different reason has been given by Steve Guthrie, former sheriff of Dallas. Guthrie reported that shortly after his election as sheriff in July 1946, Paul Roland Jones, representing other Chicago criminals, offered him a substantial amount of money to permit them to move in and manage illegal activities in Dallas. Although he never met Ruby, Guthrie asserted that these criminals frequently mentioned that Ruby would operate a "fabulous" restaurant as a front for gambling activities.²⁵¹

Despite its source, the Commission finds it difficult to accept this report. A member of the Dallas Police Department, Lt. George E. Butler, who was present during virtually all the conversations between Guthrie and Jones and who performed considerable investigative work on the case, stated that Ruby was not involved in the bribery attempt and that he had not heard of Ruby until the investigation and trial of Jones had been completed. He explained that Ruby's connection with the case stemmed from the fact that, as mentioned previously, Jones and other criminals frequented the Singapore Supper Club.²⁵² And 22 recordings of the conversations between Guthrie, Butler, and Jones not only fail to mention Ruby, but indicate that Jones was to bring from outside the Dallas area only one confederate, who was not to be Jewish.²⁵³

The Change of Name

Sometime in 1947, Jack Ruby's brothers Earl and Sam, pursuant to a joint understanding, legally changed their names from Rubenstein to Ruby.²⁵⁴ Earl testified that he changed his name because everyone called him Ruby and because a former employer advised him that it was preferable not to use a "Jewish name" on mail orders for Earl Products.²⁵⁵

On December 30, 1947, Jack changed his name to Jack L. Ruby by securing a decree from the 68th Judicial District Court of Dallas. His petition alleged that he sought the change because the name Rubenstein was misunderstood and too long and because he was "well

known" as Jack L. Ruby.²⁵⁶ The Bureau of Narcotics report of his relationship with Paul Roland Jones indicates that as of October 29, 1947, Jack was known as Ruby; ²⁵⁷ however, several persons in Dallas knew him as Rubenstein.²⁵⁸

Nightclub Operations

Except for a brief period in about 1953, when Ruby managed the Ervay Theater, a motion picture house,²⁵⁹ the operation of nightclubs and dancehalls was his primary source of income, and his basic interest in life during the 16 years he spent in Dallas prior to shooting Lee Oswald. When Ruby first arrived in Dallas in 1947, he and Eva Grant jointly managed the Singapore Supper Club.²⁶⁰ Shortly thereafter, she returned to the west coast. Except for sporadic trips to Dallas, she remained there until 1959, leaving Ruby a power of attorney.²⁶¹ Ruby, who had received \$14,000 from the sale of his interest in Earl Products,²⁶² invested a substantial amount in the club, which Mrs. Grant described as "too nice a club for that part of town."²⁶³ Ruby changed the Singapore's name to the Silver Spur Club. It was operated primarily as a dancehall, serving beer to its patrons.²⁶⁴ In about 1952, Ruby borrowed \$3,700 from a friend, Ralph Paul, to purchase the Bob Wills Ranch House ²⁶⁵ with Martin Gimpel, a former associate in the Spartan Novelty Co.²⁶⁶ The Ranch House was run as a western-type nightclub.²⁶⁷

With two establishments to run, Ruby experienced substantial financial reversals in 1952. He abandoned his interest in the Ranch House and, on July 1, 1952, transferred the Silver Spur to Gimpel and Willie Epstein, who assumed some of its debts.²⁶⁸ Disappointed by these setbacks, Ruby stated that he had a "mental breakdown," and "hibernated" in the Cotton Bowl Hotel in Dallas for 3 or 4 months, declining to see his friends.²⁶⁹ Still depressed, he then returned to Chicago, apparently intending to remain there permanently.²⁷⁰ However, he stayed only 6 weeks. Gimpel and Epstein were anxious to be rid of the Silver Spur and Ruby once again became its owner.²⁷¹

In 1953, Ruby obtained an interest in the Vegas Club, which he operated with Joe Bonds until September 1953.²⁷² At that time he informed Irving Alkana, who had retained a prior ownership interest, that he was unable to meet his obligations with respect to the club. Alkana then assumed management of the Vegas until June 19, 1954, when, following numerous disagreements with him, he sold Ruby his interest.²⁷³

Ruby still owned the Vegas Club at the time of his arrest on November 24, 1963. However, when Eva Grant returned from San Francisco in 1959, she assumed management of the club, receiving a salary but no ownership interest.²⁷⁴ The Vegas, which occasionally featured striptease acts,²⁷⁵ employed a dance band and served beer, wine, soft drinks, and some prepared foods.²⁷⁶

In 1954, Ruby's Vegas associate, Joe Bonds, was convicted of sodomy and sent to a Texas penitentiary to serve an 8-year sentence.²⁷⁷ In 1955,

Ruby sold the Silver Spur to Roscoe "Rocky" Robinson; however, Robinson could not obtain a license to operate the club and it was subsequently closed.²⁷⁸ For a few months during this period, Ruby also operated Hernando's Hideaway, but this venture proved unsuccessful.²⁷⁹

Sam Ruby testified that shortly after he sold his interest in Earl Products in mid-1955 and moved to Dallas, he loaned Jack \$5,500 to enable him to pay Federal excise taxes on the Vegas. As security for the loan, Sam required Jack to execute a bill of sale of the Vegas. Upon Jack's default in payment, Sam instituted suit, claiming that he owned the Vegas and that Jack had breached his promise to repurchase it. The case was ultimately settled, with Jack retaining his ownership interest in the club.²⁸⁰

In late 1959, Jack Ruby became a partner of Joe Slatin in establishing the Sovereign Club, a private club that was apparently permitted by Texas law to sell liquor to members.²⁸¹ Since Slatin was troubled about Dallas news stories describing police raids on a private club that permitted gambling, he felt he needed more capital.²⁸² Ruby invested about \$6,000 which he borrowed from his brother Earl and perhaps some of his own money.²⁸³

The Sovereign was described as a "plush" and exclusive club, and Ruby was apparently very anxious to attract a wealthy "carriage" trade.²⁸⁴ The venture was not successful, however. The two men could not work together, and Slatin withdrew in early 1960.²⁸⁵ Ruby turned for new capital to Ralph Paul,²⁸⁶ who had operated a Dallas club with Joe Bonds.²⁸⁷ Ruby still owed Paul \$1,200 of the \$3,700 loan made in connection with the Bob Wills Ranch House, but Paul advanced him another \$2,200, which allowed him to pay the Sovereign's rent for 4 months. Subsequently, Ruby spontaneously gave Paul a stock certificate representing 50 percent of the equity of the corporation owning the club. Ruby told Paul that if the venture failed, the Sovereign's fixtures and other physical property would belong to Paul.²⁸⁸

Experiencing difficulty in recruiting sufficient members, Ruby soon found himself again unable to pay the Sovereign's monthly rent of \$550. Again he turned to Paul, who loaned him \$1,650 on the condition that he change the club's method of operation. Paul insisted that Ruby discontinue club memberships, even though this would prevent the sale of liquor, and offer striptease shows as a substitute attraction. Ruby agreed, and the Sovereign's name was changed to the Carousel Club.²⁸⁹ It became one of three downtown Dallas burlesque clubs²⁹⁰ and served champagne, beer, "setups" and pizza, its only food.²⁹¹ The Carousel generally employed four strippers, a master of ceremonies, an assistant manager, a band, three or four waitresses, and a porter or handyman.²⁹² Net receipts averaged about \$5,000 per month,²⁹³ most of which was allocated to the club's payroll.²⁹⁴ Late in 1963, Ruby began to distribute "permanent passes" to the Carousel;²⁹⁵ however, the cards were apparently designed solely for publicity and did not affect the club's legal status.

Employee Relationships

Ruby's employees displayed a wide range of personal reactions to him. Those associated with Ruby long enough to grow accustomed to his violent temper and constant threats of discharge generally portray him sympathetically.²⁹⁶ They reported he was genuinely interested in their welfare and happiness. In addition, many former employees stated that he was a pleasant or unobjectionable employer.²⁹⁷

There is also considerable evidence that Ruby tended to dominate his employees, frequently resorted to violence in dealing with them, publicly embarrassed them,²⁹⁸ sometimes attempted to cheat them of their pay,²⁹⁹ and delayed paying their salaries.³⁰⁰ Other employees reported Ruby continually harassed his help,³⁰¹ and used obscene language in their presence.³⁰² However he frequently apologized, sought to atone for his many temper tantrums,³⁰³ and completely forgot others.³⁰⁴

One of the many violent incidents that were reported took place in 1950, when Ruby struck an employee over the head with a blackjack.³⁰⁵ In 1951, after his guitarist, Willis Dickerson, told Ruby to "go to hell," Ruby knocked Dickerson to the ground, then pinned him to a wall and kicked him in the groin. During the scuffle, Dickerson bit Ruby's finger so badly that the top half of Ruby's left index finger was amputated.³⁰⁶ In approximately 1955, Ruby beat one of his musicians with brass knuckles; the musician's mouth required numerous stitches.³⁰⁷

During 1960, Ruby and two entertainers, Breck Wall and Joe Peterson, entered into an agreement that the performers would produce and star in a revue at the Sovereign in exchange for a 50-percent interest in the club.³⁰⁸ After performing for 2 months, the entertainers complained that they had received neither a share of the profits nor evidence of their proprietary interest. Ruby responded by hitting Peterson in the mouth, knocking out a tooth. The two men left the Sovereign's employ, but they subsequently accepted Ruby's apology and resumed their friendship with him.³⁰⁹

In September 1962, Frank Ferraro, the Carousel's handyman, became involved in a dispute at a nearby bar. Ruby told him not to get into a fight, and Ferraro told Ruby to mind his own business. Ruby then followed Ferraro to another club and beat him severely. Ferraro required emergency hospital treatment for his eye, but he decided not to press charges since Ruby paid for his hospital care.³¹⁰ In March 1963, during an argument about wages, Ruby threatened to throw a cigarette girl down the stairs of the Carousel.³¹¹

Ruby's relationship with his employees commanded much of his attention during the months preceding the assassination. The Carousel's comparatively high turnover rate³¹² and Ruby's intense desire to succeed³¹³ required him to meet numerous prospective employees, patrons, and other persons who might help improve his business.

Ruby frequently encountered difficulties with the American Guild of Variety Artists (AGVA), the union which represented Carousel entertainers.³¹⁴ For several years, starting in about 1961, he unsuccessful-

fully sought modification of AGVA's policy permitting "amateur" strippers,³¹⁵ inexperienced girls paid less than union-scale wages,³¹⁶ to perform at union houses. Ruby apparently believed his two competitors, the Weinstein brothers, were scheduling amateur shows in a manner calculated to destroy his business.³¹⁷ Ruby's discontent with AGVA grew particularly acute during the late summer and early fall of 1963 when, in addition to meeting with AGVA officials,³¹⁸ he called upon several acquaintances, including known criminals, who, he thought, could influence AGVA on his behalf.³¹⁹ Other problems with AGVA arose because of his policy of continuous shows, which did not give masters of ceremonies enough time off,³²⁰ and his alleged use of AGVA members to mingle with patrons to promote the consumption of liquor.³²¹

In June 1963, Ruby visited New Orleans, where he obtained the services of a stripper known as "Jada,"³²² who became his featured performer.³²³ Jada and Ruby had numerous contract disputes and he was concerned about her high salary, recurrent absenteeism, and diminishing drawing power.³²⁴ Moreover, he thought that Jada had deliberately exceeded even the Carousel's liberal standards of decency in order to cause him to lose his license or to obtain publicity for herself.³²⁵ On several occasions Ruby excitedly turned off the spotlights during her act, and at the end of October 1963, he fired her.³²⁶ However, after Jada sued out a peace bond, she apparently recovered a week's salary from Ruby.³²⁷

In addition to problems with its star stripper, the Carousel was required to employ three masters of ceremonies in rapid succession following the departure in about September 1963, of Wally Weston, who worked there about 15 months.³²⁸ And in early November, the band that had played at the Vegas Club for about 8 years left the Vegas to accept the offer of another Dallas club.³²⁹

Financial Data and Tax Problems

Jack Ruby's pockets and the trunk of his car served as his bank. With a few exceptions, Ruby and his clubs rarely employed bank accounts.³³⁰ Instead, Ruby carried his cash with him, paying the bulk of his expenses and debts directly out of club receipts.³³¹

During the latter half of 1963, the Carousel, the Vegas, and Ruby each maintained checking accounts at the Merchants State Bank in Dallas. Balances of the latter two accounts never exceeded \$275. In July 1963, the Carousel's account had more than \$500; after August 8, its maximum balance was less than \$300. Between May 31 and November 24, 1963, 53 checks were drawn on the three accounts; with the exception of one check for \$129.47, all were for less than \$100.³³² He generally purchased cashier's checks at the Merchants State Bank to pay his monthly rental of \$550 for the Carousel and \$500 for the Vegas.³³³ He also purchased cashier's checks during the 3 months prior to the assassination to pay about \$1,500 to the Texas State treasurer, \$110 to Temple Shearith Israel, apparently for Jewish high holy day tickets, and \$60 to the American Society of Authors and Publishers.³³⁴

Records of the more than 50 banking institutions checked during the investigation of Ruby's financial affairs³³⁵ revealed that he had three other dormant accounts, all with small balances.³³⁶ Two safety deposit boxes belonging to Ruby, opened by Texas officials pursuant to search warrants, were empty and unused for more than a year prior to the assassination.³³⁷ Although Ruby negotiated several loans at the Merchants State Bank,³³⁸ there is no evidence that he was the maker or co-maker of other loans,³³⁹ and, after investigation, the Dallas Police Department found no record that Ruby cosigned the note of any policeman at any time.³⁴⁰

Ruby's financial records were chaotic. One accountant abandoned efforts to prepare income tax returns and other financial statements because of the hopeless disarray of Ruby's data.³⁴¹ The record indicates that Ruby was frequently weeks, if not months, late in filing Federal tax forms and that he held numerous conferences with Internal Revenue agents who attempted to obtain the delinquent statements.³⁴²

Ruby encountered serious difficulties with respect to State franchise and Federal excise and income taxes. The Texas charter of the corporation controlling the Sovereign and Carousel clubs was canceled in 1961, because Ruby failed to pay Texas franchise taxes.³⁴³ And, only after numerous conferences, did Ruby and representatives of the Internal Revenue Service reach agreements on installment payments of various Federal tax liabilities, to which Ruby more or less adhered.³⁴⁴

Ruby's primary difficulty concerned Federal excise taxes. Advised by an attorney that the Vegas Club, a dance hall providing food, was not subject to Federal excise taxes because it was not a "cabaret," Ruby charged Vegas patrons on the assumption that no excise taxes were due. However, his attorney reported, when Federal courts ruled that dance halls providing "incidental" food were subject to excise taxes as "cabarets,"³⁴⁵ Ruby became liable to the Federal Government for more than 6 years of taxes, amounting, with interest, to almost exactly \$40,000.³⁴⁶

Ruby also fell behind on his personal income tax payments. At the time of his arrest he owed more than \$4,400 for 1959 and 1960.³⁴⁷ Remittances accompanied his 1961 and 1962 tax forms, the latter received by the office of the Dallas District Director on September 18, 1963.³⁴⁸ The following table summarizes amounts which Ruby reported as gross and net income from the Vegas Club from 1956 to 1962; and the taxes due:³⁴⁹

<i>Year</i>	<i>Gross income</i>	<i>Net income</i>	<i>Tax</i>
1962-----	\$41,462.77	\$5,619.65	¹ \$1,217.75
1961-----	40,411.00	6,255.29	¹ 1,200.00
1960-----	44,482.41	9,703.90	2,221.39
1959-----	50,981.95	14,060.86	3,778.17
1958-----	37,755.65	3,274.64	586.52
1957-----	33,671.60	2,619.52	438.41
1956-----	30,695.27	7,437.01	1,527.10

¹ Estimated.

On his income tax forms, Ruby did not itemize personal deductions and claimed only his own exemption. For 1962, Ruby reported salary income of \$650 from the corporation controlling the Carousel, and \$900 for 1961.³⁵⁰

Ruby and officers of the Internal Revenue Service frequently discussed methods of satisfying his large excise and income tax liability.³⁵¹ In 1960, the Government filed tax liens for more than \$20,000.³⁵² In November 1962, the Government rejected Ruby's offer to pay \$8,000 to compromise the assessed taxes of more than \$20,000 because he had not filed returns for other Federal taxes and had not paid these taxes as they became due. These other taxes, for the period September 1959 through June 1962, amounted to an additional \$20,000.³⁵³ In June 1963, Ruby submitted an offer of \$3,000 to compromise all past assessments; the offer was not acted upon prior to November 24, 1963.³⁵⁴

Other Business Ventures

In addition to nightclub management and ownership, Ruby participated in numerous other commercial ventures. He was able to do so primarily because work at the clubs consumed few of his daytime hours. Many of Ruby's ventures related to show business, others were somewhat speculative promotions; almost all ended unsuccessfully.

While operating the Silver Spur Club, Ruby sold costume jewelry at discount rates,³⁵⁵ and, in about 1951, he sold sewing machine attachments at the Texas State Fair.³⁵⁶ Approximately a year later, he managed a talented young Negro boy, "Little Daddy" Nelson. The boy appeared at the Silver Spur, the Vegas Club, and the Bob Wills Ranch House. In about 1953 or 1954, Ruby took "Little Daddy" and his parents to Chicago to obtain a television appearance for him. However, shortly after their arrival, Ruby was confronted by a second woman claiming to be "Little Daddy's" mother. Upon advice of counsel, Ruby decided to abandon the venture.³⁵⁷

In 1954, Ruby became interested in the sale of pizza crusts to Dallas restaurants.³⁵⁸ He is also reported to have sold an arthritic preparation³⁵⁹ and to have manufactured and sold "Miniron," a liquid vitamin formula.³⁶⁰ In about 1958 or 1959, Ruby attempted to build and sell log cabins at a Texas lake resort.³⁶¹ In early 1959, he investigated the possibility of selling jeeps to Cuba.³⁶² He is also reported to have furnished entertainment for a Dallas hotel,³⁶³ to have promoted records for musicians³⁶⁴ and to have sold English stainless steel razor blades.³⁶⁵

In October 1963 Ruby assisted the producers of a carnival show, "How Hollywood Makes Movies," appearing at the Texas State Fair.³⁶⁶ At about this time Ruby also sought to open a new club in Dallas. He conferred with numerous persons and placed advertisements in Dallas newspapers in an attempt to obtain financial backing.³⁶⁷ Assuming that he would be occupied by the new club, Ruby offered his oldest brother, Hyman, a managerial post at the Carousel. However, Hyman, who had recently lost his sales territory, declined the offer because he felt he was too old for the nightclub business.³⁶⁸

Ruby unsuccessfully attempted to sell "twistboards," an exercising device consisting of two square fiberboards separated by ball bearings. Despite the contrary advice of his brother Earl,³⁶⁹ Jack ordered several dozen twistboards and had 2,000 promotional flyers published.³⁷⁰ He had one of his strippers demonstrate the twistboards at the Texas Products Show during the first week of November 1963.³⁷¹

Arrests and Violations

Between 1949 and November 24, 1963, Ruby was arrested eight times by the Dallas Police Department. The dates, charges, and dispositions of these arrests are as follows:³⁷² February 4, 1949, Ruby paid a \$10 fine for disturbing the peace. July 26, 1953, Ruby was suspected of carrying a concealed weapon; however, no charges were filed and Ruby was released on the same day. May 1, 1954, Ruby was arrested for allegedly carrying a concealed weapon and violating a peace bond; again no charges were filed and Ruby was released on the same day. December 5, 1954, Ruby was arrested for allegedly violating State liquor laws by selling liquor after hours; the complaint was dismissed on February 8, 1955.³⁷³ June 21, 1959, Ruby was arrested for allegedly permitting dancing after hours; the complaint was dismissed on July 8, 1959. August 21, 1960, Ruby was again arrested for allegedly permitting dancing after hours; Ruby posted \$25 bond and was released on that date. February 12, 1963, Ruby was arrested on a charge of simple assault; he was found not guilty February 27, 1963. Finally, on March 14, 1963, Ruby was arrested for allegedly ignoring traffic summonses; a \$35 bond was posted.

When Ruby applied for a beer license in March 1961, he reported that he had been arrested "about four or five times" between 1947 and 1953.³⁷⁴ Between 1950 and 1963, he received 20 tickets for motor vehicle violations, paying four \$10 fines and three of \$3.³⁷⁵ In 1956 and 1959, Ruby was placed on 6 months' probation as a traffic violator.

Ruby was also frequently suspended by the Texas Liquor Control Board. In August 1949, when he was operating the Silver Spur, he was suspended for 5 days on a charge of "Agents—Moral Turpitude." In 1953 Ruby received a 5-day suspension because of an obscene show, and, in 1954, a 10-day suspension for allowing a drunkard on his premises.³⁷⁶ On February 18, 1954, he was suspended for 5 days because of an obscene striptease act at the Silver Spur and for the consumption of alcoholic beverages during prohibited hours.³⁷⁷ On March 26, 1956, Ruby was suspended by the liquor board for 3 days because several of his checks were dishonored.³⁷⁸ On October 23, 1961, he received another 3-day suspension because an agent solicited the sale of alcoholic beverages for consumption on licensed premises.³⁷⁹

Police Associations

Although the precise nature of his relationship to members of the Dallas Police Department is not susceptible of conclusive evaluation,

the evidence indicates that Ruby was keenly interested in policemen and their work.³⁸⁰ Jesse Curry, chief of the Dallas Police Department, testified that no more than 25 to 50 of Dallas' almost 1,200 policemen were acquainted with Ruby.³⁸¹ However, the reports of present and past members of the Dallas Police Department as well as Ruby's employees and acquaintances indicate that Ruby's police friendships were far more widespread than those of the average citizen.³⁸²

There is no credible evidence that Ruby sought special favors from police officers or attempted to bribe them.³⁸³ Although there is considerable evidence that Ruby gave policemen reduced rates,³⁸⁴ declined to exact any cover charge from them,³⁸⁵ and gave them free coffee and soft drinks,³⁸⁶ this hospitality was not unusual for a Dallas nightclub operator.³⁸⁷ Ruby's personal attachment to police officers is demonstrated by reports that he attended the funeral of at least one policeman killed in action and staged a benefit performance for the widow of another.³⁸⁸ Ruby regarded several officers as personal friends, and others had worked for him.³⁸⁹ Finally, at least one policeman regularly dated, and eventually married, one of the Carousel's strippers.³⁹⁰

Underworld Ties

From the time that Ruby arrived in Dallas in 1947, he was friendly with numerous underworld figures. One of his earliest Dallas acquaintances was Paul Roland Jones, who was convicted of attempting to bribe the sheriff of Dallas and engaging in the sale of narcotics.³⁹¹ Joe Bonds, one of Ruby's partners in the Vegas Club, had a criminal record.³⁹²

Ruby, who enjoyed card playing³⁹³ and horse racing,³⁹⁴ was friendly with several professional gamblers. In 1959, he visited Cuba at the invitation and expense of Lewis McWillie, a professional gambler.³⁹⁵ Alice Nichols reported that Ruby's refusal to give up gambling was one reason why she never seriously considered marrying him.³⁹⁶ When Sidney Seidband, a Dallas gambler, was arrested in Oklahoma City, his list of gambling acquaintances included Jack Ruby.³⁹⁷ And other friends of Ruby have been identified as gamblers.³⁹⁸ Finally, two persons of questionable reliability have reported that Ruby's consent was necessary before gambling or narcotics operations could be launched in Dallas.³⁹⁹

Based on its evaluation of the record, however, the Commission believes that the evidence does not establish a significant link between Ruby and organized crime. Both State and Federal officials have indicated that Ruby was not affiliated with organized criminal activity.⁴⁰⁰ And numerous persons have reported that Ruby was not connected with such activity.⁴⁰¹

Travels

Despite reports that Ruby visited Havana, Las Vegas, New York, Chicago, Honolulu, and Mexican border towns, most of his time subse-

quent to 1947 was spent in Dallas. Some of his travels, including his efforts in behalf of "Little Daddy" Nelson and his visit to New Orleans in June 1963 have been discussed.⁴⁰² Ruby stated that he went to Chicago in 1952, in 1958 when his father died, and in August 1963 when he met members of his family at O'Hare International Airport while en route from New York to Dallas.⁴⁰³ His August trip to New York motivated by his difficulties with the American Guild of Variety Artists and his desire to obtain talent, has been completely established by hotel records.⁴⁰⁴ Early in 1963 Ruby also traveled to Wichita, Kans., because of his interest in stripper Gail Raven,⁴⁰⁵ and on May 25, 1963, he apparently registered in an Oklahoma motel.⁴⁰⁶

Although Ruby denies being in Las Vegas after 1937,⁴⁰⁷ there are unsupported rumors that he was in that city in late 1962,⁴⁰⁸ and the early part of November 1963.⁴⁰⁹ Reports that he was in Las Vegas during the weekend prior to the assassination⁴¹⁰ appear similarly unfounded.⁴¹¹

There is some uncertainty about Ruby's trip to Havana, Cuba, in 1959. The evidence indicates that he accepted an invitation from gambler Lewis J. McWillie, who subsequently became a violent anti-Castroite, to visit Havana at McWillie's expense.⁴¹² Ruby apparently met McWillie in about 1950, when McWillie operated a Dallas nightclub.⁴¹³ McWillie, whom Ruby said he idolized,⁴¹⁴ supervised gambling activities at Havana's Tropicana Hotel in 1959 and later was employed in a managerial capacity in a Las Vegas gambling establishment.⁴¹⁵ Ruby testified that he went to Havana for 8 days in August 1959 and left because he was not interested in its gambling activities.⁴¹⁶ McWillie corroborated this story except that he stated only that Ruby visited Havana "sometime in 1959."⁴¹⁷ Three Chicagoans reported seeing Ruby in Havana during the Labor Day weekend in 1959.⁴¹⁸ Meyer Panitz, an acquaintance of McWillie, reported that when he met Ruby in Miami during the "summer of 1959" Ruby stated that he was returning from a pleasure trip to Cuba.⁴¹⁹ The theory that the trip to Havana had conspiratorial implications is discussed in chapter VI. There is no reliable evidence that Ruby went to Havana subsequent to September 1959.⁴²⁰

Although Ruby denied ever being in Hawaii,⁴²¹ there is some evidence that during the summer of 1961 he was in Honolulu seeking dancing talent.⁴²² While it is unlikely that Ruby would forget a trip to Honolulu in 1961, there is no other indication that such a trip, if it occurred, had any sinister motives.

CHARACTER AND INTERESTS

Family Relationships

As mentioned previously,⁴²³ Eva Grant was the only member of the family living in Dallas when Ruby returned to that city in late 1947. In 1948, she returned to the west coast, visiting Dallas sporadically

until 1959, when she assumed management of the Vegas.⁴²⁴ Despite their recurring arguments, during which they sometimes came to blows,⁴²⁵ Ruby was closer to Eva than any of his brothers or sisters. In the summer of 1963, Eva complained bitterly to Ruby because he gave a friend about \$800 instead of paying Vegas Club bills. Eva, citing her poor health, stated that she should be hospitalized. Ruby rejoined that he had provided her money to enter a hospital. He then shoved her, causing her to fall back about 8 feet and hurt her arm and shoulder. At this point Ruby insisted he wanted her to leave the Vegas Club.⁴²⁶

Ruby frequently told Eva to submit to an operation and in early November 1963 she consented. She was hospitalized for a week, leaving about November 13.⁴²⁷ While she was in the hospital, Jack called Earl and Sam, requesting them to convey their concern to Eva.⁴²⁸ According to Eva, Jack visited her at the hospital two or three times a day. He kept in constant touch with her throughout the weekend of November 22.⁴²⁹

Sam Ruby moved to Dallas from Chicago in July 1955, after selling his interest in the Earl Products Co.⁴³⁰ His son's asthma and Eva's suggestion that he work as a builder in Dallas prompted the move.⁴³¹ Apparently as a result of difficulties in collecting the \$5,500 Sam loaned Jack in 1955 to pay Federal excise taxes,⁴³² Jack and Sam were never particularly close to each other. However, Sam entered into a partnership in an unsuccessful ice cream business with Jack's close friend, Ralph Paul.⁴³³ Jack visited Sam and his family occasionally, especially on Jewish holidays, and from time to time they spoke to each other by telephone.⁴³⁴

Jack had sporadic contacts with his brother Earl, who remained in Chicago until about 1960, when he moved to Detroit.⁴³⁵ The most successful of the brothers, Earl often gave Jack business advice and capital.⁴³⁶ He estimated, perhaps conservatively, that, when arrested, Jack owed him \$15,000.⁴³⁷ The evidence also indicates that Jack borrowed at least \$1,000, and probably more, from his sister Marion in Chicago.⁴³⁸

Social Relationships

There have been statements that Ruby was a homosexual. The available evidence does not support the allegation. There is no evidence of homosexuality on his part; Ruby did not frequent known gathering places for homosexuals,⁴³⁹ many of the reports were inherently suspect or based upon questionable or inaccurate premises,⁴⁴⁰ and Ruby and most of his associates and employees denied the charge.⁴⁴¹ All the allegations were based on hearsay or derive from Ruby's lisp or a "feeling" that Ruby was a "sissy," seemed "weird," acted effeminately, and sometimes spoke in a high-pitched voice when angry.⁴⁴² Some proceeded upon the erroneous theory that Ruby did not date women.⁴⁴³

For the better part of 11 years, Ruby dated Mrs. Alice Reaves Nichols, a blonde divorcee, 4 years younger than he. Mrs. Nichols,

secretary to a Dallas life insurance company executive,⁴⁴⁴ testified that she saw Ruby twice a week between 1948 and 1956, and once a week from then until about 1959.⁴⁴⁵ Ruby discussed marriage with Mrs. Nichols,⁴⁴⁶ but Mrs. Nichols stated that while dating Ruby she was seeing other men and he was taking out other women.⁴⁴⁷ Although there are sharply conflicting reports about whether Ruby dated women who worked for him,⁴⁴⁸ the record indicates that Ruby sought and enjoyed feminine company.⁴⁴⁹

Affection for Dogs

Ruby was extremely fond of dogs. Numerous persons stated that he was constantly accompanied by several of the dogs he owned.⁴⁵⁰ Testimony at Ruby's trial in March 1964 indicated that he referred to his dogs as his "children."⁴⁵¹ He also became extremely incensed when he witnessed the maltreatment of any of his dogs.⁴⁵²

Religious Interests

Reared in the Jewish faith, Jack Ruby was not especially devout. Rabbi Hillel Silverman, whose conservative temple Ruby favored, reported that when Ruby's father died in 1958, Ruby came to services twice daily for the prescribed period of 11 months to recite the traditional memorial prayer.⁴⁵³ Ruby normally attended services only on the Jewish high holy days and he was quite unfamiliar with the Hebrew language.⁴⁵⁴

Ruby was apparently somewhat sensitive to his identity as a Jew. He forbade his comedians to tell stories directed at Jews or Jewish practices⁴⁵⁵ and, on several occasions after 1947, he fought with persons making derogatory remarks about his ethnic origins.⁴⁵⁶ The evidence also indicates that he was deeply upset that an advertisement insulting President Kennedy appeared above a Jewish-sounding name.⁴⁵⁷

Physical Activities and Violence

While in Dallas, Ruby continued attempts to keep in excellent physical condition. He frequently exercised at the YMCA, the Carousel, and his apartment, where he maintained a set of weights.⁴⁵⁸ Ruby was extremely concerned about his weight and health, including his baldness,⁴⁵⁹ and about his appearance in general.⁴⁶⁰

Ruby's concern for his physical well-being was partially motivated by practical considerations, for he was his own unofficial club bouncer. On about 15 occasions since 1950, he beat with his fists, pistol whipped, or blackjacked patrons who became unruly.⁴⁶¹ At other times, he ejected troublesome customers without a beating,⁴⁶² in many instances, justifiably.⁴⁶³ However, many people stated that he employed more force than necessary, particularly because he often ended a fracas by throwing his victim down the stairs of the Carousel.⁴⁶⁴

Besides acting as a bouncer, Ruby on numerous other occasions severely beat people who were not club patrons, usually employing only his fists. Several of these episodes have been discussed in connection with Ruby's relationship with his employees.⁴⁶⁵ In 1951, Ruby attacked a man who had called him a "kike Jew" and knocked out a tooth.⁴⁶⁶ At about that time Ruby is also reported to have knocked a man down from behind and then to have kicked him in the face.⁴⁶⁷ In about 1958, Ruby disarmed a man who had drawn a gun on him at the Vegas, beat him almost to death, put the gun back in the man's pocket, and threw him down the stairs.⁴⁶⁸ In 1958, Ruby reportedly knocked down a man at the Vegas who was 6'3" tall and weighed 230 pounds. Ruby was approximately 5'9" tall and weighed about 175 pounds.⁴⁶⁹ Ruby then made the man, who had slapped his date, crawl out of the club.⁴⁷⁰ In a fight at the Vegas, reportedly witnessed by policemen, Ruby severely beat a heavyweight boxer who had threatened him.⁴⁷¹

During 1962, several violent episodes occurred. Ruby beat a man who refused to pay admission or leave and then shoved him down the stairs.⁴⁷² He "jostled" a woman down the stairs of the Carousel and struck her escort, who was "much smaller" than he.⁴⁷³ On one occasion, Ruby picked up a man who was arguing with his date, knocked him to the floor, cursed him, and then removed him from the Vegas.⁴⁷⁴ When a cabdriver entered the Carousel and inquired about a patron who had neglected to pay his fare, Ruby struck the cabdriver.⁴⁷⁵

In February 1963, Ruby badly beat Don Tabon, who had made some remarks about Ruby's lady companion, injuring Tabon's eye.⁴⁷⁶ Ruby was acquitted of a charge of assault and Tabon sought no monetary relief because he believed Ruby financially incapable of satisfying any resulting judgment. A doctor who went to the Carousel several times between August and November 1963, stated that on each occasion Ruby ejected someone from the club.⁴⁷⁷

Buddy Turman, a prizefighter and Ruby's friend, stated that Ruby "picked his shots."⁴⁷⁸ According to Turman, a bouncer at the Vegas for about a year, Ruby's victim was frequently drunk, female, or otherwise incapable of successfully resisting Ruby's attack. The evidence indicates that, unlike his youthful escapades, Ruby was often malicious. He frequently felt contrite, however, when his anger had passed or when his victim was an old acquaintance, and he would seek to make amends for his violent temper.⁴⁷⁹

With two exceptions, there is no evidence that Ruby settled disputes with firearms. Shortly before Joe Bonds' conviction in 1954, Ruby is reported to have chased Bonds with a pistol.⁴⁸⁰ And, Larry Crafard reported that about a week before the assassination, Ruby told him to get Ruby's gun so that an AGVA official and former employee, Earl Norman, could be ejected.⁴⁸¹ Although Ruby did not often use his gun, it was frequently accessible when he was carrying large amounts of money.⁴⁸²

Generosity to Friends and the Need for Recognition

While Ruby often flared up and acted aggressively, he seemed to calm down or forget his anger quickly, and there is also a great deal of evidence that he was extremely generous to his friends. He loaned money to them and apparently cared little whether the loans would be repaid.⁴⁸³ He was quick to offer employment to persons desperately in need of a job⁴⁸⁴ and he lent considerable aid to persons seeking work elsewhere.⁴⁸⁵ Moreover, when friends or new acquaintances had no roof over their heads, Ruby's apartment was frequently theirs to share.⁴⁸⁶

Ruby's unusual generosity may be explained in part by his extremely emotional reaction to persons in distress, which may have resulted from his firsthand familiarity with poverty, and by his unusual craving to be recognized and relied upon.⁴⁸⁷ Many of Ruby's acquaintances described him as a "publicity hound," "glad hander," and "name dropper," one always seeking to be the center of attention.⁴⁸⁸ Apparently the "egocentrism" of his youth⁴⁸⁹ never left Ruby. Yet, frequently he sought reassurance from persons he admired.⁴⁹⁰