

'I Know That With All We Have Found out, the Time Will Come That He Will Have a New Trial,' Says She

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MRS. SIRHAN WHEN SON WAS HELD.

Mary Sirhan insists her son, Sirhan Bishara Sirhan, did not go to the Ambassador Hotel deliberately to kill Sen. Robert F. Kennedy. "It just happened," Mrs. Sirhan told TATTLE in an exclusive interview. "My son was there but he didn't go as they said ... deliberately to kill."

The 62-year-old Arab mother said she is convinced new evidence and her faith in God will result in her son being granted a new trial.

"I believe in God very strongly," she said. "I know that with all we have found out, the time will come that he will have a new trial."

Mrs. Sirhan said she is unhappy with the legal representation her son has received by his various lawyers.

"SO FAR, it's been six years and until now my son never even had a defense," she said.

She revealed that the Sirhan family is negotiating with another attorney to take up her son's cause. That man, TATTLE learned, is Godfrey Isaac, a prominent Beverly Hills, Calif. attorney.

Sirhan, 34, is serving life in the California state prison at San Quentin on a first degree murder conviction. A jury initially sentenced Sirhan to die in the gas chamber for the June 5, 1968, murder of Senator Kennedy.

The sentence was commuted to life imprisonment after the U.S. Supreme Court outlawed capital punishment.

Mrs. Sirhan vigorously criticized Grant Cooper, the attorney who represented Sirhan at his trial, for not presenting a different defense.

"Look at what the people say in the tran-

script," she said. "It's not me; I don't say it. "The transcript quotes Cooper as saying, 'I'm not here to free a guilty man.' A defense (lawyer) should say this?" asked the determined mother.

She remarked that her son, who was wrestled to the floor firing a revolver when Kennedy and five other persons were shot, has adamantly insisted he doesn't remember what happened before and during the shooting.

"HE HAS TOLD THEM that many times. And he spoke the truth," said Mrs. Sirhan.

The mother said she has escaped being harrassed by the public because her son is a convicted assassin.

"People comfort me because they know me; they know my son," Mrs. Sirhan said. "I wish all the people would know my son. He is not a giant; he is a simple person."

Unlike Marguerite Oswald, the mother of the accused assassin of President John F. Kennedy, Mary Sirhan is not interested in commercializing on her infamous son.

"There is a book they made now," she said. "You don't know what they made with that. We never would do such a thing. I myself will not accept any money from such a thing because that would be like blood money."

MRS. SIRHAN expressed concern over certain threatening letters her son has received in prison.

"But we have somebody who really takes care of him," the mother said. "God in heaven. He's the only One who watches him."

"Many times he used to tell me, 'Mom, the gas chamber is only a few steps away from me, but God puts it down there ... not people.'"



MRS. SIRHAN TODAY. SHE'S 62.

One of the Nation's Top Criminologists Checked Clues & Found:

'CIRCUMSTANCES SUGGEST THAT TWO GUNMEN HAD TO BE TRACKED'

The man credited with providing the first scientific evidence that more than one gun was used in the assassination of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy has received nothing but ridicule as his reward.

The first forensic scientist to dispute the official findings in the assassination probe was William W. Harper of Pasadena, Calif., a leading criminologist for almost 40 years.

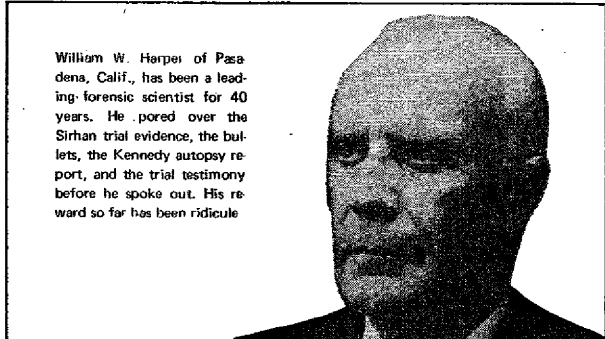
Harper, acting unofficially, spent months investigating the assassination in 1970. He made careful studies of trial evidence, including bullets and shell cases, the report of the Kennedy autopsy, autopsy photographs and portions of the trial testimony.

THE VETERAN criminologist concluded that two .22-caliber weapons were involved in the assassination and they were fired by two gunmen from different points.

The five surviving victims, Harper found, were wounded by Sirhan Sirhan while the shots that killed Kennedy were fired by a second gunman.

These findings came from an expert with extensive qualifications. For seven years he was in charge of the technical laboratory of the Pasadena Police Department. During World War II he was in charge of technical investigation for U.S. Naval intelligence at San Diego.

A fellow of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, he has qualified as an expert in courts in seven states. During his lengthy career he has been a ballistics expert in more than 300 deaths involving firearms.



William W. Harper of Pasadena, Calif., has been a leading forensic scientist for 40 years. He pored over the Sirhan trial evidence, the bullets, the Kennedy autopsy report, and the trial testimony before he spoke out. His reward so far has been ridicule.

Now in failing health, Harper declined a lengthy interview with TATTLE on orders from his doctors. But his extensive correspondence on his probe of the Kennedy assassination evidence reveals his fascination with the bizarre case.

HARPER POSES an interesting question: What position would the Los Angeles police have taken had Sirhan Sirhan escaped the assassination scene without having been seen by witnesses? The assumption is that the autopsy, medical reports and other physical evidence remain what they are today.

"Upon completion of the autopsy it would have been immediately evident that the Senator had been fired on by some gunman in close proximity to him and to his right and

rear," Harper said. Sirhan was standing in front of Kennedy when he fired a volley of shots from a handgun, it is agreed.

Would the gunman, Harper asks, then have turned and fired indiscriminately into the crowd following Kennedy?

"THESE CIRCUMSTANCES would suggest to any experienced homicide detective, as well as to any criminalist, that two guns were involved and two gunmen had to be tracked down," Harper concludes.

Harper claims Sirhan's capture with his gun at the scene caused a mesmerization of the investigative efforts.

"The well-established teachings of criminalistics and forensic pathology were cast aside and by-passed in favor of a more

expedient solution and, unfortunately, an erroneous over-simplification," Harper said.

Harper is outspoken in his belief that the Kennedy murder case should be reopened.

"There are too many things about this that point in one direction, and I think that the Kennedy family should by all means be interested in this, because the next probably will be Ted Kennedy, and then it will go on down the line - any of them," the criminologist said.

HARPER NOTED that he is the only criminologist active on the West Coast who has no affiliation with any law enforcement agency.

The veteran detective began studying the evidence and reaching his conclusion after reading the book "Special Unit Senator," former Los Angeles Chief of Detectives Robert A. Houghton's account of the Kennedy investigation.

In correspondence with journalist Theodore Charach, Harper noted that since he started his investigation of the evidence, the district attorney's office and police officials began spreading rumors to discredit him.

Journalist Charach used Harper as a key figure in his film, "The Second Gun," to back up his theory that more than one gunman was involved in the assassination.

Harper said he is convinced that police bungled the ballistics investigation of Kennedy's death.

"If they get by with this," he said, "then you can say that the science of criminalistics was buried when they buried Robert Kennedy."