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By BERNIE WARD

Vital evidence about the assassination of Sen. Robert Kennedy has been deliberately suppressed by the authorities, charges the distinguished American Academy of Forensic Sciences — which has now opened its own probe into the killing.

"We have collected a vast amount of scientific evidence that the authorities have tried to keep from coming out or denied even exists," said Robert Joling, president of the academy.

"Very grave questions have been raised by members of the academy about the ballistics evidence, the paths of the bullets, and eyewitness statements not brought out at the Sirhan trial.

"The evidence we've amassed so far, but which the authorities have denied, tells us that at least two people were probably shooting when Ken-

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Vital Evidence Was Suppressed in RFK Assassination

nedy was killed," Joling told The ENQUIRER.

Sirhan Sirhan was tried as the sole assassin in the case.

Incredibly, there has never been a test-firing made of Sirhan's gun for ballistics comparison with the bullets fired in the killing, Joling said. "There was a test-firing made, but it was with a different gun.

"We have not been able to get straight answers from the authorities as to why such evidence, and eyewitness statements about a second gunman seen at the killing, are being withheld from the American public."

For these reasons, Joling said, he has appointed a committee of three internationally respected criminologists from three universities to review the

accumulated evidence and report to the academy's executive board.

The academy is a 1,535-member non-profit group of attorneys, criminologists, pathologists, document examiners and other professionals dedicated to furthering criminal justice.

A glaring discrepancy in the evidence, Joling said, arises from the Los Angeles County Medical Examiner's finding that "the shot that hit the senator above the right ear had to have been fired from no more than 1 to 3 inches away."

But Richard Lubic, 37, a television producer who was next to the senator at the moment of the shooting, told The ENQUIRER:

"Sirhan's hand when he fired was at least 3 to 4 feet away."

Joling said that the identity of the alleged second gunman at the assassination scene has now been pinpointed. "A security guard, hired for the night Kennedy was killed, was seen by witnesses with his gun

drawn at the time the shots were being fired," he revealed.

"This man worked for the Ace Guard Service of Van Nuys, Calif., and his gun was a .22-caliber pistol like Sirhan's."

Lubic said: "The guard's pistol was pointed at the floor, where Kennedy had fallen."

Former Congressman Allard Lowenstein, a friend of the slain senator, told The ENQUIRER: "This and other

witnesses' statements were given to the authorities, but have been deliberately misrepresented.

"The authorities have publicly ridiculed as crazy anyone who said they saw a second gun, so the witnesses are afraid to tell the truth now."

Lowenstein confirmed that Sirhan's gun had never been test-fired. "The serial number of the gun that was test-fired, and was said at Sirhan's trial to be the one that fired the fatal bullets, is H18602," he said.

"The serial number of Sirhan's gun is H53725."