

GUN PANEL MEETS ON KENNEDY CASE

Will Check Ballistics Data
in 1968 Death of Senator

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LOS ANGELES, Sept. 23—

The seven firearms experts who will re-examine ballistics evidence in the Robert F. Kennedy assassination met here today for the first time.

They were introduced to the county's Board of Supervisors and inspected the court jury room in which each will conduct separate tests. Then the panel began private discussions of procedures for the court-ordered testing.

The panel is expected to choose one member as a "court administrator" to coordinate testing, act as a spokesman, decide what equipment they may need and prepare conclusions.

Before beginning the tests tomorrow the panel chose one member, Patrick Garland, a firearms examiner with the Bureau of Forensic Sciences in Virginia, as a "court administrator" to coordinate testing and act as a spokesman in court.

The panel also discussed what scientific equipment might be needed and worked

on a form on which to report results and conclusions.

The panel's primary goal is to determine whether a second gun was fired in the Ambassador Hotel pantry the night of June 5, 1968, when Sirhan B. Sirhan shot the Senator. The re-examination was ordered Aug. 14 by Superior Court Judge Robert A. Wenke. Paul Schrader, who was injured in the shooting, and the CBS television network requested the order.

One Named by Sirhan

Each participant in the re-examination—the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, Mr. Schrader, CBS, Mr. Sirhan, the State Attorney General and the County Council—picked one panel member. The seventh expert was agreed on by all parties.

The experts in addition to Mr. Garland are the following: Charles V. Morton, a criminalist with the Institute of Forensic Sciences in Oakland, Calif.

Alfred A. Biasotti, of the California Department of Justice; Ralph Turner, a professor at Michigan State University; Cortland Cunningham, of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Stanton Berg, a private firearms examiner in Minneapolis.

Lowell Bradford, a Forensic scientist from San Jose, Calif.

The experts must first determine whether the condition of the evidence, consisting of at least 20 exhibits used in Mr. Sirhan's trial, will permit re-

liable tests. The police and others have suggested that the bullets have deteriorated to the extent that they are unreliable.

The experts have been asked to offer their theories on what caused the deterioration if they find re-testing impossible. Some have accused the county clerk's office, which has custody of the exhibits, of being careless with them.

One important possible test will be a re-firing of the .22-caliber pistol used by Mr. Sirhan. The gun will probably be fired into a water tank and test bullet compared with bullets retrieved from the victim to determine whether all the bullets used in the murder came from the Sirhan gun.

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