Robert F. Kennedy Assassination: Current Status of Evidence

Robert F. Kennedy Assassination: Current Status of Evidence

Reasonable grounds for doubt exist that Sirhan B. Sirhan acted alone in the assassination of Senator Robert Kennedy in June 1968. The balance of available evidence establishes a rebuttable presumption that at least two guns were fired in the Ambassador Hotel pantry on the night of the shooting, and a variety of other unresolved problems exist, pointing to possible conspiracy. The response to these issues by the directors of the relevant Los Angeles law enforcement agencies has been persistently irresponsible or worse. Central items of evidence have been destroyed by authorities and basic information has been suppressed throughout, making independent appraisal of some key issues impossible. On the basis of current information, no final judgement on the assassination can be made.

The present incoherence of this case is wholly unacceptable. Efforts to address the outstanding problems might result in: 1.) information restoring credibility to the "lone assassin" hypothesis; 2.) inconclusive results, with a showing of good faith pursuit of the truth; 3.) information conclusively exploding the "lone assassin" hypothesis and pointing in the direction of conspiracy. Promising avenues of investigation remain open, providing serious prospect of resolving current problems of the evidence.

I. Number of Guns Fired in the Shooting

Sirhan was unquestionably firing at Senator Kennedy during the shooting, but his was not the only gun present at the scene. Strong indications exist that more than eight bullets were fired, consisting of: 1.) evidence that the bullet holes and damage admitted by officials could not have been caused by eight Sirhan bullets; 2.) evidence of other bullets or bullet damage beyond what is officially admitted. Authorities have repeatedly insisted that only a single gun was fired in the pantry. Because Sirhan's revolver had an eight shot capacity, any additional bullets which are verified establish the firing of another gun.

1. Senator Kennedy was wounded three times, and each of five other victims once. Two bullets were recovered from the senator, and one each from the other victims. According to the official police report, one additional bullet (which allegedly passed through the senator's chest) caused a hole in a pantry ceiling tile and was lost in the "interspace" between the tile and the ceiling. Two additional ceiling tile bullet holes are acknowledged to exist by officials, as well as further sets of bullet holes in the right shoulder pad of the senator's suit coat and the trousers of another shooting victim.

2. Officials contend that one bullet (mini-mag, .22 caliber) traversed a ceiling tile, rebounded off the ceiling, exited a second tile, and struck a victim located nearly 20 feet away, lodging in her forehead

while retaining over 3/4 of its original weight. The victim testified that she was bent over when hit. According to this theory, the bullet travelled downward from the ceiling, but the bullet which struck the victim proceeded at an upward angle in her forehead. If the official theory of this shot is incorrect, separate bullets caused the victim wound and the two ceiling tile holes, and an additional shot (beyond the eight shots acknowledged) was fired.

3. Police contend that the shot passing through the senator's right shoulder pad, back-to-front, struck a nearby victim in the forehead. This victim, however, was travelling behind the Senator, approximately four or five feet back, and the steep upward angle of the shoulder pad shot makes it doubtful that this bullet could have struck even a person standing in front of him. If this wound was not caused by a bullet which struck Senator Kennedy or his clothing, an additional shot was fired.

4. In order to enable the RFK through-and-through shot also to account for the third ceiling tile bullet hole, the official police trajectory chart and photo reconstruction place the senator several feet to the west of the first pantry "steam table." This creates discrepancies, however, because Sirhan reportedly never passed the edge of the steam table, making point blank shots implausible (II.1.c.), and because the senator's body on the floor extends five feet to the east of this position. If the third ceiling tile hole was not caused by a bullet which struck Senator Kennedy or his clothing, an additional shot was fired.

5. The direction the senator is facing in the official police trajectory diagram is patently inconsistent with the possibility that either the through-and-through or shoulder pad shot could have caused one of the three acknowledged ceiling panel holes. Placing him further to the south might rescue this possibility, but it also rules out the chance that this shot was fired by Sirhan, who was blocked at the side of the steam table. Rotating the senator's body further left to solve this problem would conflict with eyewitness reports, and with the direction of his body on the floor, given his backward fall. Unless they can be resolved, these problems also establish the firing of an additional shot.

6. The grand jury testimony of one pantry witness states that another victim was already wounded and on the floor prior to a shot which passed harmlessly through the witness's left pant leg. The official police trajectory summary, however, attributes both the victim wound and the pant leg holes to a single bullet, contradicting this testimony. If the testimony is correct, two different bullets were involved in this damage, thus establishing an additional shot.

7. According to the official FBI report entitled "Ambassador Hotel Area Where Shooting Occurred," four "bullet holes" and two "reported" bullet holes or marks were identified following the shooting in the swing-

ing door area at the west end of the pantry. Captioned photographs to this effect were included in the FBI reports, which were not publicly available until 1976. These documents corroborate prior reports and photographs of this area by parties on the scene after the shooting. None of these bullet holes were admitted to exist by Los Angeles authorities. All are beyond those consistent with the firing of only a single gun at the scene.*

8. Following the shooting, an apparent bullet was discovered in a door frame in Sirhan's line of fire in the anteroom to the west of the pantry. Two police officers examining the object believed it to be a bullet, and reiterated this belief explicitly when located and questioned seven years later. It was depicted in official police photos at the time and in an Associated Press wirephoto captioned "Bullet Discovered in Door Frame." This apparent bullet is separate from, and additional to, the ones described in item I.7. above.

9. According to an Ambassador hotel maitre d' (a former army infantryman), in the period following the shooting he observed "a small caliber bullet lodged about a quarter of an inch into the wood" in the center divider of the swinging doors mentioned above (I.7.). He states that this bullet had not been present at that location before.

10. The police criminalist who directed the pantry examination stated at one point in a court deposition that while he was "in charge of the crime scene" he "recovered the bullets that were recovered." However, eight bullets are already stipulated by police as <u>not</u> having been recovered at the crime scene - seven in victims and one "lost somewhere in the ceiling interspace." Any bullets recovered from the crime scene, as suggested in the criminalist's statement, comprise bullets in excess of eight.

11. During a crime scene reconstruction several days after the shooting, the Los Angeles County coroner was given the impression by police, in response to an inquiry, that bullet holes had been discovered in the door frames of the swinging doors noted above. These locations appear to bear official markings, and previous police photos were taken of them. The coroner directed that the areas be photographed.

12. According to a hotel waiter who was present during the shooting, he was told by a plain-clothes policeman at the crime scene reconstruction that two bullets had been extracted by police from the center divider mentioned above.

---

* Here as elsewhere the trivial possiblity of a prior firearms shooting in the Ambassador Hotel pantry is excluded. No suggestion of any such shooting has ever been made.

13. The identification of center divider bullet holes in the FBI report (I.7.) has been independently corroborated by a professor of police science who was an FBI special agent assigned to the case and examined the pantry area on the morning of the shooting.

II. Possibility of Sirhan's Firing the Bullets Which Struck Senator Kennedy or His Clothing

Three bullets struck Senator Kennedy's body and an additional bullet passed harmlessly through the right shoulder pad of his suit coat. All entered from the right rear at a steep upward angle. Subsequent scientific tests established that these shots were fired from virtually point-blank range. Grave questions exist, however, as to whether Sirhan's gun ever got that close to the senator, whether it was positioned to his rear, and whether four bullets could have been discharged before Sirhan's gun arm was pushed away.

1. Muzzle-distance from Senator Kennedy of the gun firing shots which struck him or his clothing:

   a.) Scientific tests involving nitrite and powder burns were conducted by the Los Angeles County coroner and by a police department criminalist assigned to the case, to determine the muzzle distance of the shots striking the senator or his clothing. The criminalist testified at trial that the fatal bullet entered from a distance of approximately "one inch" from the senator's right ear, and that the other shots were fired at a distance between "one to six inches" from his clothing. The coroner testified that the fatal shot entered from between "one to 1½ inches" from the edge of the ear, and that the other gunshot wounds were inflicted from a distance of "contact" to "one inch." These ranges are endorsed by the Los Angeles authorities and have been supported in subsequent evaluations of the distance evidence.

   b.) Though disagreeing on other matters, eyewitnesses to the shooting, including the man who first grabbed Sirhan's arm, have stated overwhelmingly that his gun never came closer than 1½ to 3 feet from the senator's body. No grand jury or trial testimony ever put Sirhan's gun closer. (Among distances reported by various witnesses are the following: Burns, 1½-2 feet; Cesar, 2 feet; DiPierro (grand jury), Sirhan 4-6 feet; Hamill, 2 feet; Lubic, 2-3 feet; Minasian, 3 feet; Patrusky, 3 feet; Romero, one yard; Schulte, 3 yards, Uecker, 1½ to 2 feet. Further elaboration of observations is desirable in some cases, as with DiPierro, Urso, Yaro.) This issue was never pursued at trial.

   c. In approaching Senator Kennedy, Sirhan was blocked by the pantry steam table on his right and by an assistant maitre d' who was leading the senator forward on his left. A point-

blank shot by Sirhan requires that Senator Kennedy was within at least two to three feet of the steam table, which Sirhan reportedly did not pass. Official representations have placed him beyond this range, in attempting to meet other requirements of the one-gun hypothesis. (I.4.)

d.) At least one other known gun was in Senator Kennedy's immediate vicinity at the time of the shooting. It was drawn by a security guard who had been travelling at his right and whose fallen clip-on tie appears at the senator's side in the first photograph taken after the fall. The guard denies having fired the gun, which was not impounded or inspected by police. Other guns may also have been present in this area.

2. Direction of the shots:

a.) According to the assistant maitre d' who was leading Senator Kennedy forward at the time, Sirhan approached from the senator's front, and he felt the senator's right arm fall out of his hand after the firing began. This witness was the first to apprehend Sirhan, and according to his account no Sirhan shot from behind was possible.

b.) Other witnesses, but not all, concur that the senator was facing forward when the shooting began and that Sirhan was to his front. According to the hotel busboy whom he reportedly greeted last, the senator "had just turned away" when the shooting began.

c.) While travelling through the pantry, the senator several times stopped to shake hands with those present. Some witnesses recall that he was turned to the left shaking hands or just turning back from a handshake when the firing began.

d.) Even if Senator Kennedy were turned ninety degrees to the north of his eastward path, it remains difficult or impossible to reconcile a gunman shooting from the east with the angles of the shots striking the senator's body or traversing his shoulder pad. (See also I.5.) His subsequent direction on the floor following a backward fall would also be unlikely.

3. According to the assistant maitre d' who first grabbed Sirhan, only two shots were fired before his gun arm was pushed down onto the adjacent steam table. Some other testimony corroborates this account. If it is accurate, Sirhan could not have fired four point-blank shots into the senator or his clothing.

a.) Eyewitness reports suggest that a victim following a few feet behind the senator (I.3.) was the first to fall in the shooting. If this is correct, and if he was struck by a separate bullet, five shots would be necessary before Sirhan's arm was restrained.

III. Firearms Examinations and Identity of Gun(s) Which Fired Specific Bullets

Subsequent tests have failed to substantiate the testimony at grand jury and trial that Sirhan's gun could be positively matched with the bullet reportedly recovered from Senator Kennedy's neck. (The fatal bullet was too fragmented for comparison.) Other problems and confusion cloud the bullet comparison issues, as well as the general matter of the handling of evidence guns and bullets.

1. The formal documentation submitted at trial recorded that a bullet recovered from Senator Kennedy's neck had been matched to test bullets fired from Iver Johnson gun number H18602. Sirhan's gun was Iver Johnson H53725. This discrepancy was later attributed to "clerical error" by the police criminalist responsible for the bullet comparison work.

2. No records exist of the test firing of Sirhan's gun in 1968, and no specific corroboration has been provided for statements concerning the firing, or for the bullet examinations and other scientific tests reportedly performed at the time.

3. In contrast to the police criminalist's testimony that Sirhan's gun had fired the bullet reportedly recovered from Senator Kennedy's neck (exhibit 47), this match could not be verified by any of the panel of seven firearms examiners convened in 1975 to study the firearms evidence. Though the match had been represented as being an easy one, it could not be duplicated using either old or newly fired test bullets.

4. None of the 1975 examiners could likewise substantiate the police criminalist's trial testimony matching either the Weisel bullet (exhibit 54) or the Goldstein bullet (exhibit 52) to Sirhan's gun. The criminalist's firearms testimony was controverted on other material points as well by the 1975 panel.

5. Though requested during the initial crime investigation, no neutron activation analysis has ever been undertaken to link the victim bullets to each other.

6. Some question exists as to whether exhibit 47 is in fact the bullet recovered from the senator's neck. This relates to discrepancies in autopsy and subsequent observations about the bullet, to the background of its custody, and to the fact that, unlike the six other bullets recovered from victims, exhibit 47 shows no trace of human tissue.

7. Of the seven victim bullets in evidence, three (exhibits 47, 52 and 54) were identified by several examiners as having been fired from the same (not identified) gun. Other examiners were unable to confirm this match.

8. Though agreeing on some questions, the examiners differed on a number of central issues with respect to the firearms evidence. Their formal conclusions reported no evidence to support or preclude the firing of a second gun.

9. Based on the unexpected presence of lead deposits in the barrel of Sirhan's gun, the chairman of the firearms panel testified in court that an unauthorized and unknown firing of the gun had apparently taken place while it was in official custody from 1968 to 1975. This conclusion was absent from the written reports and was not apparently unanimous.

10. The mandate of the panel extended only to bullet comparison issues. Questioned in court, members agreed to the potential value and relevance of specific tests and inquiries in other areas.

IV. Other Evidence Relating to the "Lone Assassin" Hypothesis

Additional problems in the case, beyond those suggested above, have been ignored or unsatisfactorily addressed by authorities. Though often difficult or impossible to pursue independently, these add further troublesome questions about the official theory. Most such questions remain critical regardless of whether one or more guns were fired in the shooting. Some can be touched on briefly.

1. According to a 1969 news report, the executive chef of the hotel, whose office was directly adjacent to the kitchen pantry, was classified by the Secret Service as a security threat to the President of the United States. He was an object of early notice in the course of the investigation, and accounts are unclear as to whether he was in the shooting area at the time of the shooting. His name and age were later misreported by the Los Angeles chief of detectives.

2. Substantial indications exist that Sirhan may have been in a hypnotic trance at the time of the shooting. His denial of any recollection of the shooting period and of contents of his notebook aside, this evidence relates to features of his behavior and reactions before, during, and after the shooting.

3. Several witnesses reported that Sirhan was engaged in close conversation with a young woman immediately before the shooting. Some evidence exists of previous Sirhan connections with the same or another woman, and a woman was also linked to an earlier reported statement that Senator Kennedy would be shot on Tuesday night. Police brushed aside these lines of evidence, and advanced a patently inaccurate identification of the woman seen with Sirhan prior to the shooting.

4. The contents of Sirhan's notebooks are consistent with the hypnosis hypothesis, as well as with the possibility of outside participation

in his plans. Prolonged repetitions of particular words and phrases occur, and the references to killing Senator Kennedy are coupled with "pay to the order of..." An entry dated May 18 vows that "RFK must die," but the television documentary which Sirhan later cited as the basis for his shooting intentions did not appear until May 20. Senator Kennedy's publicized campaign pledge concerning jets for Israel did not take place until May 26.

5. Similar independent reports from a witness and a Los Angeles police officer concerning suspicious persons hurriedly exiting the hotel after the shooting were dismissed for unknown reasons. A police radio bulletin concerning two suspects was dispatched by the reporting officer, but was rescinded by his superiors shortly thereafter.

6. Although the Los Angeles chief of detectives proclaimed that no one with "right wing" connections was present in the pantry, at least one armed individual (II.1.d.) in the immediate shooting vicinity fits that description. In spite of contradictions and inaccuracies in his subsequent statements, no indication exists that he was closely investigated, even after police were made aware of his anti-Kennedy views.

7. Various Sirhan contacts with reported organized crime and other figures have repeatedly been ignored or cursorily dismissed by officials. These include suggestive associations during the period of his first interest in the occult and a reported and unexplained contact with an itinerant self-styled evangelist in the weeks prior to the shooting. Such lines of evidence have been pursued, if at all, by independent investigators.

V. Destruction or Withholding of Major Evidence by Authorities

A central problem in testing official claims about the assassination has been the destruction of key evidence by authorities and the withholding from public scrutiny of virtually the entire investigative record on the case. These polices are contrary to early promises, and have rendered critical assessment of the evidence, and of official conduct, impossible in many areas.

1. Despite repeated public commitments of the Los Angeles police and district attorney following the trial, the ten-volume summary of the official investigation of the case has never been released, and no public access to it has been permitted. The supporting files and documents in all sectors of the case have also been withheld. Records were similarly flatly refused when subpoenaed in a 1975 Los Angeles lawsuit concerning alleged complicity in the assassination of a suspect whom police had investigated.

2. Property report records of over 90 items booked into evidence have been unavailable, along with time and chain of possession information.

3. The left sleeves of Senator Kennedy's suit coat and shirt are missing. Also missing is a bullet reportedly recovered from Sirhan's pocket after the shooting.

4. Official photos and film of the crime scene, the crime scene investigation, and the crime reconstructions are missing or withheld by officials. Captions for available photos, generalized descriptions of their content, and explanations for the notations included are either unavailable or non-existent. The hundreds of non-official photos assembled by the authorities are also permanently unavailable.

5. Gun H18602, initially linked at the Sirhan trial with exhibit 47, was subsequently reported destroyed while in police custody. Inconsistent official information has since emerged as to the date of its destruction.

6. "Two boards from door frame" taken as evidence in connection with apparent bullet holes at the scene were reportedly destroyed.

7. Two or three pantry ceiling tiles (both numbers have been given) which were booked as evidence in connection with apparent bullet holes were reportedly destroyed. X-rays said to have been made of them were also reportedly destroyed.

8. Specific records of the reported test-firing of Sirhan's gun in 1968 are unavailable or destroyed. With one exception, photos or photomicrographs supporting the bullet comparisons supposedly performed in 1968 are either non-existent, unavailable, or destroyed.

9. All records or specific documentation of spectrographic tests reportedly conducted in connection with victim bullets and suspected bullet damage in the pantry are unavailable or destroyed.

10. The texts of original interviews with key eyewitnesses within the hotel pantry have been withheld. Also unavailable are markings on charts of the shooting area made by eyewitnesses in the course of grand jury testimony.

11. A police officer's report concerning possible suspects leaving the hotel following the shooting (IV.5.) allegedly twice disappeared from official files and is unavailable or destroyed.

12. In 1975, the Los Angeles Police Commission announced that it would respond to formal written inquiries about the case as a substitute for allowing any access to case files or reports. Letters directed to them in connection with this pledge remain unanswered.

VI. Other Aspects of Official Conduct

The record of the direction of this case by Los Angeles chiefs of police and district attorneys through the late 1970s removes any presumption of its reliability or effectiveness. (This is in contrast to professionalism and competence often evident in the work of operational level law enforcement personnel.) The close journalistic oversight required in such a situation has been either sporadic or wholly absent. No corrective intervention has emerged from the other law enforcement agencies involved in the case.

1. At the time of Sirhan's trial, his counsel assumed and stipulated his sole guilt in the shooting (which Sirhan did not deny), and directed their defense toward the legal issue of "diminished capacity." Had the shooting evidence subsequently developed been available at the time, his chief attorney later declared, the legal-investigative efforts of the defense would have been wholly reoriented. Efforts by Sirhan's counsel to secure a full review of the untried crime scene issues have been blocked by Los Angeles authorities.

2. Following the trial, and before the initiation of Sirhan's legal appeals, a secret meeting was conducted at which the trial judge, prosecution and other officials addressed basic questions of the disposition and availability of evidence in the case. (The reported date of destruction of important physical evidence items was six weeks later.) It was intimated at this meeting that Sirhan's pending motion for a new trial would be denied, prior to formal argument on the motion. Sirhan's counsel were neither invited to the meeting nor informed of it.

3. For years Los Angeles law enforcement officials decried outside publicity or criticism on the case, insisting that responsible reassessment could only be insured in court supervised proceedings. Efforts to review central questions through cooperative and non-public steps were rebuffed. When limited court proceedings were achieved in 1975, through the initiative of outside parties, these officials moved at the first opportunity to extinguish them.

4. Los Angeles officials denied when questioned that the police officers shown in the AP wirephoto (I.8.) had asserted, as reported, that the object they were examining was a bullet. When the officers were identified and located in 1975 through outside efforts, this denial proved false. The authorities then acted in unison to block their requested testimony in court. The subsequent deposing of these officers was likewise blocked.

5. The Los Angeles district attorney of the early 1970s claimed repeatedly, on national television and elsewhere, that every eyewitness to the shooting reported the muzzle distance of Sirhan's gun at point-blank range. Similar claims have come from other officials as well, who sometimes invoke (falsely) the account of the assistant maitre d'.

6. The police criminalist entrusted with the physical evidence responsibilities in this case is renowned for his inaccurate, incoherent and self-contradictory statements throughout. Beyond current specifics of destroyed evidence, non-existent records, "clerical errors," and lack of corroborating testimony, his general professional competence and standing have long been sharply questioned by his peers. He was reprimanded for improper conduct in 1974, disqualified from serving on civil service interview boards, suspended from his post for one month in 1980, and cited in another case by the state Court of Appeal for testimony "bordering on perjury" and "given with reckless disregard for the truth."

7. The book on the assassination investigation authored by the then Los Angeles chief of detectives presents derogatory or embarrassing narratives concerning many named witnesses and individuals. (It preceded the exclusive devotion to privacy rights subsequently advanced as the rationale for blanket withholding of official files from all others.) Replete with gross factual errors, the book scarcely touches on the basic crime scene issues currently in contention.

8. At various times, police have warned witnesses not to talk with anyone else about their information on the case, sometimes falsely citing a court order which expired in 1969. Incidents also exist of efforts to "correct" or induce changes in witness testimony, as well as of public misreporting of it.

9. The 1977 report submitted by the "special counsel" in the case appointed by the district attorney in 1975 explicity falsifies precise quotations from the official FBI reports. It bypasses important issues, misrepresents eyewitness testimony, and presents a wide assortment of factual errors. The report was subsequently discredited at a hearing before the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors and in detailed documents submitted at their request.

10. Since the initial assassination investigation, all instances of substantial expansion or clarification of the evidence in the case have come through outside initiatives, not from the Los Angeles police or district attorney or the California attorney general. No significant official activity on these issues has been reported in recent years.

11. For years, criticisms of official conclusions have been countered with references to the comprehensiveness of the initial investigation, including a full exchange of information with, and implied concurrence of, the FBI. Only with the partial release of the FBI investigative reports (I.7.) did it become apparent that the FBI information itself contradicted the one gun hypothesis.

12. According to the Los Angeles chief of detectives at the time, the police official who exercised day-to-day operational direction of the assassination investigation "had connections with various intelligence agencies in several countries." Questions concerning this officer's formal retirement from the force in 1967 and his subsequent reinstatement, his alleged CIA status, and other related matters concerning his role in the case have never been answered.

13. Statements of official spokesmen in the past have included the false claims that the actual shooting was captured on film, that ceiling tile evidence was submitted at trial, that the RFK shoulder pad shot was not back-to-front, that the 1975 firearms panel had vindicated the original firearms testimony, that ceiling tiles were examined in 1971 which were subsequently reported as having been destroyed in 1969, that the U.S. Secret Service had been guarding Senator Kennedy prior to the shooting, and that no gun besides Sirhan's was present in the Ambassador Hotel pantry.

VII. Available Avenues of Inquiry

Despite the passage of time and the record of official obstructiveness, numerous options exist for resolving the outstanding questions which exist in this case. A few may be briefly summarized. Certain of these approaches depend on official cooperation; others can be pursued independently. In view of the record of this case to date, impartiality, practical competence, and methodical documentation are critical to constructive work in these areas.

1. Release the ten-volume report of Special Unit Senator, and related files. Arrange for reasonable access to any particularly sensitive material through appropriate procedures.

2. Release all interviews and reports of hotel employees, bystanders, and law enforcement personnel concerning locations, events, and physical damage near the crime scene. Release all relevant measurements, and charts showing locations of suspected bullet holes and estimated locations of known pantry eyewitnesses.

3. Locate and carefully question witnesses from the above group, particularly with respect to guns present at the scene and evidence of bullets and bullet holes and damage following the shooting.

4. Reconstruct and clarify the evidence relating to positions, distances and locations with respect to the four shots which struck Senator Kennedy or his clothing.

5. Perform a detailed flight path reconstruction analysis and explore possible physical simulation efforts. Determine credibility of the official version of the flight of the alleged Young bullet. (I.2.)

6. Release available photographic evidence from the crime scene, pre- and post-shooting, as well as of crime scene reconstructions. Both official and non-official photographs should be included. Release the prosecution film on physical circumstances of the shooting.

7. Conduct neutron activation analysis on the victim bullets and any other relevant physical evidence.

8. Take steps to conclusively determine the authenticity of exhibit 47.

9. Conduct an impartial review of all FBI information from the crime scene examination and interview all FBI personnel who examined the scene with respect to evidence of bullets and bullet holes or damage.

10. Review Sirhan's movements and contacts on the night of the shooting, and the circumstances and individuals in the pantry prior to the conclusion of Senator Kennedy's speech. Clarify the issue of the "polka dot dress girl" (IV.3.) and correct omissions in the official list of pantry eyewitnesses during the shooting.

11. Review all aspects of the public and private security arrangements in the Ambassador Hotel on the night of the shooting.

12. Review background aspects of the case relating to certain individuals, including Bryan, Cesar, Fahey, Gindroz, Owen, Ramistella, Rathke, Schulman, Sharaga, and Van Antwerp. Pursue outstanding issues.

13. Explore possibilities of scientific audio analysis.

14. Determine if any bullet casings were recovered from the floor of the Ambassador Hotel pantry. Pursue relevant issues.

15. Determine nature and origin of the wood in the bullets in trial exhibit 38. Verify the assertion that they were recovered from Sirhan's car.

16. Review the questions relating to Sirhan's notebooks, evidence for and against possibilities of hypnosis or self-hypnosis, and his activities and associations in the weeks prior to the shooting.

17. Investigate all aspects of the handling of physical evidence taken into police custody, particularly during the first 72 hours. These should include identification markings on the scene, chains of possession, property reports, nature and times of tests performed, and identities of personnel involved or with corroborating or relevant information. Why were police still unable to say whether there were "bullets in door frames" four full days after the shooting?

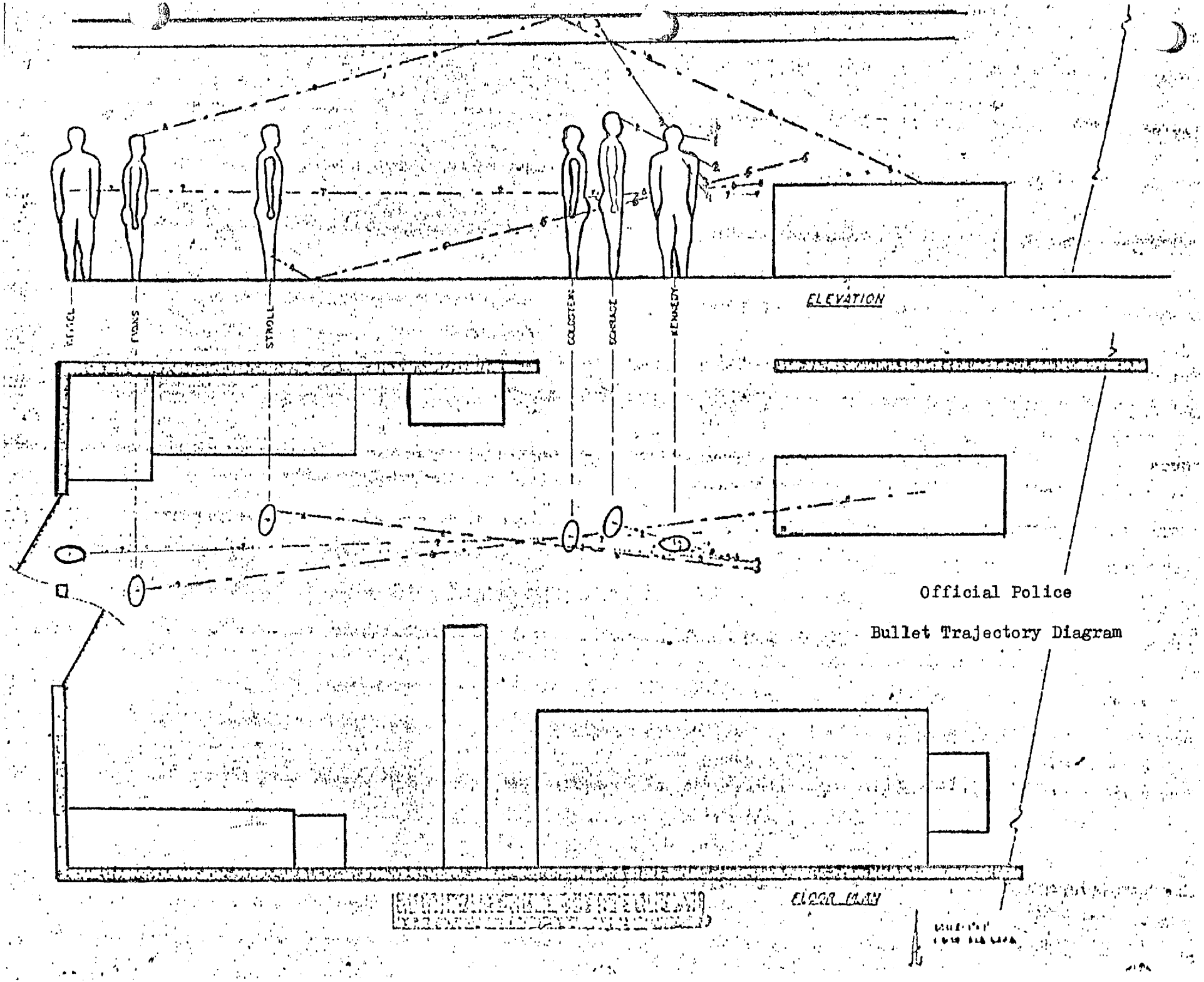
* * *

In comparison with the John F. Kennedy assassination relatively little information has been available concerning this case, and the independent work which has taken place has been necessarily incomplete. Even so, it is unlikely that Sirhan could be convicted of murder today in a trial based on present evidence. The above summary is abbreviated and highly selective; all factual references can be documented.

Among those who have advanced these inquiries to date are the late Allard K. Lowenstein, Paul Schrade, the Kennedy friend and campaign official wounded in the shooting, Robert J. Joling, the former president of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, and attorney and Charles Manson prosecutor Vincent Bugliosi. The case is likely to remain in basic disarray, however, until further responsible efforts emerge to resolve the presently unanswered questions.

-G. Stone
℅ 2349 North Early Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22302

5228423GSB



Official Police

Bullet Trajectory Diagram