

Ted's Plea for Sirhan

Last Surviving Brother Asked Court to Spare Condemned Man; Now He Faces Crucial Decision

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Sen. Edward M. Kennedy found himself able to express compassion in the aftermath of the assassination of a second brother.

Ted Kennedy made an impassioned last-minute plea that Sirhan Bishara Sirhan's life be spared after the Jordanian immigrant was convicted of the murder of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

Superior Court Judge Herbert V. Walker brushed aside Kennedy's dramatic plea and sentenced Sirhan to death.

However, Sirhan, now 30, still basks in the California state prison at San Quentin, his death sentence having been commuted to life after the U.S. Supreme Court outlawed the California death penalty.

Ted Kennedy was apparently speaking for the entire Kennedy family when he went to bed for Sirhan.

"My brother was a man of love and sentiment and compassion," Kennedy wrote. "He would not have wanted his death to be a cause for the taking of another life. You may recall his pleas when he learned of the death of Martin Luther King (three months before RFK was killed).

"HE SAID THAT what we need in the United States is not hatred; what we need in the United States is not violence or lawlessness, but love and wisdom and compassion towards one another."

"Moreover, he was a young man totally committed to life and living. He stood against injustice, poverty and discrimination for those evils lessened life. He grew to despise war for war denies the sacredness of life. And he had a special affection for children for they held the promise of life."

The Kennedy family has given no encouragement to the assassination buffs who, through the years, have pursued conspiracy theories in the deaths of President John F. Kennedy and his brother Bobby.

In May 1969, less than a year after RFK was slain in a Los Angeles hotel kitchen, a Kennedy spokesman brushed off broadcast journalist Theodore Charach's claims that a second gunman was involved in Bobby Kennedy's death with:

"He's dead; we can care less."

Richard Drayne, Sen. Edward Kennedy's press secretary, told Charach:

"Go to the police."

Charach, however, had been waging a concerted battle challenging the Los Angeles Police Department's contention that Sirhan Sirhan, acting alone, was solely responsible for Bobby's murder.

NOW THOSE QUESTIONING the official conclusions about the assassination of Bobby Kennedy have spread out from merely the assassination buffs, amateur and otherwise, who are pursuing conspiracy theories.

One prominent official, Baxter Ward, member of the powerful Los Angeles County board of supervisors, has challenged the



"My brother Robert was a man of love and sentiment and compassion. He would not have wanted his death to be a cause for the taking of another life. He said that what we need in the United States is ... love and wisdom and compassion..."

Sen. Edward M. Kennedy's plea to Superior Court Judge Herbert V. Walker to spare the life of Sirhan B. Sirhan, who had just been convicted of assassinating his own brother. Sirhan still lives.

official findings and believes that evidence from outside sources should be considered. Ward told TATTLER that he has not yet filled in the Kennedy family with the details of his efforts, but that he plans to.

Ward's interest in the questions arose during his days as a journalist, before he entered politics. He now says he will not be satisfied until all the doubts are resolved.

NOW, MORE THAN 10 YEARS AFTER a sniper killed John Kennedy on the streets of Dallas and exactly six years after gunfire ended Bobby Kennedy's presidential aspirations, Ted Kennedy is faced with a

choice of whether to be the third Kennedy brother to aim at the Presidency — and perhaps to make himself a target for another assassin's bullets.

Bobby Kennedy had a "whatever-will-be-will-be" attitude, and traveled with minimum security during his campaigns.

In the aftermath of the political assassinations of John and Bobby Kennedy, some members of the Kennedy family have urged Ted Kennedy to quit politics.

Jackie Kennedy herself, after Bobby was murdered, was quoted by a friend as saying: "For God's sake, Ted, there've been enough Kennedys in the obituary columns lately."

TED KENNEDY'S FEARS were no doubt heightened when Alabama Gov. George Wallace was shot in 1972.

Kennedy later told his wife, Joan, that he planned to announce that he would not seek the presidential nomination.

"You know what's going to happen to me?" he said. "I'm going to be the first Kennedy brother to die in bed."

But as Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Fred Sparks reported exclusively in TATTLER last year, Ted's mind was changed by Rose Kennedy, 63, who is determined to see her sole surviving son in the White House.

Rose Kennedy is carrying out the wishes of Joe Kennedy, who was responsible for his sons entering politics.

Joe wanted his oldest son, Joe Jr., to become President. But Joe Jr. was killed in World War II. The next in line was the next eldest son, John.

"I GOT JACK into politics," old Joe once said. "I told him Joe Jr. was dead and now it was his responsibility."

Rose Kennedy had another selling point in urging Ted to run for President.

"If anything happens to me," President Kennedy had said, "Bobby will take my place, and if Bobby goes, we have Teddy coming along."

Still a question mark in Ted Kennedy's future as a strong presidential contender is the Chappaquiddick episode. But Rose Kennedy has refused to buy the argument that the accident that left a young woman dead has left the Kennedy political dynasty in shambles.

IN VIEW OF the scandal-ridden Republican administration of Richard Nixon, the GOP will surely attack Edward Kennedy with vigor over the Chappaquiddick incident should he run for President.

Ted Kennedy is still coy about whether he will try to be the second Kennedy to occupy the White House.

While refusing to announce, Kennedy did answer "Yes" recently when publicly asked whether he would like to be President.

But according to journalist Sparks, Ted Kennedy has already given his mother the "birthday gift" she requested or her 83rd birthday — the promise that she will see another son in the White House.

A-Tests Could Settle Bullets Controversy

A University of California atomic scientist maintains he can clear up the controversy surrounding the evidentiary bullets in the Robert Kennedy slaying by making radioactive tests.

Los Angeles County Coroner Dr. Thomas T. Noguchi asked the scientist, Vincent P. Guinn, within days of the assassination to subject fragments of eight bullets recovered in the shooting to radioactive tests to determine if they all came from the same batch of lead, thus the same manufacturer.

However, the plan to determine if all bullets were fired from the same gun was called off at the request of De Wayne Wolfer, controversial Los Angeles police crime lab expert, who claimed the tests were so sensitive they could be confusing.

Guinn outlined the procedure he felt should have been taken in an affidavit and described the proposed tests at a recent public hearing called by Los Angeles County Supervisor Baxter Ward, a candidate for the California Democratic gubernatorial nomination.