

Grand Jury to Scan Sirhan Evidence

Dist. Atty. Joseph P. Busch Jr. announced Wednesday that the question of tampering with evidence in the Sirhan Bishara Sirhan death penalty conviction for the murder of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy will be laid before the Los Angeles County Grand Jury Aug. 16.

Busch, whose office has investigated charges of improper ballistics investigation of the original case for the last two months, said he continued to be concerned that there may have been tampering with the crucial exhibits—the fatal bullets and the alleged death weapon.

Busch cited a "gag order" by Superior Judge Arthur Alarcon in June, 1968, and a subsequent order by Superior Judge Herbert V. Walker in May, 1969, as "sealing" all exhibits to public examination except by special court order.

He said the order apparently was violated by personnel of the county clerk's office.

Busch said the grand jury examination must determine the origin and extent of outside examination of the exhibits before further investi-

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gation can be completed.

The question of tampering with evidence arose from charges that police ballistics expert DeWayne Wolfer violated procedure in probing Kennedy's death. Busch said there is a question whether those charges can ever be resolved, in light of possible tampering with critical evidence.

Mrs. Mary Sirhan said attorney Luke McKissack will remain as co-counsel in an effort to have the conviction of her condemned son set aside. Monday she named attorney Godfrey Isaac as a new defense counsel.

McKissack has represented Sirhan since his 1969 conviction for the assassination of Kennedy. Isaac has said he believes new evidence indicates that the fatal bullet was not fired by Sirhan, but by a second gunman.