

# **The Hard Evidence:**

## **A 'Perfect Autopsy', Eyewitnesses, Ballistics Photos, Mishandled Documents, Bills of Sale — & That Lost Gun**

By JOHN MOULDER  
Of the *Tattler* Staff

"I think we can end the divisions within the United States, the violence."

A thunderous roar from jubilant well-wishers followed Robert Francis Kennedy as he left the ballroom of the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles to hand-shake his way through a dingy pantry. He was on his way to still another ballroom to celebrate his victory.

The cheers turned into screams of panic as the popping sounds of gunfire were heard.

The inheritor of John Kennedy's political empire was also an heir to his curse. And the echo of the screams and the gunfire lingers in a nation's ears.

Exactly six years after Sen. Robert F. Kennedy was killed in a decade of political assassinations, the truth behind his murder finally may emerge.

That Sirhan Bishara Sirhan did not fire the shots that killed Bobby Kennedy is the

startling conclusion sworn to by experts in the field of criminal science.

The experts challenge the Los Angeles Police Department, which has defended its lone-gun, lone-assassin theory against growing dissent, expert testimony to the contrary and now, political pressure.

The latest scientific proof that a second gunman was involved in Sen. Kennedy's assassination was provided to TATTLER by Herbert Leon MacDonell, recognized as one of the country's leading experts on ballistics.

He concluded from the very evidence used by Los Angeles authorities to convict Sirhan that the young Arab immigrant could not have fired all the shots that killed Kennedy and wounded five others in the kitchen-pantry area of the Ambassador Hotel a few minutes after midnight June 5, 1968.

MacDonell's statement, backed up by a leading West Coast forensic scientist, is the latest link in a long chain of intractable facts and contradictions that indicate at least two gunmen were involved in Robert Kennedy's murder.

MacDonell, who bears an impressive list of qualifications as a ballistics expert, became interested in the Robert Kennedy murder case last fall.

### **ADJUNCT PROFESSOR OF**

**CRIMINALISTICS** at both Corning Community College and Elmira College in New York and director of the Laboratory of Forensic Science, he attended a legal and forensic science seminar arranged by Dr. Cyril Wecht, the noted Pittsburgh, Pa., fo-

rensic pathologist.

At the seminar, MacDonell saw "The Second Gun," the documentary film about the Robert Kennedy assassination produced by West Coast free-lance broadcast journalist Theodore Charach. MacDonell succumbed to fascination with the case and arranged through Charach to study photographs taken of bullets removed from Kennedy and

William Wiesel, one of the five surviving victims.

The photographs of the bullet evidence had been taken with the Hycon Balliscan Camera, a highly sophisticated device that allowed the bullets to be photographed with a microscopic clarity.

**MACDONELL'S ASTONISHING** conclusions:

- The bullets removed from Kennedy and the bullet removed from Wiesel could not have been fired from the same weapon.

- The bullets removed from Kennedy were not fired from the Iver Johnson .22-caliber pistol, the revolver reportedly taken from Sirhan.

MacDonell swore to his findings in an affidavit provided exclusively to TATTLER

investigators.

His scientific evidence that Sirhan's gun did not kill Kennedy is buttressed by the findings of William W. Harper of Pasadena, Calif., a nationally renowned ballistics expert who has served as a forensic expert in more than 300 deaths involving firearms during a career

spanning almost 40 years.

**HARPER** after almost a year of extensive examination of physical and medical evidence in the assassination probe, reached these conclusions:

- Two .22-caliber guns were involved in the assassination.
- Kennedy was shot by a second gunman standing behind the Senator, not by Sirhan, whom witnesses said was standing in front.
- The five surviving victims of the fusillade

were wounded by Sirhan firing from a position in front of Kennedy.

- It is extremely unlikely that any of the bullets fired by the Sirhan gun ever struck the body of Sen. Kennedy.

- It is also unlikely that Kennedy could have accidentally been shot by somebody trying to shoot Sirhan.

Los Angeles Police and California Attorney General Evelle Younger, who was Los Angeles County district attorney at the time of the assassination, insist that Kennedy was killed by Sirhan acting alone.

**THE LONE GUNMAN THEORY** is spelled out in "Special Unit Senator," a book on the police probe written by Robert A. Houghton, who was chief of detectives during the assassination probe. He described SUS, the code name given the investigation, as the most complete investigation ever performed by a law enforcement agency.

As **TATTLER** began its recent investigation of the Kennedy case, Los Angeles police clamped a lid of secrecy on their investigative files.

Present Police Chief Edward M. Davis issued an order that no member of the department could comment on the case. The order came the same day a **TATTLER** reporter tried to arrange an interview with DeWayne Wolfer, controversial director of the L.A.P.D. crime laboratory.

Asked why Chief Davis muzzled his men, Commander Pete Hagen told **TATTLER**:

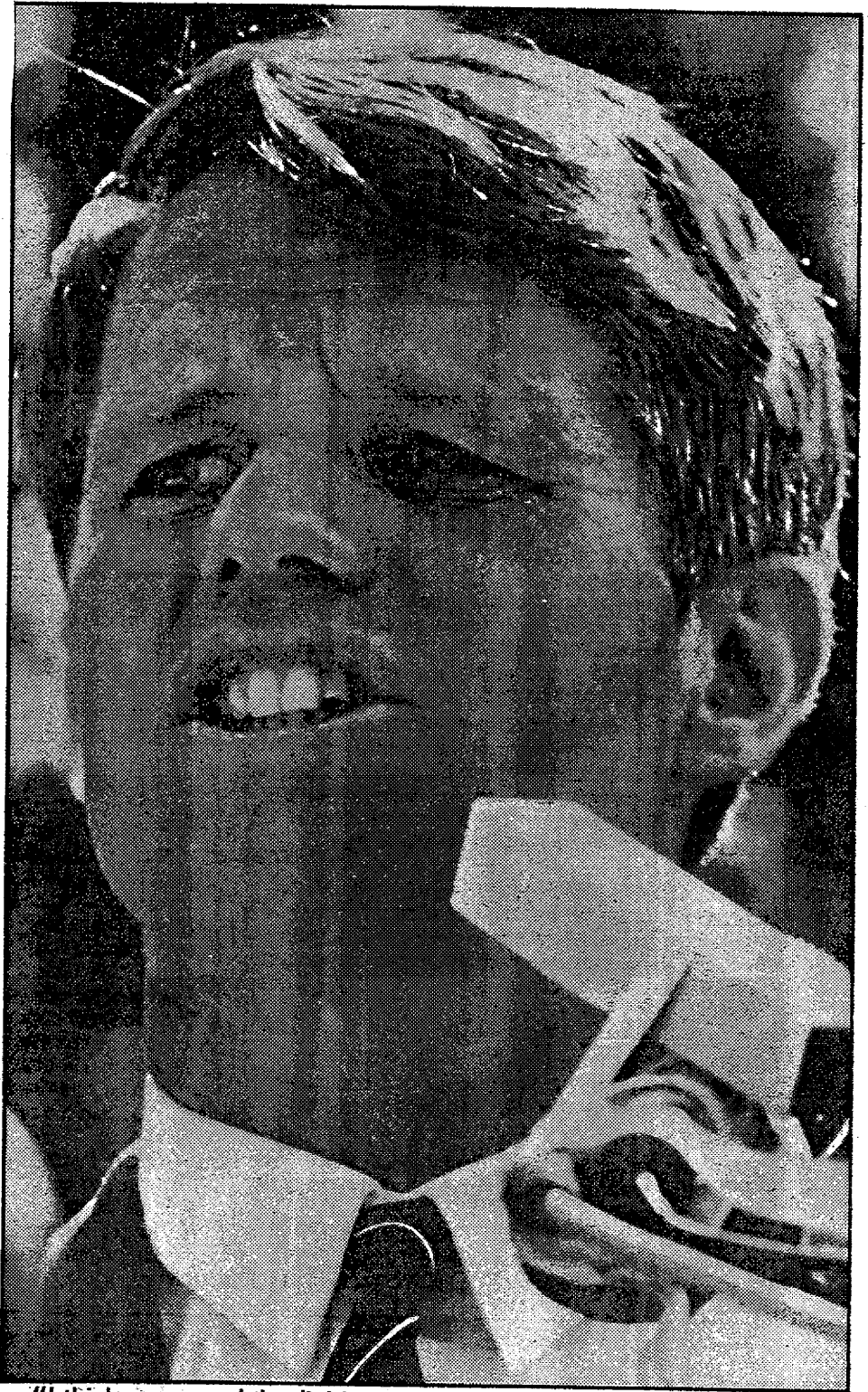
"There is still litigation underway in the Kennedy case and therefore policemen are the only ones who cannot talk once something has gone to trial. We're prohibited from speaking — and, in fact, there was a court order that nobody can talk about the Kennedy case.

"Mr. Wolfer has testified in the case; his testimony is a matter of public record, and Chief Davis does not see any reason why he should expose any members of his department in this matter."

Asked whether a "gag order" was in effect in the Kennedy case, Attorney General Younger told **TATTLER**: "I just don't know."

Wolfer's testimony, unfortunately, has been disputed by experts who have also questioned his qualifications.

**WOLFER'S QUALIFICATIONS** were challenged three years ago by attorney



**"I think we can end the divisions within the United States, the violence."**

—Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, June 5, 1968, in a speech to campaign workers after his victory in the California Democratic primary for President.

Barbara Warner Blehr, who claimed the criminalist did not use four standard procedures in investigating Kennedy's death.

A few days later, Police Chief Davis scoffed at Mrs. Blehr's claims and described Wolfer as "the top expert in the country."

Mrs. Blehr's claims, in a letter to the Civil Service Commission, were based on criminalist Harper's investigation of the Kennedy evidence.

The incident spurred a chain of mystery and confusion reminiscent of some of the handling of the investigation of the John F. Kennedy assassination in Dallas.

At first, then Los Angeles County Dist. Atty. Joseph P. Busch Jr. brushed off attorney Blehr's claims with the statement that inconsistencies in Wolfer's testimony might be verbal or clerical errors.

But he announced on June 4, 1971, that his office would investigate Mrs. Blehr's claims. Two weeks later he announced a June 28 press

(Continued on the next 2 pages)