

Seven Years Later: Experts Still Arguing Case

Who killed Bobby Kennedy?

The question haunts the American subconscious. It cannot be quieted by half-hearted evidence, by the shunning of certain witnesses or the ignoring of scientific fact.

Seven years have passed. On the anniversary of the Senator's death, MIDNIGHT asks the question again.

Who killed Bobby Kennedy?

The controversy rages on. While Sirhan Sirhan, the convicted assassin of Robert Kennedy, sits in a San Quentin cell, scientists, policemen, lawyers step forward to argue his innocence.

Did Sirhan kill Bobby Kennedy? Did he act alone? Was there a police cover-up?

In search of answers, MIDNIGHT spoke with the prime participants — the top scientists and a key witness in this bizarre and tragic crime.

BAXTER WARD

As the Los Angeles County Supervisor and a former newsman, Baxter Ward was close to the mayhem on that hot June night, seven years



D.A. JOSEPH BUSCH

ago. He believes that the case of Sirhan Sirhan should be re-opened.

"There is no doubt that Sirhan was firing a weapon. And it is an easy and logical presumption to make that he acted alone. I believe that Sirhan is now where he should be, in prison, for the rest of his natural life.

"But despite the weight of all the testimony, some of the physical evidence remains clouded. I'm convinced that cloud should be removed.

"I don't know whether the results would confirm that Sirhan acted alone or not. But whatever the results, they should be determined and publicly announced.

"We presently have a situation in which it is claimed by two nationally recognized experts that three bullets in the case do not match up. One bullet is from the body of Senator Kennedy, one from a spectator who was shot, and one from a test firing of the Sirhan weapon.

"The three bullets should match.

"We also have a case where there was an error made by the Los Angeles Police Department ballistics expert. He put the wrong gun number on the evidence envelope containing the bullets.

"His critics now suggest that it was the right number but the wrong bullets."

JOSEPH P. BUSCH

Joseph P. Busch is the District Attorney of the County of Los Angeles. Unswayed, he believes that Sirhan murdered Senator Kennedy and that he did it alone.

"These issues have been hashed over, again and again. But the basic fact remains that a number of eyewitnesses at



BAXTER WARD

close range saw Sirhan Sirhan shoot Robert Kennedy and no one else fired a gun in the pantry of the Ambassador Hotel.

"Scientific tests verified the fact that Sirhan's gun fired the bullets which killed Senator Kennedy and wounded others nearby. The most exhaustive police investigation in Los Angeles history determined that no conspiracy existed.

"I am firmly convinced that Sirhan Sirhan, acting alone, killed Robert Kennedy. I do not question the sincerity of those who think otherwise. But I am convinced that their efforts are pointless."

DR. THOMAS F. NOGUCHI

It was Los Angeles County Coroner and Chief Medical Examiner Dr. Thomas F. Noguchi who performed the autopsy on the body of Senator Robert F. Kennedy.

His report stated that Senator Kennedy died of gunshot wounds in the head, "the wound trajectory being back to front, right to left and upward."

Dr. Noguchi also reported that the wound was inflicted from a distance of one to three inches.

The police claim otherwise. They insist that Sirhan fired from a position facing the

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senator. And their claim that Kennedy turned away from the assassin at the time the shots were fired has never been collaborated by any of the eyewitnesses. Furthermore, the witnesses say that Sirhan's gun was from one and half to three feet away.

How does Dr. Noguchi explain these contradictions?

"Bullets go in straight lines. They don't go around corners. And we've tested the tissues again and now we believe that the distance was one inch or less.

"It is scientifically highly unlikely that powder burns that were imbedded so deeply in the tissue could come from a gun fired from two to three feet away."

WILLIAM W. HARPER

A leading criminologist for three decades, William W. Harper spent two years in intensive study of Robert Kennedy's assassination.

His conclusion: Two men shot the Senator.

"Assume that Sirhan had escaped from the scene of the Kennedy assassination without being seen. Assume also that the autopsy and medical reports and other physical evidence were the same as we find them today.

"Would the police have been searching for one assassin or for two?"

"Upon completion of the autopsy it would have been immediately evident that the Senator had been fired on by some gunman in close proximity to him and to his right and rear.

"Yet the trajectories of the shots wounding those accidental victims necessarily came

from a position ahead of the Senator, not from behind him.

"These circumstances would suggest to any experienced homicide detective, as well as any criminologist, that two guns were involved and that two gunmen had to be tracked down."

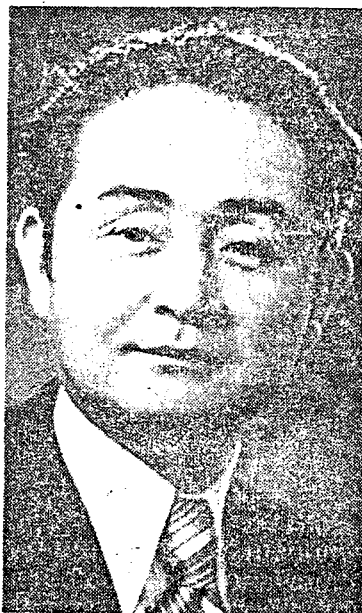
DONALD SCHULMAN

Donald Schulman, a film runner for a local television station, was a key witness to the assassination: Posted at the door to the pantry in order to alert cameramen when Kennedy was approaching, he was only six to 10 feet away when the Senator was fatally struck.

And contrary to police reports, he is certain that other shots were fired.

"I went through the door being pushed along by the crowd and all of a sudden a man stepped out . . ."

"Well I didn't see everything that night, but the things I did



DR. THOMAS NOGUCHI

see, I'm sure about. And that is about Kennedy being shot three times. And a guard definitely pulled out his gun and fired."

Schulman described the guard as having stood directly to the right side and behind Kennedy. Within five minutes after the shooting, he told newsmen, **"I also saw the security men pull out their weapons . . . there were several shots fired."**

Yet to this day, police contend that no one fired a shot in the pantry except Sirhan.

The police questioned Schulman briefly that night seven years ago.

"But they just weren't interested," Schulman said.

HERBERT L. MACDONELL

Herbert L. MacDonell, criminologist, professor and inventor of the MAGNA Brush Device used by fingerprint bureaus around the world, is the latest forensic expert to challenge Sirhan's guilt.

According to MacDonell none of the bullets that struck Robert F. Kennedy was fired by Sirhan.

"It's unlikely, in fact just about impossible that both of the shots that struck Mr. Kennedy were fired from Mr. Sirhan's gun.

"The only way to make sure of this, the only way to prove that the bullet that hit him in the armpit came from Sirhan's gun, is to re-fire the gun. This would remove all doubt, one way or the other.

"I've seen many cases where there was less doubt about the evidence and those cases were re-opened. And those cases were much less important than the Kennedy assassination."