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CALIFORNIA ASSASSINATION

Robert F.

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Special Report 1

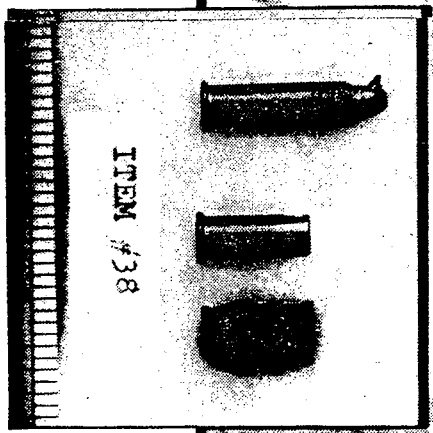
ARCHIVES -

Kennedy

November 17, 1988



The Iver Johnson .22 revolver used by alleged "lone assassin" Sirhan Bishara Sirhan and (inset) photo of unidentified bullets. Photos: LAPP-SUS records/State Archives.



Polka-dots and police perfidy

Sgt. Paul Sharaga arrived at Rampart Station just before midnight on June 4, 1968. The 19-year LAPD veteran hadn't given much thought to this night's duty. Normally, he'd supervise fellow officers during all-night patrol, on a beat which included heavily-trafficked Wilshire Boulevard. This humid summer night didn't figure to be much different from any other.

After briefing his officers, Watch Commander Robert K. Sillings ordered Sharaga to switch

duties with Sgt. Raymond Rolon, which meant he was to stay at Rampart Station as the acting Watch Commander. Nothing unusual here either; it was no big secret Sillings' "playboy" habits involved Rolon's extracurricular assignment as his chauffeuring "lookout."

However, Sharaga was usually notified the day before Sillings' outings, so he'd arrived without two packs of Camels, which were as much a part of his uniform as his service revolver

and badge.

"I'll need smokes," Sharaga said to Sillings, who glanced nervously at his watch. A bemused Sharaga figured his anxious superior merely had another of his many mattress-backed blondes awaiting his dutiful arrival.

Sillings and Rolon fidgeted as Sharaga walked out to the parking lot and slipped behind the wheel of his black and white. As if on automatic pilot it leisurely aimed for a liquor store at 8th and Fedora. Sillings and Rolon

watched him drive off with even more nervousness. Obviously, they thought Sharaga was only going to walk over to a nearby saloon.

Arriving shortly after midnight, Sharaga parked at the curb and stepped inside, where he garnered the only "gratuity" he ever permitted himself—his nightly supply of "smokes." After a customary brief chat, he climbed back into his cruiser. Its engine was still running, the volume turned up high on his radio to

alert the neighbors that he was around and on duty. As he paused to light up, his radio crackled "All Units . . . Ambulance Shooting, 3400 Wilshire Blvd." It was precisely 12:20 AM.

Sharaga recognized the address instantly; his eyes swept right to an 8th Street entrance into the

A Special Report

by Jonn G. Christian and
William W. Turner

rear parking lot of the Ambassador Hotel. Spinning a U-turn, Sharaga careened his cruiser through the jam-packed maze of parked cars. Thirty seconds and 250 feet later, he skidded to a halt about 150 feet from the sprawling complex. It was approaching 12:21 AM.

Sharaga was in the right place,

albeit at the wrong time (or vice versa) and didn't (yet) know it.

Distant police and ambulance sirens told Sharaga he was the first officer on location and thus automatically the "supervising officer" on the scene. He had just stepped from his cruiser when a woman ran past yelling, "He's been shot! Kennedy's been shot!"

Sharaga was readying to chase her down when a middle-aged couple ran up to him. In a state of near-shock the woman also said, "Senator Kennedy has been shot!"

Sharaga, too, was stunned, if slightly incredulous. Calming down the pair, he quickly extracted their fresh recollections. How did they know Robert F. Kennedy was shot? The woman pointed off toward the dimly lit backside of the hotel complex. A fire escape stairway trained downwards to a concrete walkway below. The woman related that she and her husband had just been in the Embassy Room where they witnessed RFK deliver his victory speech.

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After exiting onto the fire escape balcony, the pair encountered a young couple rushing out from the ballroom. The young male hadn't said anything. However, his female companion had yelled, "We shot him! We shot him!" The baffled wife asked "Who did you shoot?" The response was loud, clear, and shocking. "Kennedy! We shot him! We shot him!"

The younger pair had clattered down the fire exit stairs and disappeared into the night, leaving the terrified older couple in their wake.

Although Sharaga had no independent confirmation that Senator Kennedy had been shot, he recognized the ring of truth when he heard it. He took out his officer's notebook and jotted down the witnesses' descriptions of the two fleeing suspects.

"Male and female, late teens to early 20s, (both) of medium heights and builds" and "the girl was wearing a white polka-dotted dress." The married couple added an additional detail: these two suspects sported expressions that defied misinterpretation: "They were smiling, gleefully."

Sharaga took down the couple's names ("The Bernsteins," Sharaga would later recall), address and phone number, telling them to anticipate a phone call or visit from Rampart Detectives in short order.

Sharaga quickly radioed Control Number 1 (LAPD Headquarters) and reported, "2L30 (Sharaga's identification number) Senator Kennedy's been shot at the Ambassador Hotel. . . . Make notifications." He described the two suspects and closed off with "I want all available units to meet me at the rear parking lot of the Ambassador Hotel." It was just past 12:23AM

By 12:25 AM Sharaga was busi-

ly herding hordes of bewildered, hysterical masses. He told the officers under him, "No one leaves without proof of identify, addresses and telephone numbers."

Not long after, Rolon rolled up with Sillings seated next to him. Sharaga blurted out understandable consternation: "Why in Hell didn't we have more men in there?" Sharaga was stunned speechless after he heard Sillings say there were no LAPD officers in the hotel at the time of the shooting, none of which had Sillings mentioned during his earlier briefing.

Sillings' sheepish expression matched his response. "It wasn't our fault. . . . The Kennedys didn't want us around."

Sharaga stared at the subserviently nodding Rolon as he awaited details from his boss.

Sillings launched into a wordy account about how two days before he and Rampart Division Commander Floyd A. Phillips had had a meeting with Senator and Mrs. Kennedy to offer "additional security," only to be repulsed and then insulted by Ethel. "We don't want any of your goddamn boys in blue around here," Sillings quoted Mrs. Kennedy as railing back at them.

Sillings and Rolon dashed off before Sharaga could respond. Rejection of police protection by any Kennedy sounded illogical to Sharaga, who was of no mind to argue the moot point; he now had a major crime to cope with.

Sharaga received word Sgt. William Jordan from Rampart detectives had arrived at the shooting site, inside the hotel's kitchen pantry, and "had taken charge." Sharaga removed the notebook pages with the older couple's particulars and the suspects' descriptions, and had one of his men run them in to Jordan; he assumed the detective would pursue this obvious evidence of some type of conspiracy without question or delay.

"We shot him! Kennedy, we shot him!" kept resounding through Sharaga's thoughts. He

instructed the officers under his command to keep their eyes peeled for anything wearing a polka-dotted white dress.

Sharaga was unexpectedly approached by Inspector John Powers, who strongly hinted that since LAPD had "the suspect" in custody, radio alerts for all other suspects was unwarranted. Sharaga did not take Powers' 'suggestion' seriously.

When Captain Carroll Kirby dropped by, Sharaga quickly briefed him on the at-large suspects. Kirby indicated no descriptions were being broadcast by Communications other than that of the single suspect in custody. Still, the shooting had occurred less than an hour before. It seemed implausible that anyone could know the total number of suspects yet, Sharaga and Kirby agreed.

Kirby told Sharaga to order Control Number 1 to repeat the broadcasts "every ten minutes."

Thirty minutes later, Inspector Powers contacted Sharaga again. This time LAPD's Acting Chief of Detectives insisted that Rampart Detectives had the only suspect in custody; ipso facto, there were to be no others, and any witness who didn't conform to the lone gunman-assassin conclusions was destined to become a non-witness.

Sharaga's earlier resistance vanished. In due time, though, he would come to figure "things" otherwise: he had, indeed, been in the right place, all right, but at a very wrong time.

Sandra Serrano was a 20-year

old RFK campaign worker from the Pasadena area. Unable to gain entrance into the Embassy Room to hear RFK give his victory speech, she stayed on a floor below, the Ambassador Room, awaiting an expected appearance by her first political hero.

1 RAM 6-5-68 APS EMERGENCY
 LOS APS
 ASSAULT WITH INTENT TO COMMIT MURDER - IN CUSTODY
 SUSPECT SIRHAN BISHARA SIRHAN AKA SIRHAN SHARIF BISHARA, LAPD BKG.
 NO. 495 139, MALE, JORDANIAN, DATE OF BIRTH 3-12-44, 5-2, 115, BLK
 BRN.
 SUSPECT SHOT SENATOR KENNEDY AND FIVE OTHERS, 3400 WILSHIRE BLVD,
 LOS ANGELES, CALIF., USING A 8 SHOT, 22 CALIBER REVOLVER, BLUE STEEL,
 IVER JOHNSON, 2 INCH. GUN WENT THROUGH SEVERAL HANDS TO BROTHER
 OF SUSPECT.
 PRIOR TO SHOOTING, SUSPECT OBSERVED WITH A FEMALE CAUC, 23/27, 5-6,
 WEARING A WHITE VOILET DRESS, 3/4 INCH SLEEVES, WITH SMALL BLACK
 POLKA DOT/S, DARK SHOES, BUFFAUNT TYPE HAIR. THIS FEMALE NOT
 IDENTIFIED OR IN CUSTODY.
 SUSPECT OBTAINED LICENSE CALIF. 1965 EXERCISE BOY AND IT IS NOT
 KNOWN WHAT RACE TRACKS HE HAS WORKED.

LAPD all points bulletin for 'the girl in the polka-dot dress' issued on June 5, 1968, 11 hours and 35 minutes after Kennedy was shot. Source: LAPD-SUS records/State Archives.

0144

The Juv officers who were collecting witnesses initially have a sheet of paper with the name and address and phone number of this witness.

What proximity to the shooting were these people

Staff 9 Staff 9 Come into Control 1

--- to 2L30 in what proximity where these 2 witnesses

2L30 they where adjacent to the room

2L30 Disregard that Broadcast, we got Rafer Johnson and Jesse Unruh who were right next to him and they only have one man and don't want them to get anything started on a big conspiracy.

Transcript of radio transmission from assistant chief of detectives John Powers to Sgt. Paul Sharaga canceling broadcast descriptions of all outstanding suspects at 1:44 AM on June 5, 1968. Source: LAPD-SUS via State Archives.

Overly crowded conditions inside the hotel had made the heat unbearable. Stepping outside to cool off, Serrano rested on a fire escape landing near a rear exit. What she witnessed next she soon described over national TV in an interview with ABC news-

man Sandor Vanocur:

"Then this girl came running down the stairs in the back, came running down the stairs and said 'We've shot him, we've shot him!' Who did you shoot? (I

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asked). And she said 'We've shot Kennedy!' . . . I can remember what she had on and everything, and after that, a boy came down with her, he was about 23-years-old, and he was Mexican-American—I can remember that because I'm Mexican-American, and I said 'What's happening?' And all of a sudden all these people started coming down that back end."

Startled, Vanocur wanted to be sure he'd heard right. "Wait a minute! Did this young lady say 'We?'" Serrano repeated the crucial "We," and then described the girl: "She was Caucasian. She had on a white dress with polka dots. She was light-skinned, dark hair. She had black shoes on—and she had a funny nose. It was, it was, I thought it was really funny." Serrano added a self-congratulatory note: "All my friends tell me I'm so observant."

Vanocur wasn't the first to hear Serrano's fearful revelation. Before she confirmed RFK had, indeed, been shot, she had a chance encounter with Los Angeles Deputy District Attorney John Ambrose. He listened to her detailed account then escorted her to just-arriving LAPD officers.

So impressed was Ambrose that he stayed at Serrano's side until brusquely brushed aside by Rampart detectives. (The next day Ambrose wrote in a report to his superiors: "Sandra Serrano impressed me as a very sincere girl. . . not interested in publicity.")

Ambrose did not know that Serrano's account had been virtually identical to that of Sharaga's older couple, who had been only forty feet above Serrano on an upper fire exit balcony.

Sharaga knew nothing of Serrano's encounter until late the next day. (If Sharaga and Ambrose had been able to compare notes on the two sightings "things" might have turned out substantially different.)

Curiously, Serrano and Vincent

DiPierro (another witness to "the girl in the polkadot dress,") were interviewed in a room next to one where "John Doe" (Sirhan Bishara Sirhan) was being questioned by Sgt. William Jordan.

Serrano and DiPiero were soon to become non-witnesses. (See "The Silencing of Sandy Serrano.")

Sharaga continued as Command Post supervisor, and returned with Rolon to Rampart Station for debriefing by Phillips and Sillings, leaving behind a squad of officers as hotel "security."

A call came in from Powers, demanding that Sharaga dismiss his

squad immediately. What he didn't say (and Sharaga didn't know) was he already had his own on-site "security."

Sharaga asked if he was being relieved of command; he wasn't, but, once again, Powers would prevail.

After debriefing, including complaints about the absence of LAPD officers at the hotel at the time of the shooting, Sharaga received a jolting observation from his Rampart Division Commander, Capt. Floyd Phillips.

Backing-up Sillings' contentions about the meeting with "The Kennedy's," including Mrs. Kennedy's allegedly rejecting their "goddamn boys in blue," Phillips barked, "The hell with them, they got just what they deserved!"

A thoroughly exhausted (and disgusted) Sharaga went home satisfied. He had done his level best under exceedingly awkward conditions. About three months later, he began to experience unanticipated repercussions.

Sharaga hadn't dwelled on the RFK case after confronting superiors on LAPD's pre-shooting "absence." He'd read fragmented news reports about "The girl in the polkadot dress," but he had assumed "The Bernsteins" were interviewed and appropriate action had been taken on the QT. (A "gag order" applied to all involved in the prosecution and defense of Sirhan.)

Sharaga was surprised when,

in late September 1968, he and Rolon were ordered by Special Unit Senator (SUS), LAPD's super-secret investigative team on the RFK assassination case, to write out "expanded reports" on their experiences on the night of Kennedy's assassination.

Employing a copy of his Command Post Log (kept at home), Sharaga typed out approximately a dozen pages, which he later dictated to Phillips' personal secretary (Linda Babel), who, in turn, typed out master mimeograph sheets, from which the finished report would ultimately be drafted.

"I made up multiple copies, and I kept one in the right-hand drawer of the Watch Commander's desk. I kept it there for review. I also had two copies of the report in the sergeant's pigeon hole where our mail is kept," Sharaga told National Public Radio newsman Jack Thomas in April, 1988. "I came in one evening in preparation to go to work and wanted to refer to the report for some reason or other, and [found] no reports in the desk, no reports in the pigeon hole, and no reports back in 'Records Filed.' And so I asked the Night Watch Sergeant what happened to the reports and he said the only thing he knew was 'Some investigators from Special Unit Senator were

out (here) . . . and picked up the reports. They were especially upset that the first seven pages of the mimeograph masters weren't in 'Records Filed. . . .'"

Sharaga called "Downtown" to ask about "the clean-sweeping" of Rampart files. "They said they didn't know a thing about it, which was a lie," Sharaga told Thomas.

This meant Sharaga would have to compose a duplicate report, but it wouldn't take him long. Sharaga had inadvertently kept the "missing" mimeograph master sheets home. (Providentially perhaps, this was not standard operating procedure at LAPD.)

Unknown to Sharaga, etched on these master sheets was evidence, which he'd unwittingly incorporated into his initial and duplicate reports, which completely invalidated the no-conspiracy version of the RFK case.

***'This information is also in the possession of D/A (Ira) Reiner and there is no question in my mind that both of you have a Constitutional obligation to bring this matter to light and to expose those culprits that are still running free...'* Letter from retired LAPD sergeant Paul Sharaga to Mayor Thomas Bradley, September 11, 1988.**

Sharaga personally delivered his rewritten report to SUS headquarters in three days. SUS officials weren't expecting him. He recalls them being visibly upset. Sharaga too was miffed, especially when "ride-to-work-buddy" Sgt. Donald Day accepted his report through a barely cracked door, not letting Sharaga set so much as a toenail inside. Never, he recalled, had security at LAPD been so tight.

Sharaga instantly knew "something was wrong," so he made up multiple sets of the mimeograph master, and stashed the originals in a faraway safety deposit box.

Sharaga really wasn't sure yet what "it" was, but he'd been around LAPD long enough to know that double-covering his ass was "an absolute must."

Sgt. Jordan returned to Rampart Division in late summer after having been a higher SUS official. Now he was Lieutenant Jordan, and he was back at Rampart Division to replace Sillings, as Sharaga's new boss. (LAPD sergeants upgraded to lieutenant are never assigned to the division served in before their promotion. This follows from similar protocol employed by the military services, for reasons obvious.)

Within weeks Sharaga found himself plummeting down from

an upper ten level to below the 50 percent "proficiency" mark. He also found himself virtually compelled to accompany Jordan nearly everywhere.

"It was like he wanted to keep an eye on me at all times," is how Sharaga recalled the next nine months.

In mid-1969, Jordan abandoned around 12 years of tenure

(including "tons of money" in retirement perks, says the belatedly curious Sharaga) to head up a "private security consultant" firm (which, according to Sharaga, sported a clientele that included several major U.S. defense contractors.)

Sharaga's fate?.

"Hell, when Capt. Phillips began turning on me, it was time to take my 20 (years) and go for retirement. It'd gotten a little too rough."

When we first interviewed Sharaga in May 1976 he was not yet

of a mind to draw any rash conclusions about his experiences in the RFK investigation. The most he was prepared to say was "Something was wrong, that's for damned sure." Sharaga assumed LAPD's "handling" of the RFK case had merely been "a sloppy covering up of incompetence."

Sharaga had unabashedly embraced ex-LAPD superior Tom Bradley's ill-fated campaign for mayor of Los Angeles in 1969. He figured that he'd probably been the victim of internecine "racist" reprisals by his superiors (hardly an uncommon event back then, incidentally).

"In those days white cops weren't supposed to back Blacks for anything, let alone against the pro-cop incumbent, Sam Yorty," Sharaga said back then. But by mid-1988, Sharaga's perspective had begun to expand greatly.

When an avalanche of SUS data was released in April, 1988 by California's State Archives the true significance of what Sharaga had stashed away in a safety deposit box became clear to him.

We were into our third week of examining the RFK archive microfilms when out popped a full-

page report with Sharaga's name at the top.

This document appeared to be an LAPD 'Interview' with Shara-

ga, signed and authenticated by Lt. Manuel Pena. Actually, it was a somewhat sloppy re-write of Sharaga's missing "expanded report." (Though generally recorded as an legitimate interview, in the second person, it occasionally slips into the first person; see Exhibits A & B for comparison.) Ironically, the hybrid-fraud version includes basically what Sharaga included in his expanded report about the escaping younger couple and the shout of we shot him ... Kennedy, we shot him,' and Sharaga's having provided the names of the older couple who witnessed the event to Rampart Detectives.

But the hybrid-fraud version adds on the fiction that the older couple had misunderstood what the younger woman had shouted. The report claims that Sharaga believed "what was probably said was 'they shot him.'"

We recalled Sharaga had said he wrote up his own report, but we didn't recall him saying he had ever been interviewed by SUS investigators. We realized it was time to talk to him again.

We located Sharaga deep in the backhills of Missouri in Lake Ozark country, where he and his wife have kinfolk.

When we read to him the text of his "Interview," his reaction was instant. "Nobody from LAPD ever interviewed me, at any time. That interview is a phoney, and many of the statements in it are just plain lies, and I've got documents that will prove it." The former LAPD sergeant proceeded to provide us with considerably more background details than he had been prepared to 13 years earlier when we interviewed him for our book (many of which we've already included in previous paragraphs).

Sharaga sent us certified copies of the mimeograph master of his original report.

Comparison of the Sharaga's original "expanded report" with the SUS's doctored account of Sharaga's original report released constitutes prima facie proof of

systematic, official cover-up of evidence which proves conclusively that others besides Sirhan were involved in Robert Kennedy's assassination.

Nothing in Sharaga's report suggested that he believed the older couple had been confused when they said the younger couple had shouted 'We shot him, we shot him.'

Also deleted from the LAPD's version is Sharaga's radio message to LAPD headquarters: "I broadcast . . . a description of the suspects as given to me by the witnesses . . . to communications."

Nowhere in the doctored report is there mention of Inspector Powers telling Sharaga to discontinue broadcasting a description of the suspect who shouted "We

shot him . . . we shot Kennedy!" Obviously, Power's comment that "We don't want to make this look like a big conspiracy," is not in the doctored report.

Nor are there any reports anywhere in the archives documents to substantiate the Phillips and Sillings claim about meeting with the Robert Kennedys and their rude rejection of LAPD protection.

But there is documentation of Phillips and Sillings meeting with with two (retired) LAPD homicide detectives, who held key security positions with at the Ambassador Hotel.

On August 14, 1988, Sharaga executed a sworn statement on the backside of a copy of SUS's fraudulent "Interview." Sharaga's statement reads: "To Whom It May Concern: The LAPD report on the reverse side is not based on any interview of me by anyone in the LAPD at any time. Further, it also contains false and deliberately misleading statements. It is obviously derived from a much longer report personally prepared by me in September of 1968, which disappeared from the LAPD's files later on under entirely suspicious circumstances. I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing statements are correct and truthful.

(Signed) Paul Sharaga,
Lake Ozark, Missouri."

After the news broke about

"missing" or "destroyed" LAPD files being identified by California's State Archivist John Burns, Sharaga wrote Mayor Tom Bradley and half-chidingly suggested his former LAPD superior should "hire" him to locate the evidence in question. Bradley apparently took Sharaga's letter quite seriously. On May 31, 1988, Bradley wrote back: "I do not intend to reopen the Kennedy assassination case. I believe our country has suffered enough from the tragedy. The time comes when wounds close and heal. And I believe the nation must keep the Kennedy assassination where it belongs, in the past. Instead, we can remember President Kennedy's hopes and dreams . . ."

By September 11, 1988 Sharaga had received and digested considerably more data from us (including our book and updated investigative materials from the State Archives and elsewhere).

He wrote another letter to Bradley, only this missive was infinitely longer and more comprehensive:

" . . . If it were not for the fact that I had served under your command and because of this service (I) feel that I know you well enough to bring to your attention a matter that I glossed over somewhat jokingly in my last epistle. I am referring to the Senator Kennedy assassination and

what has to be the biggest job of bungling up a cover up that I or anyone has ever seen.

"In my comments following with respect to said cover up, I am talking as one Police Officer to another, in hopes that you may see things in the light as presented here.

"I'm sure that you and I would have no argument that there comes a time in each of our lives, when regardless of the things we have done or said, there comes this time that we in all good conscience must tell that truth, regardless of those that it might jeopardize, including ourselves. I have reached this point in my life . . . As you must be aware by this time, I have become privy to some additional information with respect to the Senator Kennedy shooting. As a police officer, the

inconsistencies, incongruities and outright lies that those on the Department have perpetuated and still insist on perpetuating go completely contrary to all the police training I have had, and if I am perplexed by it, I am sure that you must be also, and even to a greater extent . . .

"I am fully cognizant of the pressures applied to you and through your family . . . I know that this pressure still exists, and in spite of it, I am going to make a request of you that could shake the very foundations of the City, nay the Country if you accede, but I assure you, should you agree, you and I will have contributed toward making this Great Country just a little greater.

"I don't mean to sound like some suicidal heroic, but I am aware that because of the information that I possess, I am now probably on 'The Hit List' . . . that except for an unscheduled 'cigarette run,' I would have not been anywhere near the scene, or privy to solid information, that I'm sure the individuals involved could have cared less about me, and as a matter of fact, I probably would have remained on the P.D. for at least another ten years.

"Let me pique your curiosity somewhat with a statement made to me by Capt. F. A. Phillips (with Sillings present). 'We met with Senator Kennedy and his people and offered to provide security, but Ethel (Kennedy) stated **WE DON'T WANT ANY OF YOUR GODDAMN BOYS IN BLUE AROUND HERE**, so the H—I with them, they got just what they deserved.' If this sounds like the type of Police Procedure you would condone, then you will of course deny my request, but if it gets to you as it does me, then consider my request and act accordingly.

"Basically, since the time of the assassination, we (you & I) have obtained information from a number of sources, books, testimony, documents, and particu-

larly the disappearance of evidence that in no way coincides with P.D. Policies and Procedures. This information is also in the possession of D/A (Ira) Reiner and there is no question in my

unidentified woman ran by me shouting "He's been shot, Kennedys been shot," then disappeared into the crowd before he could talk to her. Another woman accompanied by her husband (names and addresses given to Rampart Detectives) came up to him stating that she and her husband were on the balcony outside the Embassy Room of the Ambassador Hotel when a young couple, early twenties, came running from the direction of the Embassy Room shouting "We shot him, we shot him", when asked who, the young couple replied, "Kennedy, we shot him." (He believes that due to the noise and confusion at the time what was said was misinterpreted, and what was probably said was "they shot him".) He notified communication that the probable victim of the shooting was Senator Kennedy, and gave a description of the suspect as given to him by additional witnesses to the shooting. (Names unknown at this time) He advised communications that he was setting up the command post at this location, switching to Tac-1 and requested that units in the area and those being sent in switch to Tac-1.

An unidentified female ran by me shouting "He's been shot, Kennedy: been shot". Another female person accompanied by her husband, (names and addresses given to Rampart Dets.) stated that she and her husband were just outside the Embassy Room, on the balcony when a couple in their early twenties ran by them coming from the embassy room shouting "We shot him, we shot him." The woman asked the young couple who?, and the young woman replied "Kennedy, we shot him, we shot him". I immediately broadcast to communications that Senator Kennedy had been shot, a description of the suspects as given to me by the witnesses was given to communications and I further advised that I was setting up a Command Post at my location and switching to "Tac-1", and requested units in the vicinity switch to "Tac-1". Lt. Sillings and Sgt. Holon arrived and after being briefed went to the Embassy room of the hotel.

At approx. 1:15AM, Captain Kirby suggested that I have control #1 repeat crime broadcast and description every ten minutes. Control #1 acknowledged and broadcast twice at which time Inspector Powers suggested this broadcast be discontinued as "we don't want to make this look like a big conspiracy".

I was able to determine that one suspect was in custody, and that the description that I had was probably erroneous and I therefore complied with Inspector Powers request, and advised Control #1 to discontinue broadcasts.

Excerpt from LAPD-SUS fabricated interview with Sergeant Paul Sharaga (top). Excerpt from 'missing' expanded report (middle) submitted by Sergeant Sharaga in September 1968. Excerpt from Sharaga's expanded report (bottom) noting 1:44 a.m. direction from assistant chief of detectives John Powers to cancel broadcast descriptions of all outstanding suspects.

mind that both of you have a Constitutional obligation to bring this matter to light and expose those culprits that are still running free. I have had an opportunity to peruse considerable SUS documents, and even a dumb cop like me can see the bungled job.

"You, D.A. Reiner and myself have a moral if not a legal obligation to bring this matter to its truthful conclusion. I, for my

part, will do my utmost to see that conclusion reached, and I would much prefer to do it with your help, specifically, because I consider us to be friends and as such would not want it said you were not given the opportunity to address this issue.

"I therefore feel that it would be appropriate, no obligatory for you to have me flown to L.A., for

a conference between you, D.A. Reiner and myself, at a place away from City Hall and its ears. Mr. Reiner is well aware of what I am talking about, as a copy of the (Christian-Turner RFK) book was delivered to him in 1986 by Bill Stout. . . . I have also had the opportunity to read the book, whose publication was stopped, that was provided to me by Jack Thomas of National Public Radio.

"If you agree to this arrangement, I would further request an Official Letter from your office indicating that I am on an 'on duty' status and authorize my carrying my gun on the aircraft. (I have no intention of being the next patsy.)

"I would further request that I make the reservation from here, and notify you when I arrive and where I'll meet you, as I don't relish the idea of meeting my Maker at this time.

"Consider carefully this epistle and its far reaching consequences, and I pray to God that

you make the right decision.

"Very truly yours, Sgt. Paul Sharaga."

Veteran CBS Newsmen Bill Stout initially approached D.A. Ira Reiner about the RFK assassination case in Summer, 1986, and his focal point was the evidence contained in our book.

Stout couched the evidential substance of our book in the manner that the politically astute Reiner could appreciate. "It's a golden opportunity — with gobs of whipped cream on top," Stout told Reiner.

The dean of West Coast broadcast newsmen meant his appeal to hit Reiner where his very highest public service instinct resided.

At Reiner's request, a xeroxed copy of our book and post-publication data was assembled and delivered to Reiner's personal attention soon after, via courier directly from KCBS-TV News.

Stout proposed that Reiner personally examine the material, af-

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Chief of Police Tom Redden presents LAPD sergeant's stripes to Paul Sharaga in December 1967. Photo courtesy of Paul Sharaga.

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ter which a private meeting might be in order at Stout's Beverly Hills home between Reiner, Stout and co-author Jonn Christian.

Reiner made no response for over six months. He then scheduled a meeting at 8 p.m. on March 23, 1987, at Scandia's Restaurant on "The Sunset Strip," near Reiner's Hollywood Hills home.

However, the night before the long-anticipated get together, Reiner called Stout and canceled out. Reiner had Stout call Christian to see if a same time-same day arrangement the following week was alright. It was, of course.

Although Scandia's was crowded with mid-week diners, a corner table in the cocktail lounge sufficed as a setting for what was hoped (by Stout and Christian, at least) would be a momentous occasion.

Stout and Christian pitched Reiner with one main theme: the overkill of evidence that literally screamed "conspiracy and cover-up." The second focus was an over-abundance of proof of multiple gunmen-assassins.

(It was assumed that Reiner's previous dealings with LAPD's "intelligence apparatus," when he was City Attorney back in 1983, would have tempered whatever reservations that he might still harbor about what he, himself, had labeled as "a bunch of right wing zealots." That publicly-uttered condemnation very nearly ended Reiner's political career via State Bar rebuke.)

Reiner listened stoically during most of the session; but what he did say at one stage appeared to be a ray of hope. Looking straight at Stout he asked: "How in Hell could this go on for nearly 19 years without somebody in the news media breaking this story?"

Stout's response was typically candid. "Frankly, Ira, we haven't done our job."

Christian's response was less subtle. "But, neither have any of your five predecessors, sir," Christian added.

On another occasion Reiner

commented about an audiotape (part of the material we'd provided him) made by Mutual Broadcasting Radio reporter Andrew West, who continued on reporting amidst gunfire in the kitchen pantry, delivering an unprecedented narrative. The primary significance of the West tape, according to acoustics scientist Michael Hecker of Stanford Research Institute, is that there were far more shots on this tape than Sirhan's eight shot Iver Johnson revolver, alone, could have fired (scientifically identified by Hecker in his laboratory).

Rather than addressing the obvious relevance of Hecker's findings, Reiner asked, "Why didn't West say he saw a (second) weapon being fired?" Christian pointed out that this was precisely the point: West hadn't seen Sirhan's gun firing, but his recorder was picking up shots being fired by other gunmen on multiple occasions.

The look of incredulity on Reiner's face indicated he had less than a firm grasp of the ballistics and acoustics data contained in our book. When (we) asked how much of the book he had actually read, he said "I flipped through it." That was not exactly what (we) had hoped for after seven months. But, then, Christian had held back the "evidential coup d'grace" (He was positive Reiner would eventually become the Clarence Darrow of Assassination D.A.'s)

Reiner was provided with videotapes of the assassination (obtained from the vaults of the three principal TV networks with Stout's assistance), which contain incontrovertible audio-visual proof that Sirhan was not a "lone assassin." Though the tapes do not show Kennedy and the four others being shot, they do show the crowd immediately outside of the kitchen pantry reacting to the gunshots. And most importantly, the sound of shots being fired is recorded.

SUS files supplied to state archivist John Burns indicate that they possessed copies of these tapes. But he recently confirmed our discovery that copies of the

tapes were not included in the material released to him last April.

Reiner accepted copies of the videotapes and still another increment of "new evidence." But his receptivity to our findings remained an unknown quotient.

The session broke up after several hours or so, with Reiner intimating he was not inclined to partake of any cover-up; but, one way or another (we) would be hearing back. Then, he jumped into his personal vehicle and drove off.

Well, 18 months later, we finally received Reiner's first and only "feedback" albeit via circuitous routes. (This included his avoidance of Stout, heretofore his longtime close personal friend, whose judgment he previously valued greatly.)

It took Andy Boehm of the LA Weekly, Jack Thomas of NPR, and sheer luck to eventually force Reiner's hands atop the table. Boehm reviewed much of the material in this story before attempting to interview Reiner. But instead of Reiner he found himself up against an in-house "stonewall" in the form of two of Reiner's heavier hitters, Assistant D.A. Curt Livesay, the D.A.'s

"specialist" on death sentence cases; and his "resident expert" on matters-RFK, Steven Sowders.

From beginning to end, the D.A.'s men insisted that "The Kranz Report had already explained everything." (This is an ersatz imitation of "The Warren Commission Report," concocted by then-D.A. John Van de Kamp in 1976 to rebuff all challenges to the "official" position; it's a very unfunny "joke.")

Boehm spent an hour trying to make a breakthrough before discovering not even mass confessions from SUSers was going to make a whit's difference. No, they hadn't heard of our book; and, no, they had no interest in an ex-cop named Paul Sharaga, not even after seeing his hybrid-fraud "Interview" and his sworn disclaimer on its backside, certainly not when Boehm told them he was "authorized" (by us) to turn over the actual Statement,

albeit "to the District Attorney, himself, only."

The "official" position (cover-up) on the RFK assassination case obviously hadn't changed.

It wasn't until Jack Thomas wangled an interview with the D.A. on October 21, 1988 that Reiner's official-official position was exposed to public view—almost.

In Northern California pitching one of California's ever-floating "Propositions," Reiner made himself available via phoned-in interviews at whistle stops along the way; one being the University of Pacific at Stockton, home of National Public Radio affiliate KUOP-FM and a "loaded up" news director, Jack Thomas.

"Proposition 89" was not one the ostensibly "liberal" Reiner was thought to be associated with (at least not in Southern California environs); its main purpose was to usurp prerogatives of the State Parole Board in the release of "convicted murderers," by allowing the Governor to override the board's decisions.

With well-known baritone voice and deeper conviction, Reiner had lumped "the Sirhan case" into the ominous category, "infamous," which opened up a door for Thomas to drop (our) obviously unexpected questions about the RFK case per se.

Thomas: Back on March 31st of last year, I've been told that you met with Bill Stout and Jonn Christian, after Stout had previously given you a book co-authored by Christian, (who) turned over some RFK assassination tapes from the networks.

Reiner: Oh, really? Ha-ha-ha!

Thomas: Have you read Christian's book?

Reiner: Ah, no, I haven't.

Thomas: Okay — I was told that Stout gave you a copy a long time ago and that's presumably why you called that meeting that

you did.

Reiner: No, I didn't call a meeting. No, no, ah, Bill Stout, ah, wanted me to get together with him and, ah, this person, whose name yet I'd never heard, and, ah, listened to what he had to say, and, ah, that's, it's never gone any further than that.

(Reiner's normally cocky aplomb was fast dissolving.)

Thomas: Alright, well, is that because you felt what he had to say wasn't, ah, you know, credible or something or what?

Reiner: Ah, well, I-I mean I-I'm not even interested in commenting on him, you know, that, ah, you know, just, ah, you know, I'm not even going to go that far as to whether he is or isn't. It's just, ah, that was, I don't even remember the date; it seems to me like it was a couple of years ago, something like that. . . ah, and, ah, so, you know, I met with him. I couldn't tell you that I'd recognize him if I saw him tomorrow.

Thomas: Alright. . . .

Reiner: And that frankly, I don't even remember his name. I remember meeting with a person. I remember, you know, what he was talking about, ah, but, ah, I don't even recall his name and, ah, I'm not sure, I think, I remember he had a beard.

Thomas: That's right.

Reiner: And, ah, ah, so, that if anybody that came up with, with, ah, a beard and said they were the person, I'd have to say "Okay." I mean, that's about all I can remember. . . .

At this point Thomas suggested that Reiner should read our book because of its 'persuasive' contents. This time Reiner mumbled something about Christian, himself, having 'sent something' to Reiner's office, but he had no idea of where it had disappeared to; but the inference was clear: the DA wasn't about to read our book or anything else about the RFK assassination case, other than the 'Case Closed' label put on it by the LAPD.

Thomas: Well, I thank you for calling today and hope maybe I'll hear from you again.

Reiner: Okay, thank you.

Thomas: Good-by.

DA Reiner's non-interest might well reflect why Mayor Bradley has thus far failed to answer Paul Sharaga's request for a private session between them, an uncommon summons to duty and honor.

Such avoidance of Constitutional responsibilities stands as a license to kill for those who shattered the brains of the the Kennedy brothers and the nation's spirit in the process.

Is it any wonder that multitudes of Americans have come to distrust a system that just plain does not or will not work?!

(The authors gratefully acknowledge vital assistance by one of the nation's premiere assassination research-historians and all-round good-guys, Floyd B. Nelson, and his cooperative compatriot Gregory Stone.

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