

Papers on RFK killing still secret

*Release of LAPD
report delayed*

By John Fleck
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Parts of the summary of the Los Angeles Police Department's investigation of Robert F. Kennedy's assassination should be released as soon as possible, the city's Board of Police Commissioners decided yesterday.

But scholars and journalists still trying to answer questions about the 1968 slaying of the Democratic presidential candidate will have to wait for a look at the 50,000 pages of documents from the investigation.

The commission voted to form a subcommittee to establish standards that will guide the release of the documents. The standards are to ensure that national security, legally protected rights to privacy and sources of confidential information will be protected.

The subcommittee's members were not named.

The documents, which include records of interviews with more than 4,000 people, more than 1,700 photographs, autopsy reports and the reconstruction of the crime by inves-

Part of RFK report to be released, but bulk will stay secret for now

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tigators — have been languishing in four locked LAPD file cabinets since the special unit which conducted the main investigation of the killing completed its work in 1969.

The documents "are of supreme historical importance," said Philip Melanson. He is chairman of the political science department of Southeastern Massachusetts University, which recently established the Robert F. Kennedy Assassination Archives.

Melanson noted that nearly complete records of other major assassinations are available, but not in the Kennedy case.

But Police Chief Daryl Gates questioned whether all of the information in the documents was relevant, saying that privacy considerations should prevail in the case of some of the information which was given confidentiality.

"There are still people living who I think would be harmed, seriously harmed, because of what's in" some of the documents, Gates said.

Kennedy was gunned down as he entered the kitchen area of the Ambassador Hotel here after delivering a victory speech the night of the California Democratic primary in June 1968.

Sirhan Sirhan, a Jordanian immigrant who police determined was upset about Kennedy's Mideast policies, was apprehended at the scene, convicted of the murder and is serving a life sentence at the state prison in San Luis Obispo. However, those seeking disclosure of the LAPD's investigation records insist that questions remain about whether he acted alone.

The commission conducted the lengthy hearing yesterday in response to a flurry of disclosure requests it has received in the past year.

The subcommittee it agreed to form was ordered to move as quickly as possible to release parts of a 10-volume summary of the

LAPD's investigation. The commission order applies to portions of the summary which do not have legal restrictions against their release.

The ruling on the summary did not satisfy those pushing for disclosure of investigation documents.

As an example of assassination questions some believe remain unresolved, television documentary producer David Mendelsohn said police clearly accounted for all eight bullets in Sirhan's gun without explicitly referring to bullets found in a doorjamb which has

since been destroyed.

"Without access to LAPD files, a researcher might conclude that another gun had been fired," he said.