

PRESS-TELEGRAPH

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Sirhan acted alone, RNK report says

L.A. police faulted as moving too slowly on releasing files

By Murray Dubin
Knight-Ridder News Service

The Los Angeles Board of Police Commissioners Tuesday released a 1,500-page summary of its investigation into the 1968 shooting of Robert F. Kennedy amid criticism that it was mov-

ing too slowly toward release of the remaining 50,000 pages of investigative files.

The summary, three times the size of a city phone book, concludes that Sirhan B. Sirhan — acting alone and under the influence of neither drugs nor alcohol

— killed Kennedy in a premeditated act.

Sirhan, a Jordanian immigrant, was convicted of the 1968 slaying on April 17, 1969, and sentenced to death. That death sentence was later overturned, and he remains in prison after being denied parole seven times.

The commission voted in July to begin editing the voluminous investigative files so that they all

eventually could be released.

At the commission hearing Tuesday, Paul Schrader, a Kennedy campaign coordinator who was wounded the night the senator was killed, criticized the commission.

He said that the commission edited the summary in private and without any outside help from archivists or Kennedy scholars.

"The commission has been operating on a closed stage," he said. "There's been no public dialogue here. You act like you own these papers. You don't. The people do."

He called the release of the summary "public relations" and said that if it took seven months to edit 1,500 pages, it could "take 10 to 20 years" to release all the files.

He also added that much of

the material in the summary appeared in a 1970 book about the Kennedy shooting by the Los Angeles Police Department's chief of detectives at the time.

"You're not telling us anything new here," he said.

He and others said the summary represented just 3 percent of the investigative files.

"What's important here is the other 97 percent," said author

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RFK report concludes Sirhan lone killer

FROM/A1
and political scientist Gregory Stone, an aide to former Rep. Allard Lowenstein of New York.

"I urge public input and review" in the handling of the 50,000 pages, Stone said. "I urge the process be open the way it hasn't been these past seven months. And I urge a timetable so that this doesn't drag on."

Despite those urgings, there was no timetable announced by the commission, nor any promise that the editing of the full files would include outside experts.

Instead, the commission announced that it had asked Mayor Tom Bradley to form a special committee to edit the

“There are still too many unanswered questions.”

—Paul Schrade,
Kennedy aide wounded in 1968 shooting

files and choose a repository for them.

The committee, as of yet, does not exist.

Schrade said the summary simply reflects the Police Department's conclusion that "this was a one-gun shooting. There are still too many unanswered questions." One of those questions,

Schrade said, concerns the police theory that the bullet that struck him in the head had first passed through Kennedy's jacket.

"That bullet was headed for the ceiling. It couldn't have hit my head," he said.

Among the files that Schrade, Stone and Philip Melanson, director of the Robert F. Kennedy Assassination Archive at

Southeastern Massachusetts University, would like to see are a prosecution chart of the locations of all eyewitnesses to the June 5, 1968, shooting at the Ambassador Hotel; a transcript of Sirhan's original taped interview with police; the 1,700 photographs assembled by the police; and identification of the keys found in Sirhan's pocket and car after the shooting.

Schrade said he was not wedded to a two-gun or conspiracy theory.

"It has been nearly 18 years of questions without answers. I just want to get this over with," he said.