

RFK slaying report lacks all the facts

By Mark S. Warnick
Herald staff writer

A 1,453-page summary of the Los Angeles Police Department's investigation into the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy was released yesterday, but scholars and others studying the nearly 18-year-old slaying blasted officials for allowing more revealing documents to languish in LAPD files.

"This city, this department, this Police Commission has scandalously refused to put those records into the public arena," said Paul Schrade, a former campaign adviser to the slain presidential candidate.

Schrade and other critics of the commission's handling of the Kennedy documents complained that the summary contained no new information and again urged officials to move promptly in releasing the 50,000 pages of information on which the summary is based.

"You're doing a public relations gesture," Schrade told commissioners. "I don't know what your game is."

The summary itself was extensively censored, with many names, phrases, sentences — and in some cases entire pages — blacked out with felt pen.

The commission last July agreed to release the summary as quickly as possible. When it still was not available last month, several persons, includ-

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ing Schrade, said the delay in releasing the Kennedy files was "on its way to becoming a national disgrace."

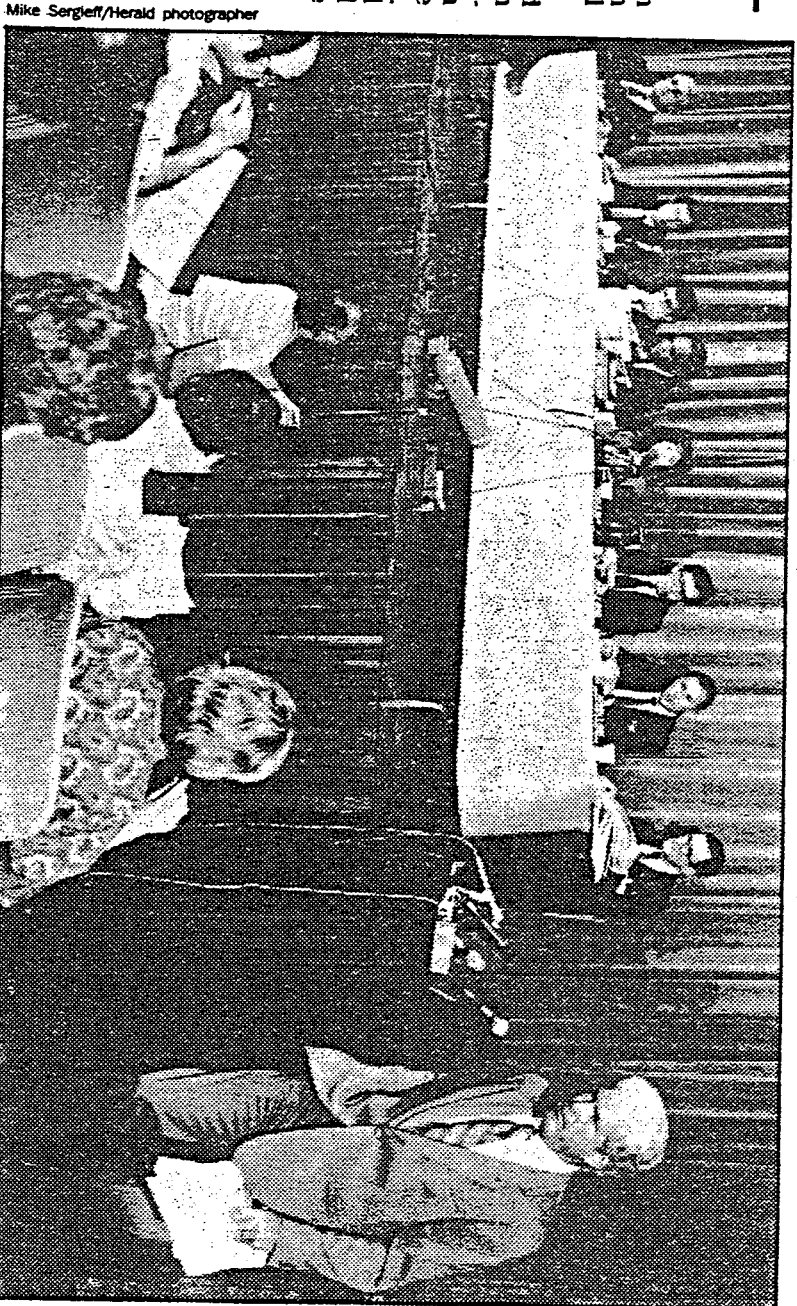
Schrade was shot in the head when Sirhan Sirhan opened fire on Kennedy after the presidential candidate delivered a victory speech in Los Angeles the night of the California primary in June 1968. Sirhan, who police have said acted alone, was convicted of murder and is serving a life sentence at the state prison in San Luis Obispo.

Seven scholars and an attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union addressed the commission yesterday, urging prompt release of the main Kennedy files. They expressed concern that it took police officials and the city attorney's office seven months to review the 1,453-page summary and worried that it may be as many as 20 years before all 50,000 pages are released.

They also argued that the commission had yet to release the "meat and potatoes" of the investigation.

"The 3 percent summary of the file is not important," said Gregory Stone of Washington, D.C., a former aide to the late congressman Allard Lowenstein. "What is important is the 97 percent of material which remains withheld."

The commission's release of the



Mike Sergien/Herald photographer

Paul Schrader, who was wounded by Sirhan, walks away from LAPD commission after calling for release of all RFK papers. three-volume summary was the first time it has turned over material stemming from the Kennedy investigation.

Portions of the summary were not released to the public. Most of the parts blacked out involved instances of rights of privacy, officials said. Other exemptions were granted for information involving governmental privilege.

"We sought to redact (edit) as little as possible from this summary," said Police Commission vice president Barbara Schiel. "I don't believe anything was cut out or redacted that would shed light on the assassination itself."

The commission also approved a proposal calling for the eventual release to an appropriate archive or repository the complete Kennedy

investigation file. It turned over the issue to Mayor Tom Bradley, recommending that he form a committee to develop standards for what information should be cut and a schedule for releasing the 50,000 pages.

That proposal also was attacked by critics, who said it would add further delays to release of documents.