

LOS ANGELES HERALD

EXAMINER

A call for public disclosure

The memory of that bloody June night in 1968 when presidential contender Sen. Robert Kennedy was cut down by an assassin in the Ambassador Hotel lives on. The Los Angeles Police Commission report released this week, which concludes that the convicted killer, Sirhan Sirhan, acted alone, should help put to rest the conspiracy theories that have arisen in the last 18 years to explain the circumstances surrounding the assassination. Still, for those who remain unconvinced by the commission's 1,453-page summary, and simply for the sake of a more complete disclosure, the 50,000-page police file on the tragedy should be made public.

In the immediate aftermath of Kennedy's murder, whispers of suspected plots began to appear in the press. After all, the former U.S. Attorney General, who served under his brother John during some of the most explosive years in America, had plenty of enemies. That the 24-year-old Jordanian Sirhan, angered by Kennedy's pro-Israeli stands, would act independently seemed implausible to some. Moreover, reports that 13 shots had been fired at Kennedy, rather than the eight from Sirhan's gun, suggested there might even have been a second killer in the pantry where he was shot.

The nation had just recently been shocked by the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., and the murder of John Kennedy was still fresh in Americans' minds. In the ensuing local probe of Robert Kennedy's death, thousands of hours were spent poring over hundreds of pieces of evidence to insure a thorough investigation. Those findings pointed to Sirhan.

We have no quarrels with the way the LAPD handled the investigation or with the follow-up by the Police Commission. The investigators, however, have yet to fulfill the promise they made in 1969 to release the complete file on the Sirhan probe. The responsibility for making that information available to the public now goes to Mayor Tom Bradley. For everyone's peace of mind, he should open up the files as soon as possible.