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## (Editorial) Analysis of LAPD Summary Report

Philip H. Melanson, March 12, 1986

What follows are some rushed, preliminary points regarding the LAPD Summary Report. They are basically valid, but any details should be rechecked for accuracy before dissemination.

1. References to specific films or pictures taken at the crime scene: pp. 629, 653-6, 707, 785, 774, 793. These will be helpful when the 1700-2700 photos are released, in terms of cross checking as to what photos were analyzed and which ones LAPD is supposed to have (I am compiling a similar file from FBI releases, of individuals who took pictures, to cross check against LAPD photos).
2. P. 800 property report: "2 pieces of wood, from door frame at crime scene, both contain numerous holes" (a food-cart demolition derby was held in the pantry, no doubt).
3. Interesting that they leave Pete Noyes' name in and then make him look like either a flake or the world's worst journalist. P. 1434 "His intentions can not be wholly evaluated." I guess working for a TV station made him a public figure.
4. P. 176. Whoever drew this diagram of bullet paths ignored both the autopsy data and Wolfer's photos with the metal rods. The trajectories are only very slightly upward. This diagram seems to have been drawn from Sirhan's assumed and LAPD-preferred angle of fire rather than from the available data.
5. Pp. 149. The script writers inject the mythical "lunge": Sirhan "removed a gun and lunged toward the Senator with his right arm fully extended." Again on p. 151 "Sirhan was lunging at the Senator and firing."
6. The handling of the distance problem (pp. 146-51) is instructive. After mentioning seven witnesses whose FBI and/or grand jury statements offer a distance estimate (Shulte, Hamill, Manasian, Lubic, Uecker, Burns, Patruski), the summary creates a false impression.

(Last para p. 151.) It quotes Romero, 3 feet; Barry, 12 inches; Urso, point-blank. Then it summarizes: "Due to the excitement of the moment and position of witnesses each gave different versions of the distance of the first shot, ranging from point blank to several feet."

This paragraph distorts the available evidence. While it is true that there was a variance in estimates, it is not true, as implied on p. 151, that witnesses estimates were strung out equally on a continuum from point blank to several feet. Ignored is the fact that in addition to Romero and Barry, 6 witnesses

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mentioned in this section had estimates beyond 1 1/2 feet.

7. P. 901. The capsule summary of Cesar's statement has the main points, except one: no mention of Cesar reaching for his gun (which is in his June 5 LAPD statement) or drawing his gun (which is in his FBI statement). Nothing about getting knocked over, either.

8. Do we know that Sgt. Sharaga did put out an APB for the polka-dot girl as Christian and Turner claim (C2T pp. 73-6)? None of the references in the Summary refer to a Sharaga APB for a woman, only for a "blond male". But (p. 21 Summary, last line) it says that two juvenile division officers put out an APB for a male latin and a female caucasian. References to Sharaga APB: pp. 21, 198-9, 208, 211. Was there an APB for polka-dot girl? It's nowhere in the report.

9. Polka-dot dress After spending pp. 408-17 working to discredit Serrano and DiPierro, the Summary describes how several candidates who might have been polka-dot were checked out because of leads (pp. 417-21), then concludes with a section about Shulte, entitled "Actual Girl in Polka-Dot Dress." Pages 421-2 are a white wash of the first magnitude. "The investigation proved that a basis never existed for \_\_\_\_\_ allegation that there was a woman in a polka-dot dress." My FBI file on Polka-dot contains statements by the following witnesses that they saw such a girl at the Ambassador. It is a fair statement that the physical and clothing descriptions of the girl offered by some of these witnesses has more consistency than does their description of Sirhan. These people are not describing Shulte, whose dress was the wrong pattern (light dots on dark instead of vice versa and were too large). Besides which Shulte was using a crutch! Beyond Booker Griffin, who may be a waffler to some degree, we have some **very credible** sightings in FBI documents: George Green, Susan Locke, Darnell Johnson, an unidentified Kennedy campaign worker [name deleted], Joseph G. Giordano, Marcus McBroom; even Jack Merritt. Their FBI statements **do** provide impressive corroboration for the existence of a mysterious, apparently sinister polka-dot girl other than Shulte.

In the polka-dot section of the LAPD Summary (417-22) there is not hint of other witnesses. However, in the capsule summaries of witnesses statements in vol. 3, most of these witnesses (names deleted) are dismissed (in the capsule summaries).

--George Green, bottom of p. 975- top 976 the "Note" discredits Green on the basis of "two prior interviews by the FBI," because the two manifested inconsistencies and because Green "stated he had had several drinks" the night of the shooting.

I have one Green FBI interview (6/7/68). If this is one of Green's two FBI statements that LAPD is talking about here, they are not reporting anything correctly. Green's FBI statement, contrary to what the LAPD summary says, has nothing about him

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consuming several drinks, does not say he saw Sirhan earlier on the evening of June 4, describes a man other than Sirhan as being 5' 11" and fleeing the kitchen (LAPD implied Green got SBS's height wrong), does not describe the color of the polka-dot dress, has nothing about "wandering" between floors. I find it hard to imagine that this June 7 FBI interview is not one of the two that the summary is supposed to be describing. I guess Houghton never thought Green's FBI statements would be disclosed.

Darnell Johnson - p. 1013, next-to-last interview on the page. The summary says he saw a girl in a polka-dot dress, then says: "Note: Investigators believe \_\_\_\_\_ statement is unreliable and contrary to fact." The "fact," no doubt, is that there is no polka-dot girl, so that makes Johnson wrong. Instead of feeding him fictional drinks like they did with Green, they decide Johnson is "unreliable," he doesn't have his LAPD-preferred facts straight--catch-22.

Suzanne Locke, p. 1047. Told the FBI on June 7 that she observed (in the Embassy Room before the speech) a suspicious-looking (expressionless, out-of-place) attractive, well-proportioned woman with "long brown" hair, wearing a white shift with blue polka dots. She pointed the girl out to the head of the Kennedy girls who told a security guard. None of this is referred to in the summary of Locke's LAPD statement.

Joseph Giordano, office manager RFK senate office. His FBI interview says he saw a girl with white dress and blue or black, large dots at 3:00 a.m. June 5, talking to a "policeman" outside room 507, Ambassador. No summary of his statement in LAPD Summary Report.

Booker Griffin, p. 977. "He stated that he saw a male and female run from the room. Later he stated that the report of the male and female escaping was a total fabrication on his part."

When later? Christian & Turner, p. 69 cite an LAPD June 5 interview with Griffin which discusses the fleeing couple (see cite, bottom of p. 69). Griffin's 6/11/68 FBI statement indicates that he saw SBS, a blond with a white dress "with colorations," and another white male 2-3 times before the shooting. Did he recant this, or just the part about the blond and the man fleeing the kitchen after the shooting?

Interesting that unlike other witnesses, Jack J. Merritt (p. 1069), security guard, has his polka-dot sighting reported in symmetry with his FBI statement and with no caveat that he was lying, factually incorrect, etc. as with the other witnesses. I guess you get a lot of deference from LAPD if you wear a uniform: Cesar certainly did, too.

10. p. 614 "Evidence of Prior Contacts with Kennedy." Only two items here. Conspicuous by its absence is an alleged May 20 incident described by FBI files, at Robbie's Restaurant, Pomona. Albert LeBeau told the Bureau that a man closely resembling

Sirhan (he picked SBS's photo) tried to crash an RFK luncheon and was accompanied by a well-built young blond. An off-duty Pomona policeman's FBI interview confirms the basis of the incident but refused to identify SBS as the man. The activity of the couple seems sinister: they claimed to be part of RFK's party but were not; the man had a coat over his right arm.

On p. 1038 we have a name-deleted summary of Albert LeBeau's LAPD interview. It briefly describes the incident referred to in FBI documents, and then states: "\_\_\_\_\_ initially stated that the man was Sirhan, but later admitted he lied." On June 12 Le Beau furnished a seven-page signed statement to the FBI, describing the sinister behavior of the blond and the young man, selecting SBS's photo as "closely resembling" the man he saw. The unidentified Pomona policeman confirmed the basic story of the suspicious couple; but, while stating that the subject bore some resemblance to SBS, also indicated that "he did not feel that the man would have been Sirhan."

Despite a strong, detailed, signed FBI statement, and despite at least ball-park corroboration by a Pomona cop, Le Beau "admitted he lied"?! LeBeau's FBI statement was careful and not designed for publicity. Why would he lie? This is one LAPD interview tape I'd love to hear.

11. P. 162. Witness/Victim Position Chart: I see no scale, but it looks as if RFK is more distant from SBS than the official conclusion says. Also, Cesar's position is curious: walled off from RFK by Shulte, Lubic, Burns. Cesar's police statement of June 5 says that he was 2 feet from RFK and had retaken RFK's arm just before the shooting (p. 7-8 Cesar's June 5 LAPD interview). And what of Cesar's bow tie? The chart has him pretty far removed from RFK.

12. Rifle Range p. 511 Sirhan didn't own a rifle but was seen firing one on June 4 at the San Gabriel Valley rifle range. Summary concludes: "From 37 persons interviewed, only two, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, place Sirhan Sirhan on the rifle range, and it was the investigating officer's opinion that they made an honest mistake in identifying Sirhan Sirhan as the person they observed firing the rifle. An unidentified person resembling Sirhan in general appearance was observed by witnesses firing on the rifle range."

Note that the Williams's story about the time and nature of their interaction with SBS is unsupported by any of the 37 witnesses, and it directly conflicts with 2 witnesses (Weaver, Kendall) who describe a couple fitting the Williams's description as arriving much earlier (near to the time SBS was seen with a rifle). And the Williamses story of their encounter with SBS is accepted while the two witnesses who saw Sirhan with a rifle are rejected.

SBS was on the rifle range for only a short time; most shooters were on the pistol range. Why discount the Grijalvas

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(brother and sister)?, except that SBS with a rifle is untidy, smacks of sinister interaction. Sirhan was only 3-5 positions away from the Grijalvas when they claim to have seen him fire. Robert Grijalva passed an LAPD lie detector test; his sister wasn't given one. They are both lucid, excellent witnesses in their FBI interviews. They both saw SBS on the pistol range first, where he was easily distinguishable because he was firing his pistol very very rapidly: this is why everyone, including the Grijalvas, remembered him. The Grijalvas then saw this same man firing a rifle--same physical description as the rapid-fire pistol shooter, same clothing (Roberta gave a precise, detailed same-clothing description for the rifle shooter as for the rapid-fire pistol shooter). Both Grijalvas said this was the same individual, and they were quite sure it was Sirhan. Most importantly: no other of the 35 witnesses give any hint that there was anyone who looked like Sirhan either physically or clothing-wise, or rapid-fire wise. Many witnesses ID'd Sirhan with no confusion and were called to the trial. Yet the police invented someone "resembling Sirhan" in order to discount the Grijalvas' story. I can tell you why the LAPD did not give Roberta Grijalva a lie detector test: her FBI statement is stronger, even surer than her brother's; if they could break him, they discredit her. But since they couldn't--forget it.

LAPD Summary, p. 978. The last two witnesses are the Grijalvas. In Robert's summary, LAPD does not report that he saw SBS firing a rifle but says vaguely: "He then went to the rifle range," and it is not clear whether SBS or Grijalva is being talked about. Robert is credited with a positive ID of SBS, but no mention of SBS firing a rifle. Roberta is described as alleging that SBS fired a rifle, but "she was not certain" of her ID. Her only caveat in her FBI interview was that she could not be certain because the man wore sunglasses, but her description of this man fits with--and is thus corroborated by--all other descriptions of Sirhan's appearance and demeanor. The summaries are written to downplay and distort the evidence. Sirhan was completely conspicuous and unmistakable, and the Grijalvas' ID is solid.

13. Summary, pp. 425-34 Khaibar Khan. This concerns the allegation that SBS and an attractive young woman were at Kennedy campaign HQ on the afternoon of the shooting (complete with polka dot dress) and also on an earlier occasion. LAPD decided that SBS was not there (p. 434). LAPD sprinkled these pages with a lot of derogatory info on Khan, no doubt to discredit him. We are told that he was described as "somewhat over-dressed" that he was a "phony" who "appeared to do strange things." That he was "very over-bearing," (p. 426). That he changed his name (429).

Khan gave a lot of data to the FBI about the girl he saw with SBS, including the leads as to the identity of the man in the blue VW who was allegedly with the attractive young girl on June 3 (the same girl who was with SBS June 4). No LAPD follow-up is reflected. FBI documents reflect that a sighting of SBS prior to June 4 is confirmed by Khan's sister Rose (FBI 4-1-566

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to 567) who ID'd SBS as being there June 2. Kennedy worker Larry Strick thinks SBS was there June 2. Mrs. Ellenore Severson rendered a positive ID of SBS as being there that same time, same day (her 6/11/68 FBI interview); and she later reconfirmed this ID for the FBI in a separate interview. Ellenore Severson is not in the LAPD's Summary witness list (she should be on pp. 1152, 3, or 4).

Larry Strick is summarized on pages 1176-7. Very strange: he retracts his ID of SBS having been at campaign HQ on June 2. Strick was a high school kid who was probably frightened of the polygraph. Again, it is conspicuous that Strick and Severson saw the same thing at the same time: SBS at HQ on June 2, 2:00. But she is totally left out even though she rendered two positive ID's to the FBI. Strick's ID to FBI was less positive, so the cops leaned on him and included him in the report as having recanted.

Last paragraph p. 433 to top of 434. I believe this is Khan's sister Rose. Her FBI statement mentions SBS standing near the women's rest room. This is not Ellenore Severson. LAPD "missed" the most important and surest witness regarding the June 2 HQ visit of SBS. Great police work!

14. See p. 887-8. Similarly: reported sighting of SBS at RFK campaign HQ San Gabriel Valley on May 30. Lavern Botting told the FBI that a man came in and asked if RFK was expected to visit the HQ. She thought it was SBS. He was accompanied by two other people--one, a "dishwater blond" with an excellent figure. Ethel Crehan was with Botting and confirms that this trio visited; Crehan also thought it was SBS.

How did LAPD handle this? They do not mention that one of the trio was an attractive blond. Also, they say that Botting said she can't be sure unless she sees SBS in person, and they leave it at that: they didn't offer her a line-up, probably for fear she'd pick SBS. But when they get a frightened Iranian woman, Rose Khan, they offer a line-up and gleefully report that she refused to go downtown for one. You only get it if you don't want it, I guess.

See p. 916, Ethel Crehan, Botting's co-worker: "She identified Sirhan's mug, but in her description of Sirhan she stated he was 5' 8" tall." So what? If the only standard for a valid ID is to guess the precise height of the individual rather than ID his face, the police may not be able to place Sirhan in the pantry!

One important conclusion emerges: This Summary report manifests a consistent, concerted attempt to squelch any and all hint of conspiracy by negating all witnesses who saw anything conspiratorial. Leave them out if they are too sure and too credible (Ellenore Severson). Change their statements (George Green's FBI statement). Brow beat them (Khan, Serrano). Offer line-ups or withhold, depending on which is better for dis-

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crediting the witness. Pick the weakest of 2 or 3 witnesses to an incident and rattle their cage, then use this to clear the incident.

Are we to believe that all these conspiracy witnesses gave long, detailed statements to the FBI within days after the crime and were making it all up, but only LAPD (with its superior skills) could discover this. And the people who rendered positive SBS ID's to FBI in conspiracy-related instances, or who saw the mystery girl, were all mistaken and finally admitted this to LAPD. It's like there are two cases here--a good case for conspiracy in FBI files, and no valid hint of conspiracy in LAPD files, because all the conspiracy data comes from whimps, psychos, drunks, and morons, and compulsive liars. I doubt it. I think the tapes of LAPD interviews with these witnesses could show that witnesses were browbeaten or that their statements were consistently and severely distorted. If the full interviews were taped (instead of going off the record to a conspicuous degree, they could be very embarrassing to LAPD.

The cops had two standards for evidence and for treating witnesses. Serrano's alleged inconsistencies are discussed page after page. Cesar's get nothing. And there's Catch-22 logic: Serrano is wrong 'cause there's no corroboration, and that becomes "fact". Then, any witnesses who saw a polka-dot girl are wrong because their statements are contrary to "fact" (that the girl does not exist).

LAPD may yet make the Warren Commission lawyers look like an intrepid band of Perry Masons.