SIRHAN 8/16/71

2ND LD 163

BY YVONNE PATTEN

LOS ANGELES(CNS)--A COUNTY GRAND JURY INQUIRY THUS FAR HAS PRODUCED NO EVIDENCE THAT THE EXHIBITS IN THE SIRHAN BISHARA SIRHAN CASE HAVE BEEN TAMPERED WITH, A PROSECUTOR SAID TODAY.

DEPUTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY RICHARD HECHT MADE THE COMMENT TO NEWSMEN AT THE END OF THE FIRST DAY'S TESTIMONY BEFORE THE GRAND JURY.

THE JURY SESSIONS ARE EXPECTED TO LAST TWO OR THREE MORE DAYS.

"THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THE EVIDENCE HAS BEEN TAMPERED WITH," HECHT SAID.

HE SAID THE JURY'S INVESTIGATION IS "PRIMARILY AN INQUIRY INTO THE ACTIVITY OF THE COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE IN DISCHARGING ITS RESPONSIBILITY IN CONNECTION WITH COURT ORDERS ISSUED.

HECHT REFERRED TO RULINGS BY TWO SEPARATE SUPERIOR COURT JUDGES IN THE SIRHAN CASE ORDERING THE COUNTY CLERK NOT TO MAKE EXHIBITS AVAILABLE TO ANYONE WITHOUT PERMISSION FROM THE COURT.

HECHT SAID THAT HIS COMMENT ABOUT TAMPERING WAS MADE ONLY IN CONNECTION WITH THE GRAND JURY PROBE.

(MORE)

TT400PM

SIRHAN 8/16/71

1ST ADD 2ND LD 225 XXX PROBE.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY JOSEPH P. BUSCH HAS LAUNCHED HIS OWNINVESTIGATION INTO SEVERAL FACETS OF THE CASE INVOLVING THE ASSASSINATION OF U.S. SENATOR ROBERT F. KENNEDY IN JUNE OF 1968.

BUSCH HAS NOT ANNOUNCED ANY FINDINGS YET IN HIS INVESTIGATION.

THE TWO SUPERIOR COURT JUDGES WHO ISSUED ORDERS IN THE SIRHAN CASE, ARTHUR L. ALARCON, AND HERBERT V. WALKER, WERE AMONG EIGHT WITNESSES WHO APPEARED BEFORE THE GRAND JURY TODAY.

NEITHER WOULD COMMENT ABOUT HIS TESTIMONY, BUT PRESUMABLY THEY EXPLAINED THEIR ORDERS TO THE JURORS.

ALSO TESTIFYING WERE COUNTY CLERK WILLIAM SHARP AND PETER J. TALMACHOFF, CHIEF OF THE CRIMINAL DIVISION OF THE COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE.

THEY ALSO WOULD NOT COMMENT TO NEWSMEN ABOUT THEIR TESTIMONY.

TALMACHOFF, WHO TESTIFIED FOR ABOUT AN HOUR, CARRIED A CARDBOARD CARTON FILLED WITH LARGE ENVELOPES INTO THE CLOSED-DOOR HEARING.

WHEN NEWSMEN ASKED HIM WHAT THE CARTON CONTAINED, TALMACHOFF REPLIED, "THE STUFF THEY SUBPOENAED."

HE WOULD NOT ELABORATE.

TALMACHOFF SAID HE WILL CONTINUE TESTIFYING TOMORROW AT 9:30 A.M. WHEN THE JURY RESUMES ITS SESSION.

ALSO TESTIFYING TODAY WERE TWO OF SIRHAN'S PROSECUTORS, JOHN HOWARD AND DAVID N. FITTS. HOWARD IS NOW CHIEF DEPUTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY AND FITTS IS A SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE.

IT IS BELIEVED HOWARD AND FITTS TESTIFIED ABOUT THE BACKGROUND OF THE SIRHAN CASE.

THE TWO OTHER WITNESSES WERE FRED WYNBRANDT, CHIEF CRIMINALIST FOR THE STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE; AND JOYCE SHANNON, ONE OF THE SECRETARIES WHO DOES THE PAPERWORK FOR THE GRAND JURY.

DEPUTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY SIDNEY TRAPP IS ASSISTING HECHT IN THE PRESENTATION BEFORE THE GRAND JURY.

(INCLUDES PREVIOUS)

SIRHAN 8/16/71

1ST LD 103

LOS ANGELES(CNS)--THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY GRAND JURY OPENED AN INVESTIGATION TODAY INTO REPORTS THAT PHYSICAL EVIDENCE FROM THE SIRHAN SIRHAN TRIAL MAY HAVE BEEN TAMPERED WITH SINCE THE CONCLUSION OF THE TRIAL.

TWO JUDGES AND A PROSECUTING ATTORNEY WERE AMONG THE FIRST WITNESSES SUMMONED FOR THE CLOSED-DOOR QUESTIONING.

THE GRAND JURY HEARINGS ARE EXPECTED TO LAST TWO TO THREE DAYS.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY JOSEPH BUSCH HAS SAID THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT ATTORNEYS AND PRIVATE CITIZENS INTERESTED IN THE SIRHAN CASE MAY HAVE HAD ACCESS TO THE COURTROOM EXHIBITS SINCE THE CONCLUSION OF THE TRIAL.

SIRHAN WAS CONVICTED AND SENTENCED TO DEATH FOR THE ASSASSINATION OF SEN. ROBERT F. KENNEDY AT THE AMBASSADOR HOTEL IN JUNE OF 1968.

TAMPERING WITH THE PHYSICAL EVIDENCE COULD AFFECT LEGAL APPEALS IN THE CASE.

THE LEAD-OFF WITNESS AT THE HEARING AT THE HALL OF JUSTICE WAS CHIEF DEPUTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY JOHN HOWARD, WHO WAS ONE OF THE PROSECUTORS IN THE SIRHAN TRIAL.

IT WAS REPORTED THAT HE TESTIFIED REGARDING BACKGROUND OF THE CASE.

THE SECOND WITNESS WAS LOS ANGELES SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE ARTHUR ALARCON, WHO SIGNED THE ORIGINAL ORDER SEALING THE EXHIBITS IN THE CUSTODY OF THE COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE.

RETIRED SUPERIOR JUDGE HERBERT V. WALKER, WHO PRESIDED OVER THE SIRHAN TRIAL AND LATER EXTENDED ALARCON'S ORDER, ALSO TESTIFIED BEFORE THE GRAND JURY.

UNDER THE COURT ORDER, NO ONE WAS TO BE PERMITTED ACESS TO THE PHYSICAL EXHIBITS WITHOUT WRITTEN COURT PERMISSION.

COUNTY CLERK WILLIAM SHARP WAS SCHEDULED TO TESTIFY LATER TODAY.

(PICKUP 5TH PGH: BUSCH SAID XXX)

IE 1113AM

SIRHAN 5/16/71

LOS ANGELES(CNS)--THE COUNTY GRAND JURY TODAY IS SCHEDULED TO BEGIN AN INVESTIGATION INTO POSSIBLE TAMPERING WITH EXHIBITS IN THE CASE OF CONDEMNED ASSASSIN SIRHAN SIRHAN.

THE PROBE IS SET TO BEGIN AT 10 A.M. IN THE JURY CHAMBERS ON THE FIFTH FLOOR OF THE HALL OF JUSTICE.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY JOSEPH P. BUSCH ASKED FOR THE INVESTIGATION "TO DETERMINE...THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF THE VIOLATION OF THE COURT ORDER REGARDING THE SIRHAN EXHIBITS."

HE REFERRED TO AN ORDER ISSUED BY A JUDGE AT THE BEGINNING OF SIRHAN'S PROSECUTION PROHIBITING ANYONE FROM EXAMINING EXHIBITS IN THE CASE WITHOUT COURT PERMISSION.

BUSCH SAID THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THE PROBE IS TO FOCUS UPON THE "INTEGRITY OF ORIGINAL EXHIBITS IN ORDER TO DETERMINE IF ANY OTHER APPROPRIATE ACTION NEEDS TO BE TAKEN."

BUSCH FIRST BEGAN AN INVESTIGATION OF HIS OWN INTO THE SIRHAN CASE WHEN AN ATTORNEY CHARGED THAT A LOS ANGELES POLICE CRIMINALIST DID NOT FOLLOW PROPER PROCEDURES IN THE BALLISTICS PHASE OF THE INVESTIGATION INTO THE SLAYING OF SEN. ROBERT F. KENNEDY.

THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY HAS EMPHASIZED THAT THE GRAND JURY PROBE IS MERELY ONE FACET OF THE TOTAL INVESTIGATION INTO THE ALLEGATIONS IN THE SIRHAN CASE.

JS1246AM