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Did Sirhan kill Kennedy?

Examiner News Services

LOS ANGELES — A one-day hearing into the possibility that Sirhan Sirhan may not have killed Sen. Robert Kennedy took place yesterday.

The investigation was called by Los Angeles County Supervisor Baxter Ward, candidate for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination.

Ward denied political motive. He said results would be studied and he would make recommendations to fellow supervisors on what next should be done.

The evidence that another gun may have killed Kennedy is not, however, new. It has been the subject of previous inquiries, none of which made any determination affecting Sirhan's verdict.

County Coroner Thomas Noguchi and a New York criminologist, Leon McDonnell, testified at the opening session there is evidence that more than one pistol was fired when Kennedy was assassinated, and that the bullet that entered Kennedy's brain may not have come from the pistol held by Sirhan.

Sirhan is serving a life prison term for killing Kennedy in a kitchen passageway at the Ambassador Hotel June 15, 1968.

Noguchi, who conducted the autopsy on Kennedy and removed the death bullet from him testified that "physical evidence" shows the gun only one to three inches from Kennedy's head.

Many witnesses to the shooting agree that Sirhan was nowhere near that close.

McDonnell, director of the Laboratory of Forensic Evidence in New York, testified the bullet removed from Kennedy and a bullet removed from a newsman wounded by Sirhan, did not come from the same gun.

The other bullet was removed from ABC newsman William Weisel, who has recovered.

McDonnell said the bullet removed from Kennedy had been fired by a pistol with only one rifling groove in the barrel, while the bullet that came out of Weisel showed the marking of two grooves.