

Serial Numbers Cited

RFK Slaying Laid To Second Gunman

By George Lardner Jr.
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The producer of an hour-long documentary film called "Who Killed Robert F. Kennedy?" staged a three-hour press conference here yesterday to urge a Congressional investigation of the late senator's assassination.

Theodore Charach, a self-styled "investigative documentarian" and free-lance newsman from Los Angeles, asserted that Sirhan Bishara Sirhan, Kennedy's convicted murderer, never even hit the senator despite the bullets that poured out of his gun at virtually point-blank range.

Instead, Charach claimed, the senator was killed by another gunman firing at point-blank range—whom no one happened to see or hear.

According to testimony at his trial in Los Angeles, Sirhan killed Kennedy with a bullet to the brain, fired "approximately one inch away from the senator's ear."

Charach insisted, however, that "none of the bullets from Sirhan's gun hit the senator." Asked how it was that no one saw any assailant but Sirhan, Charach blamed "the confusion and chaos."

On a more modest level, Charach maintained that evidence he has developed shows a "bungling" of the ballistics tests by Los Angeles authorities.

He said that serial numbers in court files suggest that while one .22-caliber pistol was taken from Sirhan after the slaying, bullets test-fired from another gun were identified in court as matching slugs that hit Kennedy and two other men in the hotel pantry way where the senator was killed three years ago.

The disputed testimony

came from DeWayne Wolfer, a ballistics and firearms expert for the Los Angeles Police Department, who said at Sirhan's trial that bullets fired from the convicted assassin's gun matched those taken from Kennedy's neck and from two other victims of Sirhan's wild shots.

Charach, however, said the court exhibit containing the test bullets labeled them as having been fired from a .22-caliber Iver-Johnson with the serial number, H-18602. The serial number from Sirhan's .22 was H-53725.

Los Angeles authorities have recently undertaken an investigation of the alleged irregularities in the ballistics tests, but District Attorney Joseph P. Busch Jr. has yet to announce the findings. A new ballistics test with Sirhan's gun is reportedly under consideration.

Wolfer testified at Sirhan's trial that he used another .22-caliber pistol for some final tests in the case after Sirhan's had been locked up as a grand jury exhibit. He said he used the substitute pistol to determine the range of the shots since "no two (similar) guns could vary that greatly."