

# RFK Plot Tale Spiked, But Rumors Persist

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LOS ANGELES, June 22—Hemmed in by the mountains, the smog hovers over Los Angeles like a giant poison bubble. The rumors hinting of a conspiracy in the assassination of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy are even thicker.

One by one, they are proving to be false.

But those who originate and spread the stories remain apparently unaware of the real facts that show them to be spurious.

Investigators are squelching the rumors largely under the enforced silence of a court order, designed to insure Sirhan Bishara Sirhan, the 24-year-old accused assassin a fair trial.

At the San Gabriel Valley Sun Club, where Sirhan was seen practicing with a .22-

caliber revolver less than 12 hours before the assassination, Cashier David Buckner has told investigators, and presumably others, that he saw "a woman and another guy" with Sirhan at the gun range that day.

In suburban Alhambra not far away, at a neighborhood bar decorated with prints of rear-view nudes, the two brothers who own the place have talked to FBI agents and Los Angeles detectives at length.

They have been told to keep quiet, but the customers at the Golden Garter have not. Sirhan, it is said, was at the watering spot several times with a friend named "Jim" and perhaps Jim's girl friend, "Karen."

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## SIRHAN, From A1

Jim, it sadded darkly, has dropped out of sight.

The whispered talk is honestly believed. At the gun club, a woman who turned up at the practice range did talk with Sirhan. The man she came with, her husband, was farther away, practicing by himself. She was left a couple of spaces away from Sirhan with a pistol she didn't know how to shoot.

So she asked him.

Always polite, Sirhan obliged. He even let her fire a couple of rounds on his Iver-Johnson .22. But neither the woman nor her husband would have known him if he were King Hussein.

Cashier Buckner, however, remains apparently unenlightened. The rumor spreads.

Fanning out from the Golden Garter, investigators have also found "Jim" and his swarthy friends. It is not Sirhan.

But no one has told the

bar's proprietors, Carl and J. Andy Martigani, much less the customers. The talk goes on. Some embellish it.

By now, in some minds, the phantom Sirhan associated with "Jim" has acquired a phantom girl friend, "with the sexiest figure you ever saw."

Visions of "polka dot girls" spring up in response.

Police still believe there is a "polka dot girl" to be found—though not the one initially reported to them.

Miss Sandy Serrano, a 20-year-old Youth for Kennedy volunteer from Altadena, had told newsmen that she had seen a dark-haired girl

In a white dress with polka dots run from the Ambassador Hotel shortly after the shooting and shout shot him."

With her, Miss Serrano had said, was a man who appeared to be of Latin extraction.

Police Friday canceled the all-points bulletin for Miss Serrano's "polka dot" girl, concluding that she had been "overwrought." It was learned that Miss Serrano had been invited to take a lie detector test, but a least initially, she declined.

Not all reports of "polka dot" girls have been discarded, however. Vincent DiPierre, who testified before the Los Angeles County Grand Jury, told of seeing Sirhan exchanging smiles with such a girl moments before the shooting.

Detectives and presumably FBI agents believe him. Asked how this could be squared with the cancellation of the all-points bulletin based on Miss Serrano's initial report, one source replied simply that "it isn't the same girl."

Investigators have also yet to confirm or discount reports that two men were with Sirhan when he bought ammunition at a San Gabriel gun shop the Friday before the June 4 shooting.

Even so, they point out that it takes more than a smile to make a conspir-

acy. Other sources add that the proprietors of the gun shop were somewhat "less positive" in talking to the police than they were with the press about seeing Sirhan with two men.

Other allegations have been squelched, but again in a secrecy that fails to counter their circulation and the currency that rumors gain with widespread repetition. Los Angeles has enough to feed every sort of preconceived notion.

Mayor Sam Yorty, never known for his reticence in public speaking, has loudly charged that communism was behind the assassination.

Across town, near Hollywood and Vine, one Arab-American businessman whispers to another that he has "the real story." Sirhan, he confides darkly was a secret agent, "paid by the Zionists" to blacken the name of the Arab world.

The "Zionist plot," story appears to have its origins in the self-defense mechanisms in the Middle East where it first surfaced.

Yorty's charge appears to have been simply a wild swing from right field.

Alleging that "evil Communist organizations" in-

flamed Sirhan, Yorty declared that the suspected assassin's car had been spotted near a building where the radical left-wing W. E. B. DuBois Club was holding a meeting.

What Yorty did not disclose was that the meeting had been held more than two years ago—March 4, 1966. Sirhan was never seen inside the DuBois Club. The car was his brother Adel's.

Beyond that, probably most Arabs and Arab-Americans in Los Angeles have parked near the building at one time or another. The Fez—a Middle Eastern belly-dance palace (for the whole family)—is right down the street. Sirhan's brother Adel used to play a guitar-like instrument called the oud there every night.

Yorty's charge, however, was made before Superior Court Judge Arthur L. Alarcon handed down the court order aimed at banning most out-of-court statements to the media about the case. By then, many of the rumors were already afloat. The facts have been harder to come by.

Beneath the surface, however, investigators—while still not ruling out the possibility of a conspiracy—have yet to find any genuine evidence of one. Sirhan himself, and what drove him to the Ambassador Hotel, still pose the biggest enigma.

### **Calif. Group Scores Secrecy In RFK Case**

STANFORD, Calif. June 22 (AP)—The California Freedom of Information Committee took sweeping exception today to a court secrecy order issued in the assassination of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

Such an order, the Committee said, "puts unreasonable emphasis on the rights of the defendant at the expense of other equally important public rights."

In a report to the annual meeting here of the California Newspaper Publishers Association, the Committee representing all news media in the state—said the secrecy order issued June 7 by Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Arthur L. Alarcon could deprive the public of its right to know the facts and could promote the spread of false rumors while blacking out official denials.

### **Arab Agency Orders Aid Offer to Sirhan**

BEIRUT, Lebanon, June 22 (AP)—The Arab Higher Committee for Palestine reported today it has instructed its New York office to offer "all possible assistance" to the alleged assassin of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, Sirhan Bishara Sirhan.

The Committee's representative the former Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Haji Amin el Husseini, said it has instructed its U.S. representative to legally defend Sirhan as far as American law permits.

The Committee in New York goes by the name of Palestine Arab Delegation.

The Committee's representatives in New York are Issa Nakhleh and Omar Azzouni, both attorneys.

Jordanian-born Sirhan was described by the Committee as "a young Nationalist."