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—AP WIREPHOTO.
KENNEDY SHOOTING SUSPECT
En route to arraignment.

A Handshake --Then Blood, Tears, Terror

By **ROBERT HEALY**

(Boston Globe Political Editor

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LOS ANGELES (AP)—In that narrow, darkened corridor, there was terror, profanity, tears, blood and the violence of a nation.

Sen. Robert Kennedy of New York had walked down the same back corridor in the kitchen of the Ambassador Hotel just 15 minutes before. He was in a good mood. He had won California. And he came over to shake my hand. I congratulated him and we talked about his big win.

NOW, I WAS STANDING on a steel serving table directly over the same place where we had shaken hands. He lay there struck down by bullets. His right hand held a bleeding side. His face was white. His eyes were open. His lips moved just slightly.

But he did not cry.

Against the steel serving table, Roosevelt Grier, the huge Negro lineman for the Los Angeles Rams, had the assailant pinned. He held tight to the man's right wrist and he smashed it against the side of the serving table. He tried to free the gun from his hand.

There was this great man, towering over the small man and with all his strength it took him more than a minute

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to take that gun.

ANOTHER MAN, atop the table, was trying to kick the gunman in the face. "Bastard . . . kill him," he shouted. And he would have.

Kennedy waited until his victory was secure in the California primary before he came down to talk to his workers. There was a huge crowd in the ballroom. They had waited for several hours.

About 12:15 a. m., (2:15 CDT), the senator's press aides entered the working press room adjoining the ballroom. They said Kennedy would come in a matter of minutes to thank his workers and make a statement for television.

A BIG CROWD filled the lobby outside, and it was decided it would be easier to bring the candidate through the kitchen corridor into the ballroom.

Then the senator came. He had been in Malibu during the day and picked up a fresh sun tan. His press aide, Richard Drayne, preceded him. There were few people in the corridor—some kitchen workers and some television cameramen forewarned of his arrival.

Kennedy began his speech with a remark about the shut-out victory that Don Drysdale had just pitched for the Los Angeles Dodgers. It went over big.

I LISTENED TO him speak for a few minutes, then walked into the press room, because you could not hear the senator in the roar of the crowd. The reception was better on the television in the press room.

Kennedy had said that after his speech he would meet with a small group of reporters in the working press room.

A few seconds before he ended his speech, I left the television and went to the door that led to a corridor behind the ballroom stage and off the kitchen. Kennedy would come off the stage and walk down this corridor.



ROOSEVELT GRIER
Grabbed gunman.

I WAS ONLY a few feet inside the corridor, walking toward Kennedy, when I saw his head bobbing in the crowd. We were 25 or 30 feet apart. The assailant was between us.

Then there were the shots. They said there were eight of them. Their flash lit up the corridor. I remember

thinking there were about five. They came quickly and I wasn't counting.

Someone said they were firecrackers. There had been some of that in the rally in San Francisco's Chinatown Monday.

But there was no mistake about this. Someone had been shot.

I RAN DOWN the corridor. People bunched in front of me and I jumped on the steel serving table, past the assailant beneath me on my left, and saw Robert Kennedy on the floor in the gray light.

People were screaming: "Get a doctor . . ."

"Get back and give him air."

They swore and cursed each other.

For a few seconds I did not notice the struggle directly beneath me. Then I looked down and saw the gun. Grier held the assailant and was attempting to take the gun from his hand. The man next to me was shouting, "Kill him!"

WHEN Grier finally shook the gun from the assailant's hand, a man next to me picked it up. Bill Barry and Rafer Johnson, Kenney's other two bodyguards, scrambled to get the weapon—they were afraid the man would kill the gunman.

Then there was a struggle to hold the assailant. They did not want to let him go and Rosie Grier did not want him killed and said so. They picked the assailant up by the legs and hauled him away from Kennedy.

I did not hear this but one of those walking beside Kennedy said that the gunman shouted: "Let me explain . . . let me explain," as he fired the shots at Kennedy.

THERE WAS TURMOIL in the ballroom. Kennedy's brother-in-law, Stephen Smith, went to the stage and asked the people to clear the room. The assailant was still in the corridor behind the stage, and so was Kennedy. A doctor came in and attended him.