



By ROBERT BLAIR KAISER

This book not only brings back with overwhelming force a dark night in American history, but provides new insights into the murder of a man who might have become president. Few men, if any, know more about the assassination of Senator Robert F. Kennedy—and about his killer, Sirhan Sirhan—than writer Robert Blair Kaiser. It is doubtful that any reporter has ever been permitted to penetrate so deeply into a major murder case. Kaiser was the only writer Sirhan's attorneys allowed to interview the assassin's family and friends, to attend defense counsel's conferences with Sirhan, to confer closely with psychiatrists brought into the case. Kaiser had access to police and FBI files—and to Sirhan himself. He visited Sirhan in his cell until the convicted assassin was sent to San Quentin Prison, where he now waits, condemned to die in the gas chamber.

In exchange for this unprecedented entree, Kaiser paid \$34,000 toward Sirhan's legal defense and contributed his services as an independent investigator. "I am not at all sure that every case would lend itself to such personal involvement by a reporter who is trying to write about it," Kaiser admits. "In this case, however, I got what I wanted—access to the assassin—without having to give up my own independence."

"RFK MUST DIE"

From the book "RFK Must Die," by Robert Kaiser, to be published this fall by E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc. Copyright © 1970 by Robert Kaiser. Photograph by Cornell Capa. © 1964, Magnum Photos.

Senator Robert Francis Kennedy frowned at the Ambassador Hotel's color TV as Walter Cronkite patiently explained to the nation that there was a news delay in California. The trouble lay in Los Angeles, land of instant everything. County officials had decided to let computers add up the Democratic primary votes, but the machines weren't delivering.

Senator Kennedy was not amused. Los Angeles was the key to California's 174 delegates, to the Democratic National Convention, perhaps to the Presidency of the United States. And now, at ten o'clock on election night, June 4, 1968, no one knew what Los Angeles voters had done that day.

The Senator shook his head and wandered into a crowded bedroom in the other half of the hotel suite. He plopped down on the floor with a sigh, hugged his knees, and leaned back against the wall. Someone gave him a small cigar and a light. More people piled into the room. Kennedy wandered around the suite again, then went out and stood in the corridor. Several reporters had been waiting there on the chance that Kennedy would appear. One started talking about the campaign that lay ahead, and about "the politicians."

"I like politicians," Kennedy said quietly. "I like politics. It's an honorable adventure." He paused. "That was Lord Tweedsmuir." Kennedy paused again. "You don't remember Lord Tweedsmuir?" None of the reporters seemed to remember. Kennedy was pleased. He delivered a brief lecture on John Buchan, Baron Tweedsmuir, the Scottish author and statesman. "He wrote *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, you know, and several others. And then he was Governor General of Canada. He said, 'Politics is an honorable adventure.'" Kennedy savored the expression. Then he went back inside the suite, into the bedroom, and hunched on the edge of the bed, looking small, vulnerable, edgy, tired. His son David kissed him on the cheek and sat down close to him on the bed.

A week before, Kennedy had lost the Oregon primary election to Senator Eugene McCarthy. And here in California, in the last of the 1968 primaries, McCarthy held the early lead. But CBS predicted a Kennedy victory, and NBC finally forecast that Kennedy would win. Television producers urged him to claim the election.

Kennedy stalled. What if the projections were wrong? He took some time to talk to his advisers—to Dick Goodwin, to Pierre Salinger, his brother John's former press secretary, to Jesse Unruh, leader of his California campaign, and to Frank Mankiewicz, his own press secretary. He phoned Kenneth O'Donnell, a long-time Kennedy adviser, in Massachusetts. O'Donnell would be flying West in the morning for a strategy session; he thought Kennedy could get the nomination for president.

"I think I may," said Kennedy.

The nomination would go to the man who could squeeze the delegates to the Democratic national convention, and the man who could do that best was Kennedy. Only he could call in some of the political debts outstanding from the administration of his brother, John F. Kennedy.

Here on the fifth floor of the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles were many of those closest to both Kennedys: Bob's wife, Ethel; his sister Jean and her husband, Stephen Smith; Salinger; Fred Dutton, one of Bob's campaign chiefs; Ted Sorensen, an aide to John Kennedy and an adviser to Bob, too. And some new faces were also there—the black faces of Roosevelt Grier, the massive tackle of the Los Angeles Rams football team, and Rafer Johnson, the decathlon champion of the 1964 Olympics.

There were in addition the alert faces of writers Theodore White and Budd Schulberg; the patrician faces of George Plimpton, the author, and his bride, Freddy; and the strong face of John Glenn, the first American astronaut to orbit the earth. On this night all the faces were happy. They were part of the team, almost as much a part of the family as young David, Michael, Courtney and Kerry Kennedy, who were there with their springer spaniel, Freckles.

In a small bedroom of the Royal Suite, Schulberg reminded Kennedy of the blacks and chic-

nos who had helped him win in California. "Bob," he said, "you're the only white man in this country they trust." Kennedy smiled.

Frank Mankiewicz rushed in to say that it was time to move toward the Embassy Room, where a more-than-capacity crowd of 1,800 waited.

Kennedy went back into the bedroom to make one last check with Fred Dutton—the points he ought to make in his victory speech, the names of the people he ought to thank. Ethel Kennedy, three months pregnant with her eleventh child, was lying down for a brief rest.

"Ready?" asked Bob.

"Ready!" said Ethel, rising brightly. Steve Smith was talking to the people in the Embassy Room when Kennedy appeared, and the crowd roared its approval of the Senator, and of Ethel, sun-tanned and pretty in a white, sleeveless Courrèges dress.

Kennedy's talk was a disjointed mixture of the serious and the absurd. He wanted to acknowledge those who had helped in a special way. He wanted to entertain the crowd. And he wanted to throw in a sober message for people who were watching all over America. These were his last public words: "We can work together [despite] the division, the violence, the disenchantment with our society, the division between black and white, between the poor and the more affluent, or between age groups or over the war in Vietnam. We are a great country, an unselfish country, a compassionate country. And I intend to make that my basis for running. . . . So my thanks to all of you, and now, on to Chicago and let's win there."

Someone started to chant, "We want Bobby! We want Bobby!" and the crowd took it up. There was a moment's hesitation on the stage. Someone wanted to lead Kennedy to his left,

ROMERO WRAPPED THE ROSARY AROUND SENATOR KENNEDY'S LEFT THUMB.

through the Embassy Room past a queue of pretty Kennedy girls costumed in red, white and blue. Indeed, his two bodyguards, Bill Barry and Rafer Johnson, were helping to clear the way. Edward Minasian, a headwaiter, started to lead Kennedy off to the right. But Karl Uecker, a maître d'hôtel, took Kennedy's right hand, parted the gold curtain behind the rostrum and led the Senator off the rear of the platform directly toward the service pantry.

Uno Timanson, a hotel official, got in the lead, motioning frantically to Uecker, who pulled Kennedy along. They turned into a dim corridor and passed through the double doors of the service pantry while Kennedy's entourage rushed to catch up. "Slow down!" cried Frank Burns, an attorney and close friend of Jesse Unruh. "Slow down! You're getting ahead of everyone."

Bill Barry, the ex-FBI man who had guarded Kennedy closely during the campaign, was lifting Ethel Kennedy down from the stage. "I'm all right," said Ethel. "Stay with the Senator." Barry turned and started for the pantry.

The one man who might have saved Kennedy's life, an armed guard who was at the Senator's side when he reached the pantry, was hardly in condition for heroics. Thane Eugene Cesar had worked a full day on his regular job as a maintenance plumber at Lockheed, on the 7 A.M. to 3:30 P.M. shift. He no sooner arrived home than his boss at the Ace Guard Service phoned and told him to show up that evening at the Am-

bassador—a 90-minute drive from his home. After six more hours of work, trying to "control drunks, break up fights and keep young children from sneaking into the Embassy Room," Cesar was assigned to escort Senator Kennedy to the Colonial Room. Now, in the pantry, he grabbed Kennedy's right arm and started pushing back the crowd.

Lisa Lynn Urso, a dark-haired teen-ager who was a Kennedy volunteer in San Diego, had gone to the kitchen during the victory speech "to cool off." She was still in the pantry when Kennedy entered, and she turned as he came toward her. Valerie Schulte, a student at the University of California at Santa Barbara, hobbled in behind Kennedy (she was on crutches) and saw him stop in front of the kitchen boys.

"Senator Kennedy was smiling," said a bus boy, Juan Romero. "He held out his hand and I shook it." Kennedy moved on a step or two, turned to his left, shook hands with a waiter and then with a kitchen porter.

Out of the corner of her eye, Lisa Lynn Urso noticed that a slight young man in front of her was reaching across his body with his right hand. Subconsciously, she thought he was getting ready to shake hands with Kennedy. But when he continued the motion, she said to herself, "He's reaching for a gun." She saw him take a slight step forward.

Juan Romero noticed someone to his left, smiling and reaching a hand toward Kennedy. There was a gun in that hand and it was "approximately one yard from Senator Kennedy's head."

Lisa Lynn Urso saw no gun—just "flames coming from the tip of his hand."

Curiously, Freddy Plimpton saw no gun, either. She'd been following her husband George through the pantry, and was still behind Kennedy when she saw him shaking hands with the kitchen help. Then Kennedy gave a slight jump; his hands went to the side of his face "as if to push something away." Freddy Plimpton's recollection of the gunman is vivid: "His eyes were narrow, the lines on his face were heavy and set and he was completely concentrated on what he was doing. I did not see a gun. I don't know why I didn't see a gun."

But Valerie Schulte saw it. "Kennedy turned back to shake hands and I was pushed sideways and forward. And then I saw this gun. It was a small gun. It looked like a cap gun."

Richard G. Lubic, a Hollywood television executive, stood at Kennedy's right. He heard a voice cry, "Kennedy, you son of a bitch," then heard two shots.

Cesar, the armed guard, also saw the gun. "I saw a hand sticking out of the crowd between two cameramen," he says, "and the hand was holding a gun." Cesar, blinded by the brilliant lights, moved toward the gun, then saw a red flash come from the muzzle. "I ducked," says Cesar, "because I was as close as Kennedy was. When I ducked, I threw myself off balance and fell back against the iceboxes, and the Senator fell down right in front of me."

Freddy Plimpton believes the first shot hit Senator Kennedy in the arm. Most other witnesses remember two shots in rapid succession, then a pause, then three more. "I was about three feet behind and to the right of him," says photographer Boris Yaro of the *Los Angeles Times*, "and I was trying to find his head in my camera viewfinder when I heard what I thought were two explosions. My first thought was, 'Some jerk has thrown some firecrackers in here.'"

Headwaiter Edward Minasian, who was on Kennedy's right, saw a flash and heard two shots. Then Uecker, the maître d', leaped on the man with the gun. "I immediately grabbed the man's gun hand," says Uecker, "and pushed him onto the steam table. During this time he continued to fire the gun."

"I pushed the two of them against the serving table," says Minasian. "The shots continued. People grabbed the suspect. I saw the fellow behind the Senator fall; then the Senator fell." The wounded man behind Kennedy was Paul Schrade, West Coast director of the United Auto Workers

Union, who thought he had run into a bolt of lightning.

Uecker had his right arm around the assassin's neck and his left hand on the man's right wrist after the second shot—or possibly the third. He tried to push the gun away from Kennedy, with little success. Uecker tried to slam the man's gun hand against a nearby steam table and cried out, "Get his gun! Get his gun!" Then the shots stopped and he told Minasian, "Get the police! Get the police!" Minasian ran for a telephone.

Bill Barry was hurrying through the crowd to catch up and take his customary place immediately in front of Kennedy. He was perhaps six feet away when he heard a sound "like a firecracker." He charged through the crowd, struck out with his fists, then got a headlock on the man being held by Uecker.

At the sound of the shots, 290-pound Roosevelt Grier pushed Ethel Kennedy to the floor and covered her body with his, a huge human shield. Moments later, he was seen kneeling next to the steam table, his head in his hands, sobbing, "Oh, no! Oh, no!"

In the dim light of the hallway, near the double doors leading to the pantry, Rafer Johnson heard a sound like "a bursting balloon." A second or two later, he heard another bang. He plowed through the crowd and entered the pantry just as Bill Barry hit the little man with the gun. Johnson saw Paul Schrade lying on his back with a bloody hole in his head, and Senator Kennedy struggling to get up. Kennedy's right hand moved in a slow arc from his head to his side. Blood flowed from his head below the right ear; his cheek and his chest were stained with it, and a red pool had formed on the dirty concrete floor. Kennedy stared at Johnson for a moment.

Hugh J. McDonald, Kennedy's assistant press secretary, took off his jacket and placed it next to the Senator's head. Rafer Johnson moved toward the man with the gun, who was struggling with Uecker and Barry.

Jim Wilson, a burly television cameraman, was on the floor, slapping it with his hand and screaming, "My God! My God! No! No!" His sound man, John William Lewis, was shouting in his ear, "You've got to shoot, Jimmy, you've got to shoot!"

Andy West, a radio reporter, had more aplomb. He burst into the room, took in the scene before him, and flipped the switch on his portable tape recorder. "Senator Kennedy has been shot! Senator Kennedy has been shot. Is that possible? Is that possible?..."

By then, Frank Burns and Warren Rogers, an editor of *Look* Magazine, had joined the macabre dance in the middle of the floor, spinning down the room to the last of three steam tables. Gabor Kadar, a Hungarian refugee, vaulted onto the table and grabbed the hand of the man holding the gun. To dislodge the gun, he slammed the assassin's hand against the table several times, without success.

Andy West's tape and the sound track of Jim Wilson's film—for Wilson had now gotten to his feet—recorded the cacophony of the moment. Screams, shouts of "Oh, my God!" and "Jesus Christ!" and more screams and "Somebody get a doctor!" In the middle of this chaos—by now, at least 70 people had come into the room—there were two centers of activity: one around Kennedy and the other around the gunman.

From his vantage point on the floor, Thane Cesar watched others pile on the man with the gun. Then he rose, drew his own gun and moved—too late—to Kennedy's side, "to protect him from further attack."

Jack Gallivan, one of the Senator's aides, and George Plimpton attached themselves to the twisting pile of men struggling for the gun. No one knew whether there were more bullets in it. "Take care of the Senator," Gallivan said to Barry. "I can handle him." Earl Williman, a TV electrician, jumped onto the steam table and tried to stomp on the hand holding the gun. Suddenly, the weapon was free, lying right on the table.

Barry called to Roosevelt Grier, "Take him,

Rosey, take him!" As Barry spoke, he released his hold. The assailant seized the gun again and another struggle began.

Barry fought through the crowd gathering around Kennedy. "Put that gun away," he said to Thane Cesar, the security guard. Barry put the coat lying next to Kennedy under the Senator's head.

Juan Romero, the bus boy, was cradling Kennedy's head with his right hand. "Come on, Mr. Kennedy," he said. "You can make it." Kennedy's lips moved. Romero says he seemed to say, "Is everybody all right?" Someone next to Romero said, "Throw that gun away, Mr. Kennedy." Romero started to reach for the wad of chewing gum in Kennedy's mouth, but then he thought he'd better not. Kennedy's right eye was open and his left eyelid moved up and down. His right fist was raised as if he were clutching at something. Richard Aubrey, a postal clerk, knelt next to Kennedy and said a prayer. A young man named Danny Curtin bent over Kennedy and recited the Act of Contrition: "Oh my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee . . ." Curtin handed his rosary to Romero, who wrapped it around Kennedy's left thumb and folded his hand over it. Kennedy brought the rosary up to his chest.

Richard Tuck, another Kennedy campaign aide, had pushed a path through the crowd for Ethel Kennedy. Before she got to her husband, she heard newsmen Ira Goldstein moaning, "What happened to Kennedy? What happened to that so-and-so?" Ethel stopped and scolded him, "How dare you talk about my husband that way!" Goldstein says she slapped his face.

"I'm sorry, lady," Goldstein protested. "I got shot, too."

Ethel softened. "Oh, I'm sorry, honey," she said, and kissed him on the cheek.

Finally, Ethel reached Kennedy's side. She pushed Romero away and started talking to her husband in a low, soothing voice. His jaw worked. He was trying to speak. Ethel left his side for a moment and, with more presence of mind than most of the screaming mob in that pantry, found a towel, filled it with ice from an ice machine, and came back with it just as Dr. Stanley Abo arrived.

Dr. Abo pressed his ear to Kennedy's chest. The Senator's breathing was quite shallow. Dr. Abo found one small wound back of the right ear; it was hardly bleeding. He took Kennedy's pulse. It was slow, possibly because of "cranial pressure." Abo probed the wound with his finger to make it bleed.

"Oh Ethel, Ethel," Kennedy moaned. Ethel patted his hands. "It's okay," she said.

"Am I all right?" he asked.

"You're doing good," said Dr. Abo. "The ambulance is on its way."

"The ambulance is coming," said Ethel.

Kennedy took her right hand and brought it to the rosary on his chest. More and more people streamed into the room. The air became very heavy. Dick Tuck took off his coat and started to fan the Senator.

"You'd better go see where the damn ambulance is," Barry said to Tuck. "Or how it can get in."

Across the room, Rafer Johnson lunged for the gun, grabbing it by the barrel with his left hand. Roosevelt Grier held the butt. Incredibly, the assailant still had his finger in the trigger housing.

Joseph La Hive, president of the Van Nuys, Calif., Democratic Club, was also grabbing at the gun. "Let me have the gun. Let go, Rosey. Let go, Rafer," La Hive shouted.

"Shut up!" cried Johnson. Then he shouted to Grier, "Let me have the gun."

La Hive let go of the barrel and chimed in, "Let Rafer have the gun."

Johnson shouted at Grier again, "Rosey, give me the gun." Grier pulled and twisted—the little assassin's strength was fantastic—and finally got control of the gun. He gave it to Johnson, who put it in his coat pocket. Uecker, Grier, Gallivan, Plimpton, Burns and Rogers continued to hold

the captive, who continued to struggle. Kadar pummeled him in the chest and kicked him in the knee. Booker Griffin, an organizer from Watts, started chopping at the assassin's neck, and others seemed to be trying to twist his head off as it hung over the edge of the metal table. "We don't want another Dallas," shouted Jesse Unruh, pulling away some of those who were trying to strike the prisoner, "We don't want another Dallas." Unruh climbed up on the steam table and started an impromptu speech. "If the system works at all," he said, "we are going to try this one."

Several doctors reached Kennedy's side and called for air. Dr. Abo clamped the ice pack on the Senator's head. Dr. Ross Miller loosened the Senator's tie. Another man unbuttoned Kennedy's shirt. Someone took off his shoes. An ambulance was said to be on the way, and the doctors decided they could do no more for Kennedy at the moment. They looked at the four others who had been shot: Paul Schrade, 43, whose head rested on a white plastic campaign hat; Ira Goldstein, 19, hit in the left hip; William Weisel, 30, an American Broadcasting Company associate director, wounded in the abdomen; and Mrs. Elizabeth Evans, 43, who had been wounded in her forehead. Erwin Stroll, 17, hit in the knee, had already been put in a taxi by his friends and sent to the hospital.

Back on the steam table, Joseph La Hive tried to get the gunman's feet off the floor. He lifted one leg and gave it a savage twist. "Stop," the man said, "you're hurting my leg." At least he spoke English.

"Why did you do it?" Rafer Johnson shouted in the man's ear.

No answer.

Johnson glared fiercely into his eyes and asked again: "Why did you do it?" Again no answer. Johnson clenched his fist and placed the back of it on the young man's forehead. "Why did you do it?" he growled.

Someone thought he heard the assassin say: "Let me explain. I can explain." But someone else told him to shut up. And he did. Grier had pinned the assassin down on the table. Even so, someone suggested tying the prisoner with a rope.

"Don't tie him," said Grier. "The police will be here soon."

At approximately 12:15 A.M., Patrolmen Travis White and Arthur Placencia, cruising on Wilshire Boulevard, heard a radio call ordering another police car in the area to 3400 Wilshire, where there had been a shooting. White said, "That's the Ambassador! Let's go!"

When the two officers reached the hotel, employees took them to the kitchen area. Said one employee: "He's right here and they are killing him." White and Placencia saw the struggle on the steam table. Johnson and Grier were fighting off people "milling around the suspect and punching and kicking him." The cops heard cries of "Kill the bastard! Kill him!" The man they were looking for was spread-eagled on the table, and Jesse Unruh had a knee in his back.

Other policemen arrived. Officer William Nunley leaned over the table, snapped one handcuff on the man's left wrist, but had trouble getting hold of the right. Unruh wouldn't let go. Neither would Grier.

"We are police officers," said White. "We are taking him in." He and Placencia rolled Grier off the captive and the man gasped for air.

"I charge you with responsibility for the man," said Unruh. But he kept hanging on to the prisoner.

One policeman gave Unruh a violent push and started to move through the crowd. "All right," said Unruh, "you can take him, but I am coming, too." Placencia and White moved off with the prisoner, and Unruh kept his hand on the back of the man's neck. "This one is going to face trial," shouted Unruh. "Nothing is going to happen to him. He is going to pay. We aren't going to have another Dallas."

White led the way through the Colonial Room and into the red-carpeted lobby. Placencia was

right behind him with the prisoner. They started down the twisting stairs to the ground floor. Placencia looked back and saw a horde of people behind him. He didn't know why they were angry.

Just as the police led the suspect away, Richard Tuck arrived with the ambulance driver, Robert Hulsman, and a bulky attendant, Max Behrman. Both were dressed like police officers, except for shoulder patches reading "medical attendant." They wheeled their stretcher up to Kennedy. Hulsman took the Senator's feet, Behrman, his head.

"Keep your hands off him. I'm Mrs. Kennedy," Behrman says Ethel Kennedy said.

"We are here from Central Receiving Hospital, Emergency Section. We are here to help you," said Behrman.

"I don't care who you are," said Mrs. Kennedy. Somebody else said to hurry and get the Senator on the stretcher. Behrman moved in roughly and put a blanket under and around Kennedy.

"No, please don't," said Kennedy. "Don't lift me up."

Hulsman and Behrman each grabbed an end of the blanket and heaved it on to the stretcher. Barry told them, "Gently, please, gently." But they bumped and banged their way through the kitchen pantry to the elevator, where Rafer Johnson stood guard. Johnson allowed six persons to get in with the stretcher bearers: Mrs. Kennedy, Bill Barry, Fred Dutton, Blanche Whittaker, wife of Jim Whittaker, the mountain climber, Warren Rogers and Dick Tuck.

Pete Hamill, a New York writer, looked at his watch. It was 12:32. Seventeen minutes getting Kennedy out. He looked at the pool of blood on the floor. Kennedy's blood. Could he survive that much loss of blood?

At 3:31 A.M. Eastern Standard Time, President Lyndon B. Johnson was awakened in his White House bedroom by a phone call from an aide, Walt Whitman Rostow, who told him that Senator Kennedy had been shot in Los Angeles. The President turned on his console TV—three separate screens, one for each network—and put in a call to the Secret Service. He wanted agents dispatched immediately to protect all presidential candidates and their families. No, he didn't have legal authority to do so. Yes, he was going to ask Congress to give it to him in the morning.

In the elevator, Max Behrman bawled out instructions. "Please lower your voice," Ethel Kennedy said, but Behrman went right on shouting. Blanche Whittaker, infuriated, gave Behrman a light tap on the mouth.

"Don't do that again, lady," he growled, "or somebody will get a crushed head."

The elevator reached the ground floor, Behrman and Hulsman propelled the stretcher down a concrete ramp. "Somebody grab that thing," cried Barry. Warren Rogers reached out and slowed the stretcher down.

"For Christ's sakes, let go!" shouted Behrman. Rogers held on.

"Only Mrs. Kennedy rides with him," said Behrman. Fred Dutton shoved past him and joined Mrs. Kennedy inside the ambulance. So did Blanche Whittaker. Behrman got in.

"I belong in there, too," said Barry.

Rogers grabbed him and they both got in the front seat next to the driver, Hulsman. Ethel Kennedy signaled Father James Mundell, a Maryknoll priest and close friend, to follow the ambulance.

Behrman picked up his call book and turned to Ethel Kennedy. "Just for the records," he said, "I have to know what happened." Mrs. Kennedy said she didn't care what he had to know. Behrman says she grabbed his call book and threw it out the rear of the ambulance.

In front of the Ambassador Hotel, where the police were ready to take the assassin away, a crowd of people started screaming and surging forward. Officer Placencia pushed his suspect into the back seat and climbed in. White took the wheel and Jesse Unruh jumped in beside him.

"Let's get out of here!" cried Unruh.

The police car sped out the drive, red lights flashing. Art Placencia thought his prisoner looked "smirky."

Placencia turned on his flashlight and looked into the young man's pupils, which were dilated and remained so despite the light in his eyes, indicating to Placencia that the gunman was either drunk or drugged.

Travis White noticed what Placencia was doing. "You'd better give him his rights, partner," White said.

Placencia informed the man of his constitutional right to remain silent, to have counsel present, and to be provided with free legal advice. After Placencia read the formula, he asked, "Do you understand your rights?"

The suspect mumbled something. Placencia read the formula again. "Do you understand your rights?" he demanded.

"Yes," said the suspect.

"Do you wish to remain silent?"

"Yes."

Placencia addressed Unruh in the front seat. "By the way, who did he shoot?"

"Bob Kennedy," said Unruh.

John Howard was a big man with a sandy crew cut and a sunny, carefree disposition that belied the weight of his responsibilities as chief of the District Attorney's Special Investigations Division. He had prime administrative duties in an office of some 200 lawyers and served as the D.A.'s chief attorney before the County Grand Jury.

On this election night, he was in the Plush Horse Inn, in Redondo Beach, with a friend, Lynne Frantz. All of a sudden, on the TV screen a reporter was trying to tell the world that somebody, possibly Senator Kennedy, had been shot in the Ambassador Hotel.

"God, not again!" said Howard, a Kennedy Democrat.

Without waiting for confirmation, he dashed to his car and sped to the D.A.'s headquarters. By the time he got there, his car radio had told him that Kennedy—and others—might have been critically wounded. He called a platoon of prosecuting attorneys down to headquarters and headed for Central Receiving Hospital.

Officers White and Placencia took their prisoner to the Rampart Street police station and put him in Interrogation Room B, a bare cubicle with a metal table, a few metal chairs and a microphone imbedded in the wall. White searched the prisoner; he found four \$100 bills, one \$5 bill, four \$1 bills, \$1.66 in change, a comb, a car key, a David Lawrence column clipped from the Pasadena Independent Star News, two unexpended .22 caliber cartridges, one copper-jacketed slug, a song sheet handed out to Kennedy supporters at the Ambassador and a newspaper advertisement for a Kennedy rally on June 2.

Sergeant John S. Locker entered the room and asked Jesse Unruh to step outside. Locker assigned Sergeant E. H. Austin and Officer F. R. Willoughby to guard the prisoner. Los Angeles Police Department brass started pouring into the station and Sergeant Bill Jordan, the night-watch commander of Rampart Street detectives, took over. He told Willoughby and Austin to wait outside.

In the ambulance with its siren wailing and red lights flickering, Barry pleaded for a smooth ride. Ethel Kennedy bent over her husband and made a motion with her hand, running it quickly up and down her throat. It seemed to say, "He can't breathe." Fred Dutton turned to Max Behrman, who grabbed a clear plastic breathing mask.

When he lifted the Senator's head, Behrman insists that Ethel Kennedy told him to keep his hands off her husband. He says he ignored her. Roughly, according to Warren Rogers, Behrman stretched the elastic attached to the mask over Kennedy's head, scraping across the bullet wound behind his ear. Ethel shivered with horror, then asked, "How do you know the air is on?"

"You can hear it," said Behrman. And the tan

ambulance sped away toward Central Receiving Hospital.

"I want to know what happened," Behrman again asked Ethel Kennedy.

"I don't give a damn what you want to know," said Ethel.

Behrman shrugged. He says he picked up some gauze compresses and applied them to the bloody side of Kennedy's head. He says Mrs. Kennedy slapped him for this. Then she called Bill Barry in the front seat and asked him to throw Behrman out because "he's asking too many questions."

Barry tried to crawl right over the seat, but Hulsman, the driver, pulled him back. "Take it easy," he said, "we're almost there."

At Central Receiving Hospital, Dr. V. Faustin Bazilauskas, number one doctor on duty, waited. A taxi pulled up. A young man climbed out and limped over to him. It was Irwin Stroll.

"What are you here for?" said Dr. Bazilauskas.

"I got a bullet wound," said Stroll.

"Where was that?"

"At the Ambassador," said Stroll.

Dr. Bazilauskas sighed with relief. Then it wasn't Kennedy. It was just this young man and his wound was insignificant. In the next instant, Central Receiving's ambulance unit G-18 pulled up to the dock. Behrman and Hulsman pulled a stretcher out of the vehicle and wheeled it up to Dr. Bazilauskas, with Ethel Kennedy trailing closely. It was Senator Kennedy, and he was unconscious.

Dr. Bazilauskas told a nurse to look after Stroll and followed Kennedy. The crowd pushed around the stretcher and Behrman struggled through a tangle of television news crews. Miss Betty Eby, nursing supervisor, and another nurse, Mrs. Margaret Jane Lightsey, tried to pull the stretcher into the treatment room while the newsmen and

FATHER,
ETHEL
KENNEDY
TOLD THE
PRIEST, "SAY
A PRAYER
FOR HIM."

camera crews hauled it back to get more pictures. A policeman finally broke up the tug-of-war and the hospital personnel got Kennedy into Treatment Room 2.

Dr. Bazilauskas shouted, "Get him on the table! Get him on the table!" The stretcher was still being moved into position, but Bazilauskas was impatient. He placed his hands under Kennedy's hips and started to lift him. At this, the oxygen tank, which was at the foot of the stretcher, clattered to the floor. "Let us do it properly," Nurse Eby cried. The ambulance attendants seized the sheet Kennedy was lying on and flipped him on to the treatment table. "Don't be so rough," cried Ethel Kennedy. "Don't be so rough."

The prisoner was exasperatingly mum. Jordan told him of his right to remain silent. The prisoner took the admonition seriously: he would not tell the sergeant his name.

Jordan turned to the items taken from the young man's pockets. "I want to count this in front of you so that you are satisfied that this is the right amount." Jordan fingered each of the items taken and named them. The interrogation rooms of the Los Angeles Police Department are all wired for sound; every word uttered is tape-recorded "for the record." Jordan was getting the prisoner's property "on the record."

Jordan made a second search of the prisoner, who winced when the sergeant grabbed his leg. "Sorry," said Jordan. "What happened?"

"I had—I had mentioned it to Officer 3949."
"Sorry, what was that?"
"I don't know his name, sir." The prisoner didn't know the names of the officers who took him in, but he remembered their badge numbers.
"You mentioned what?" Jordan asked.
"Mentioned to him my ankle and my knee—my knee."
"Okay," said Jordan, "I'm very sorry. I'll be as gentle as possible. If I get in an area that's uncomfortable, you tell me." He told the prisoner to sit down and brought Austin and Willoughby back into the room.
They came in and stared at the prisoner. He sat back at them.

Kennedy's eyes were glazed and he didn't seem to be breathing at all. Ethel stood at his side. Dr. Bazilaukas listened through a stethoscope for a heartbeat, then began slapping Kennedy's face. "Bob! Bob! Bob!" he shouted. There was no response.

"His pupils are not dilated," said Nurse Eby hopefully. The doctor began pressing his palm on Kennedy's chest. Miss Eby detected a slight ingurgling breath and turned to Mrs. Lightsey for some suction tubing. Miss Eby applied the tube to Kennedy's mouth, then lifted the heart-lung machine from its table directly behind her.

Dr. Albert C. Holt, a surgeon, entered the room and prepared to administer the intravenous fluids. He suspected they would have to transfer Kennedy to Good Samaritan Hospital for surgery.

Dr. Holt tested Kennedy's reflexes. His toes curled normally in response to a touch on the soles of the feet, but taps on the knees brought hyperactive jerks, indicating brain damage.

Miss Eby suggested an immediate transfer to Good Samaritan. Bazilaukas and Holt agreed, and told Mrs. Lightsey to warn Good Samaritan. Dr. Holt asked her to get Dr. Henry Cuneo, one of the best brain surgeons in Los Angeles, on the telephone and, since a second bullet might have penetrated the chest, to contact the chief thoracic surgeon at Good Samaritan, Dr. Bert Meyers.

Miss Eby asked Ethel Kennedy if she wanted a priest. "Yes," she said.

Mrs. Kennedy asked a policeman to let Father Mundell come in. The policeman looked at Mundell, who was wearing a blue blazer and gray slacks, and didn't believe he was really a priest. He wouldn't let him in.

"Look," said Ethel. "I'm . . . you know, Mrs. Kennedy."

"I," said the policeman, "am a policeman." Ethel blinked hard. She was not prepared at this moment for an officious cop and pushed him aside. When he wheeled and hit her in the chest with a forearm blow, bystanders mobbed him, and Ethel pulled Father Mundell into Treatment Room 2. Mundell gave Kennedy absolution, a short English version of the traditional formula, "I absolve you from your sins . . ." then stayed at Ethel's side.

Dr. Bazilaukas had ordered adrenalin for a heart needle, a long, wicked-looking instrument, but after glancing at Ethel Kennedy and listening again to Kennedy's heartbeat, he ordered the adrenalin to be injected into the Senator's arm instead. In moments, Kennedy's heartbeat sounded better. Dr. Bazilaukas turned to Mrs. Kennedy and offered her the stethoscope so she could hear for herself. She listened and nodded. At this point Dr. Holt was called to the telephone. It was Dr. Cuneo.

"Senator Kennedy has been shot in the head and the chest," said Dr. Holt.

"Oh God, you don't mean it!" exclaimed Cuneo, who had been asleep.

"We'd like to take him to Good Samaritan," said Dr. Holt.

"I'll see you there," said Cuneo. He immediately phoned the supervisor of the intensive care unit at Good Samaritan and told him to have the resident in thoracic surgery, Dr. Paul Ironside, begin a tracheotomy as soon as Kennedy arrived. "I may not get there before the Senator

does," Cuneo explained. Then he called his associate, Dr. Nat Downs Reid.

Father Thomas Peacha, a young assistant pastor at St. Basil's Church on Wilshire Boulevard, was driving home from a sick call when he heard on his car radio that Senator Kennedy had been shot. He drove directly to Central Receiving Hospital, gained surprisingly quick admittance to the Receiving Room and saw Kennedy lying on his back with a white sheet covering his body and an oxygen mask over his mouth. With a word to Ethel Kennedy, who sat calmly on a high stool, and a nod to Father Mundell, he anointed Kennedy's forehead with a bit of oil—a short form of the sacrament of Extreme Unction. "Don't worry," Father Peacha said to Mrs. Kennedy. "He'll be all right."

"Father," she said, very calmly, "say a prayer for him."

The doctors applied polysporin ointment to the Senator's eyes and covered them with eye patches. In a coma, the eye may not react to bumps and jolts in ordinary ways. The ointment and the patches were protective precautions. Ethel Kennedy—uncomfortable with Behrman—extracted a promise from Dr. Holt that he would stay with the Senator all the way, something he intended doing in any event. They were ready to move, but there was a security problem outside. The crowd had become a mob. People were chanting, "We want Bobby! We want Bobby!" The police wanted Behrman and Hulsman to drive their ambulance to another entrance.

"No," said Dr. Holt. "We have no time for elaborate security measures. Senator Kennedy has a bullet wound in his head."

The doctors and nurses, with the Senator on a stretcher, hurried down a passage cleared by policemen to the waiting ambulance. Dr. Holt carried the bottles of intravenous fluid and, once in the ambulance, cradled Kennedy's head in his hands. Mrs. Kennedy sat next to him. Senator Kennedy's sister Jean and her husband Stephen Smith also squeezed in, and the rest of the Kennedy entourage followed in other vehicles. Pierre Salinger and his wife Nicole rode on the back of a police motorcycle. It was 12:57 A.M. In three minutes—at exactly 1 A.M.—they wheeled Senator Kennedy into the Hospital of the Good Samaritan, where a spotlight shines steadily on a large white cross on the roof nine stories overhead.

The Senator was taken to the intensive care unit, where two resident surgeons, Dr. Ironside and Dr. Hubert Humble, started blood transfusions and a tracheotomy—a throat operation to open the windpipe and make way for a tube leading to a pump that moves oxygen in and out of the lungs. The tracheotomy was successful: Kennedy's blood pressure decreased from 280 to a more normal 140.

At 1:10 A.M., Dr. Cuneo arrived and examined the Senator. There was an obvious gunshot wound in the right mastoid. A dark red splotch behind the ear, still running, indicated intracranial bleeding. From the ear itself oozed bloody spinal fluid, indicating a basal fracture of the middle fossa of the skull. Two bullet wounds in the right armpit seemed unimportant, but the head wound was trouble.

Dr. Meyers, the hospital's chief thoracic surgeon, joined the team working on the Senator. Dr. George Griffith, a cardiologist, taped electrodes to Kennedy's chest and extremities in order to monitor his heart. Dr. John Zaro, an internist, continued to monitor the blood supply. Dr. Robert Scanlan, chief of the hospital's radiology department, brought in a portable X-ray machine to survey the Senator's skull, spine and chest. While the pictures were being taken, Dr. Cuneo gave Ethel Kennedy a preliminary report.

"Extremely critical," said Cuneo, and he told her there was "intracranial injury." But he was impressed with the Senator's improvement since the tracheotomy. "His blood pressure has gone down, his heart is beating strongly . . . his color is good."

Ethel Kennedy almost collapsed, but quickly recovered, and refused a sedative offered to her.

"I want to be awake and alert," she said.

Dr. Reid arrived, and he and Dr. Cuneo went down to radiology with Dr. Scanlan to look at the Senator's X-rays. The films showed that one bullet had passed through some soft tissue in the right armpit. Another had penetrated the armpit, burrowed upward through fat and muscle, and lodged just under the skin of the neck, two centimeters from the spine. No real problem here. But a third bullet had shattered inside the skull and some of the fragments were very deep. Dr. Cuneo believed that the bullet had also penetrated or torn the lateral sinus, a large blood vessel, and that fragments of the mastoid bone were scattered into the brain.

There was only one thing to do: operate as soon as the Senator could take it, remove the blood clot that was surely forming inside the skull, and remove as many pieces of the bullet as they could find.

Cuneo and Reid went back upstairs. Kennedy's heart and respiration were now stable, and all vital signs were good. They talked to Ethel Kennedy again. "Now we know what we have to do," said Cuneo.

To those around him, Cuneo may have seemed like a man of steel. As a brain surgeon, he had to be strong. But he felt an overwhelming sense of responsibility. "This man could have been our next president," said Cuneo. "He was the brother of John Kennedy. The father of ten children. And millions of people who loved him were looking over my shoulder."

"Do you speak English?" Officer Willoughby asked the prisoner.

No reply. During the long silence that followed, Willoughby and Austin had a chance to observe the man who had tried to kill Kennedy. He was dark-skinned and had thick lips, wild, dark hair and intense brown eyes. He had a bruise on his forehead and a cut near his left eye; his clothes were in disarray.

He complained about the handcuffs binding his arms behind him. "These are tight," he said.

"What happened to your leg?" asked Willoughby.

The prisoner didn't answer.
"It's going to be a long night," said Austin.
"Yeah, you said it," said Willoughby. He searched himself for a cigarette.

"May I smoke?" asked the prisoner.

The two officers glared at him. After a long pause, Austin spoke. "What color are his eyes?" He was making out a description for his report.

"Brown," said Willoughby.

"How much do you think he weighs?"

"Oh, 140. How much do you weigh? 140?"

"How much do you weigh?" asked Austin.

"140? 150? 130? 120? 110? How tall are you?"

Makes no difference to me. I'm only a peon here."

"I like your humor, sir," the prisoner said with a smile.

The three of them sat there. And sat. "I hate to sit here and say nothing," said Austin. "Are you married?" No reply.

"Do you have a family?" No reply. "We're all people, you know. You got a girlfriend? Boyfriend? Friends?" No reply. "Did the detective tell you that you have the right to remain silent? Did he?" No reply. "Did he tell you that? Do you understand that? Do you understand? Do you or don't you? Shake your head no if not, or shake your head yes if you do."

The prisoner stared at Austin impassively.

Willoughby sighed. "Silent Sam," he said.

At 1:30 A.M., Bill Jordan came back and broke up the staring match. First round to the prisoner. Now they would move him downtown.

Officer Willoughby and Sergeant Jordan hustled their man down a rear stairway to the underground garage where Sergeants Frank Patchett and Adolph Melendres were waiting in an unmarked sedan. They pushed the prisoner, still handcuffed, into the back seat. Patchett, followed by an escort car, pulled out, avoiding the knots of curious and angry citizens who had guessed the assassin might be at the Rampart Street station.

Four minutes later the car arrived at Parker Center, headquarters of the Los Angeles Police Department, and parked in the basement garage. Police officers were waiting there; others were in the elevator, along the third floor corridor, and outside the doors of the Homicide Division. The message had moved through Parker Center: "They lost their man in Dallas. We won't lose ours."

In the Homicide squad room, Sergeant Patchett asked, "Who are you?" He got no answer. An officer came in to take fingerprints. "If you'd give us your name," said Patchett, "you'd save us an awful lot of work." He got no answer to that, either. "What's the matter," said Patchett, "ashamed of what you've done tonight?"

"Hell, no!" said the prisoner, loud and clear. Patchett shrugged, then went off to transmit the prisoner's fingerprints to the FBI lab in Washington. Other officers took the prisoner to Room 319, which was bugged. He asked for a drink of water. Sergeant Jordan got him a glass of water, but the prisoner wouldn't put his lips to it until Jordan had tasted it.

Deputy District Attorney John Howard and his chief investigator, George Murphy, tried to question the prisoner. They got about as far during this second interview as Jordan had during the first. The prisoner understood his rights. He wouldn't tell them his name.

Howard said the prisoner could phone either himself or Murphy. "That's Murph." He pointed to Murphy, a huge Irishman with a florid complexion.

"When will I have a chance to clean up?" asked the prisoner.

"Let me explain what will happen," said Howard. "They have to book you. That's legal procedure—fingerprints, pictures taken, everything like that. After that, I'm sure you will be able to clean up." Howard and Murphy were ready to go, but security precautions had to be taken. Anytime the prisoner was to be moved during the next 24 hours, the police department would take emergency measures, freezing all movement within Parker Center. Sergeant Jordan went out to have the freeze put on.

While he was gone, the prisoner turned and inquired casually, "How long have you been with the D.A.'s office, Mr. Murphy?"

"Three years," said Murphy. "I retired from the Police Department and went over to the D.A.'s office three years ago."

"Do you remember Kirschke?" asked the prisoner.

"Very well," said Murphy. Jack Kirschke was an assistant District Attorney who had been convicted of killing his wife and her lover.

The prisoner was curious about Kirschke. Murphy said it was a hard case to figure.

"Well," said Howard, "I knew Jack Kirschke. Did you read about it or . . ." Jordan returned. It was time to go. "We'll take it up again," said Howard. It was 2:20 A.M.

The prisoner was booked under Section 217 of the Penal Code—assault with intent to commit murder. They photographed him, front and profile, and led him through a barred gate into a kind of wire cage for a full set of fingerprints. The prisoner refused to fill out the handwriting exemplars or to answer questions. Officer Guadalupe De La Garza took him to a shower room and watched him take a slow, thorough shower. After drying himself, he put on jail shorts and a pair of jail trousers. They were too big. He didn't like that at all.

At Good Samaritan Hospital, surgeon Cuneo was joined by Dr. Maxwell Andler, whom Cuneo had known for 23 years. Like Cuneo and Dr. Reid, Andler had had extensive experience in World War II, treating gunshot wounds to the head. "Stick around, Max," said Cuneo, thankful to have another brain surgeon at his side.

At 3 A.M., the surgeons and nurses entered the operating room. They shaved the area behind Kennedy's right ear, stepped aside for a moment while a police photographer took a picture of the bullet wound (to be used in court), and commenced surgery at 3:10 A.M.

At 3:15 A.M., police officers took the prisoner to Interrogation Room 1. John Howard and Bill Jordan were there. "Hi!" said Howard.

"Hello," said the prisoner. Howard motioned for him to join them at a wooden table. The prisoner sat lightly in a chair and complained about the clothes he'd been given. "I wish you could accommodate me more," said the prisoner seriously. He said he didn't look very presentable.

Sergeant Melendres joined them. "There," said Melendres, "he looks better, all cleaned up nice." Melendres, Jordan and Howard all smiled sweetly. The prisoner had called for them. Maybe he'd decided to talk.

Yes, he did want to talk, but not about Robert F. Kennedy. He wanted to talk about the Kirschke case, in which the death penalty eventually had been reduced to life imprisonment.

Said Howard, "Yeah, we were talking about Kirschke, weren't we? How come you followed that?"

"I was hoping you'd clue me in on it," said the prisoner. "You know, brief me on it, you might say."

Howard scratched his head and looked at Jordan. Well, if the kid wants to talk about Kirschke, he thought, maybe I'd better talk about Kirschke. Maybe I'll loosen him up. So they talked about the Kirschke case for a quarter of an hour. Jordan knew that his superiors were watching from the darkened corridor on the other side of the one-way glass.

Howard tried to get the conversation moving more productively. It was past 3:30 in the morning, he told the prisoner, and he hadn't come to the cell to talk about the Kirschke case. "What else can we talk about?" asked Howard.

"Really, that's all I wanted," said the prisoner. Sergeant Jordan came in with some coffee for the prisoner. "Now, you want me to take a swallow?" he asked.

"Sure," the prisoner said, lightly. Jordan took a sip. "It's all right," he said. In effect, Jordan was a court taster. If he didn't keel over and die, neither would the prisoner.

The surgeons cut the overlying skin and muscle behind the Senator's ear and laid it back. They cut through the skull with an air drill and an air saw. They removed a segment of bone. Then, while Reid helped control bleeding, Cuneo probed the wound. He shook his head grimly. If the bullet had hit near the midline of the skull, the Senator might have been in fairly good condition. Kennedy's occipital bone, which was uncommonly thick, might have deflected the bullet. But the mastoid, which lies to the side of the occipital and looks much like a honeycomb, is easily penetrated. The bullet had hit Kennedy's mastoid, shattering it and sending sharp bone fragments into the brain—fragments that were dirty, medically speaking, and had to be removed.

Cuneo removed the blood clot, washed out bits of destroyed brain tissue, then went to work on the fragments of bone and bullet.

By 6:30 A.M. in Hyannisport, Mass. (3:30 Los Angeles time), Rose Kennedy was up and about, getting ready for 7 o'clock mass. She turned on the TV to see how Bobby had fared in the California primary. Earlier, Ted Kennedy had phoned from San Francisco. He talked to his cousin, Ann Gargan, who had attended Joseph P. Kennedy since his stroke. Ted told Ann that Bob had been shot, but asked her not to awaken his mother, to wait until she arose. But Rose Kennedy, who had lost two children in plane crashes and another to an assassin's bullet, learned about yet another assassination attempt, as much of the nation did that morning, from television.

Quietly, she finished dressing for mass, put on a shawl and sunglasses and headed for the front pew of St. Francis Xavier Church in Hyannisport with a friend of the family, Boston attorney John Driscoll.

Outside the hospital the crowd of newsmen and curiosity-seekers grew. They had seen familiar

Kennedy friends come and go, their faces lit by flickering red flares and the eerie white lights of television trucks parked in the street. A police car, its siren screaming, delivered Senator Edward M. Kennedy, who had swooped down at Central Receiving Hospital in an Air Force helicopter.

After Rafer Johnson had satisfied himself that there was nothing more he could do for the Kennedys, he had a policeman drive him to the Rampart Street police station, where he handed in the assassin's weapon. It was an eight-shot, Iver-Johnson .22-caliber revolver. There were eight empty cartridges inside.

Henry Carreon, a student at East Los Angeles Junior College, sat watching television. Maybe the man who shot Kennedy was the strange little guy he and his friend, David Montellano, had seen practicing at the San Gabriel Valley Gun Club. The news broadcasts said the prisoner was short, dark and thin. When they reported that the gun was an eight-shot Iver-Johnson .22, Carreon phoned Montellano. "David," he said, "remember that guy we talked to on the range? The little dark guy? I think he's the guy who shot Kennedy." Montellano remembered. Carreon called the police and told them his story. He said that if they wanted him, he would be at Montellano's house.

Sergeant Louis R. Estrella of the Homicide Division visited Carreon and Montellano and got a full account of their day at the gun range. The fellow they remembered didn't seem to know very much about guns; he didn't even know, for example, whether his .22 was a "single action" or a "double action" revolver. He was shooting very fast, rapid fire, which was against the range rules, and he was shooting high-powered ammunition. Montellano recalled asking the young man about that. He said the bullets cost 25 cents more a box, but they had hollow points. "They spread a lot more on impact," he had explained.

Then Estrella showed them photographs of various dark, slim young men. Carreon and Montellano fingered the same one—and that, Sergeant Estrella knew, was the young man now being held for shooting Robert F. Kennedy.

George Murphy said they ought to make one more try. "Let Jordan talk to the kid," he said. They had the prisoner brought back to Interrogation Room 1. Jordan, who had another cup of coffee for the prisoner, went through the tasting ritual again. They all had coffee. Murphy looked at his watch. It was 4:02 A.M.

Jordan wondered where to start. "You obviously had some knowledge of the Kirschke case," he began.

The prisoner said it was just that he felt Kirschke had prosecuted innocent people. He had suddenly guessed that the conversation in the interrogation cell was not a private one. "Is this being bugged? Are you bugging me?"

"Yeah," admitted Murphy. "Sure. You know that," said Jordan. "We wouldn't lie to you."

But the admission didn't make things any smoother. "No, I mean, hell," said the prisoner. "If you want to tape me, bring the microphone in. Don't, don't play this with me."

Jordan explained that all the cells were bugged. The three of them talked again about the Kirschke case. "Sometimes, it's part of your job," said Murphy, "to prove a man innocent."

"That's right," said Jordan. "Would you purposely try to hang some guy on a case if you thought he was innocent?"

Philosophically speaking, the prisoner was a modern. "Well, really, I, I'm such a, how-should-I-say, indifferent. I mean, it depends. It's an indifferent attitude toward this business, really, because the falsehood and truth, sir, really, they're relative. Really, you, there's no factual, there's no facts directly to say this is false, or this is wrong, or this is right, you know. Everything is what you think it is, in fact, no?"

"Would you work hard to convict a person that

you really, sincerely, believed was innocent?" asked Jordan.

"I don't really know," said the prisoner. "You're asking me this question as if you're putting me, you're giving me the responsibility, me, the responsibility of something so fantastic that it's beyond my mental and physical ability to, to cope with, really."

"I don't think it's beyond your mental ability," said Jordan quietly. "I think you've got a lot of mental ability. I think you've been putting us on a little bit here."

At 4:25 A.M. Sergeants Patchett and Melendres had a very interesting witness closeted in Parker Center's Homicide Division. He was Thomas Vincent Di Piero, tall, dark and nervous.

Di Piero told police that moments before the shooting he'd seen the assassin with a girl in a polka dot dress. Earlier, another witness, Sandra Serrano, had told detectives and NBC newsman Sander Vanocur that she had seen a girl in a polka dot dress fleeing the scene.

Di Piero said he had walked into the pantry right behind the Senator and had seen the assassin move toward Kennedy "with a stupid smile on his face," as if to shake his hand, and then there were two or three shots and Di Piero's spectacles were spattered with blood as union leader Paul Schrade fell back into his arms. Moments before the shooting, Di Piero said, he had noticed the gunman hanging onto a wheeled tray stand. He was looking around, and a girl was smiling back at him, a girl wearing a white dress with either black or dark violet polka dots.

Was there a conspiracy? The police weren't sure. But later, when they couldn't find "the girl in the polka dot dress," they dismissed Di Piero's and Miss Serrano's stories as hysterical attempts to be helpful.

Jordan had to leave the cell. The prisoner told Murphy he looked like Dean Rusk. Murphy said he didn't know about that. He looked at the prisoner searchingly. "You're just sort of matching wits with us."

"Well, I, I think it's like I said, you know, I'm always open for any kind of an intellectual, educational—anything that would, you know, benefit my mind as well as with whatever I can contribute to their helpfulness or benefit of that proposition. Really, what can, what more can you ask for?"

"Well, of course," said Murphy, "you can have a nice conversation and everything."

"It's up to you guys."

"But you could also make our job a lot easier."

"Again, you might lose the interest in the mystery."

"Oh, we're not going to lose interest," Murphy said.

Jordan returned to the interrogation a little more chipper than before. He thought he might have the first break in the case.

"Hi," he said to the prisoner. "Miss me?"

"How about some more coffee?" asked the prisoner. "A little warmer, please, if it's no inconvenience at all."

It was Jordan's moment for irony. "Now, what could be inconvenient," he asked, "at four-thirty in the morning?"

"Is it four-thirty or five?" asked the prisoner.

"A quarter to five," he said firmly.

Murphy noted that it was exactly a quarter to five. "You mean you can tell what time it is?" he asked incredulously. There was no clock in the room and the prisoner had no watch.

To Jordan, that was interesting but irrelevant. He now thought he knew who the prisoner was. Officers had taken the man's car key back to the Ambassador Hotel and tried it on every car parked nearby. It fit a 1958 Chrysler registered to Robert Eugene Gendroz, a hotel waiter.

"Okay," said Jordan. "Let me have you try this on for size. What about Robert Gene Gendroz?"

"Hell," said the prisoner, airily, "that's a good name—Gendroz."

"I think," said Jordan, with rising confidence,

"I think we're in pay dirt now. And your car?" "Cadillac?" asked the prisoner.

"No," said Jordan.

"Rolls Royce?" asked the prisoner.

"How about a Chrysler?" asked Jordan.

"Beautiful," said the prisoner.

"Beautiful. Nothing wrong with a Chrysler, is there? 1958 Chrysler?" asked Jordan. He thought he had the prisoner pined down, but he was mistaken. The prisoner continued with the put-on.

"Wonderful," he said. "The mystery is beginning to unfold now, huh? How did you know I had a '58 Chrysler? The key? Beautiful." He smiled. His own car was a '56 De Soto.

By 6 A.M. Murphy and Jordan hadn't learned much, except that their prisoner was very tough and very clever.

"We're going to arraign you in a little while," Murphy said. "You're going to court."

"Please make sure about my attire," said the prisoner. He wanted to wear his own clothes.

At 4:45 A.M., the doctors took some hope: Senator Kennedy had started to breathe completely on his own. All the bleeding had stopped and most of the metallic fragments had been removed. But Drs. Cuneo, Reid and Andler stayed with it, to finish removing the bone fragments that had been driven into the brain. Frank Mankiewicz, the Senator's press secretary, told reporters the surgery would take "another hour and perhaps two."

Mankiewicz and Kennedy's brother-in-law, Steve Smith, were waiting in the hallway when the doctors emerged from surgery at 6:20 A.M.

"The next twenty-four to thirty-six hours should tell," said Dr. Cuneo.

"Should tell what?" asked Mankiewicz.

"Whether he lives or not," said Cuneo.

"And if he lives?"

ENNEDY,
IF HE
SURVIVED,
WOULD STILL
BE ABLE
TO THINK
AND
REASON.

Cuneo put it to them directly. "There is some evidence of damage to the midbrain." If a bullet or a bone fragment had hit the midbrain, the body's most important neural pathway, Kennedy would now be dead. But the concussive shock of the bullet and the in-driven fragments of bullet and bone had caused tiny hemorrhages in the midbrain. Only time would tell how serious they were. The blood clot, now removed, and the swelling of the brain had cut off a certain amount of oxygen—a loss that could cause permanent damage.

If Kennedy survived, he would be totally deaf in one ear and the right side of his face would be paralyzed. His left field of vision would be impaired and he would have a degree of spasticity in his arms and legs. "But," Dr. Cuneo added, "the higher centers seem to be unaffected. He would still be able to think and reason."

Senator Kennedy was taken back to the intensive care unit where he was placed on an ice mattress to lower his temperature and decrease the metabolic rate. This reduced the strain on his heart and protected the brain, which needs less oxygen at lower temperatures. The doctors continued to monitor the cardiograph and kept a record of all the other vital functions. Ethel Kennedy was given a cot at her husband's side. Sometimes she sat, sometimes she lay down. Almost always she held his hand.

Mankiewicz told Dr. Cuneo that the press would appreciate it if he explained to them what had

happened. "You tell them," said Cuneo. Mankiewicz took Cuneo to Senator Edward Kennedy, who was now with Ethel. But Cuneo was at a loss for words. What do you tell a man who has lost one brother, a President of the United States, to an assassin's bullet, and has another brother, a U.S. Senator, in critical condition as the result of another assassin's bullet?

It was Ted Kennedy who did the talking. He told Dr. Cuneo that he had asked Dr. James Poppen of Boston's Lahey Clinic to come to L.A.—in fact, an Air Force jet was ready to leave Boston at any moment with Poppen aboard.

Cuneo knew Poppen from various professional meetings. Poppen had looked after John F. Kennedy's back, treated Ted Kennedy's multiple injuries suffered in a 1964 plane crash, and attended their father, Joseph P. Kennedy, after his stroke. "I don't know anybody I would have been any happier with," said Cuneo.

At 7:20 Frank Mankiewicz stepped outside the hospital to tell the newsmen all he dared to. He did not tell them about the shattered facial nerves, the hemorrhage into the right temporal lobe, the certain deafness in the right ear. Why talk about certain horrors when the doctors weren't even sure that Kennedy would live? Mankiewicz told them simply, "There may have been an impairment of the blood supply to the midbrain."

Downtown, another army of reporters waited outside Parker Center for news about the mysterious gunman who wouldn't give his name. No one except members of the Los Angeles Police Department was allowed in the building. Finally, at 7 A.M., newsmen holding press cards were searched, then allowed into the auditorium to hear from Chief of Police Tom Reddin.

Reddin had little news. The suspect was still unidentified; he still declined to give his name. The police had sent his fingerprints to the FBI in Washington. Reddin did not mention efforts to trace the gun. Nor did he reveal that Judge Joan Dempsey Klein was heading for her courtroom in the County's Hall of Justice, where the prisoner would be arraigned, nor that a camper truck was being backed into the police garage so that the prisoner could be taken unobtrusively to the Hall of Justice. This news conference was more of a diversionary action than an attempt to communicate information, for the police wanted to avoid press coverage of the prisoner's transfer. It was during such a transfer, attended by a tangle of newsmen, that Jack Ruby shot the assassin of President Kennedy, Lee Harvey Oswald. So Reddin stalled for time and tried to talk about the assassin. "I spoke with him for about fifteen minutes," lied Reddin, "and he sounds well educated. Speaks good English and is a good conversationalist."

"Can we have an interview with the suspect?" asked one newsmen.

Said Reddin, "After Dallas, nobody is going to get within a thousand feet of him."

Nobody did, except for half a hundred sheriff's deputies who stood guard in the Hall of Justice while the Chief Public Defender, Richard Buckley, huddled in the jury box with the man to be arraigned. The prisoner said he wanted to talk to someone from the American Civil Liberties Union. Buckley said he would pass the word along. "In the meantime," he advised, "you don't have to tell them anything if you don't want to. Not even your name." The prisoner nodded. "And don't sign anything. Don't even sign a booking slip."

Buckley's advice was entirely proper under the circumstances. The prisoner signed the booking slip, "John Doe."

At 7:40 A.M. he was moved into a chair in front of the bench, where he was surrounded by deputies, and heard the charges against him. "Do you have a name?" asked Judge Klein.

"Mr. Buckley is my attorney," answered the prisoner.

"Do you have a name?" repeated the judge.

"John Doe," said the prisoner. In white hospital pants, a blue denim shirt and black slippers, he looked like a John Doe.

"Do you have an attorney?"

The prisoner said he didn't. Not yet.

Judge Klein appointed the Public Defender. She said the prisoner was charged with violating Section 217 C of the Penal Code, assault with a deadly weapon with intent to commit murder. The prisoner was informed of his right to speedy and public trial, by jury or judge, and his right either to testify or to refuse to testify.

"Do you have any questions?" the judge asked. "Not at this time," the prisoner answered.

Chief Deputy District Attorney Lynn Compton suggested that the defendant be held without bail. He outlined his reasons:

1. There was a strong possibility that one of the victims of the shooting would die, and those charged with murder don't get out on bail.

2. The defendant refused to identify himself, making it impossible to investigate his background to determine how high his bail should be.

3. There might be others involved in the shooting who would want to kill the defendant. "This man did attempt to assassinate a United States Senator," Compton pointed out.

Buckley disagreed. He said the court had to fix bail and in a reasonable amount.

"All right," the judge said. "I'll set bail at \$250,000 at this time."

A dozen sheriff's deputies surrounded the defendant, handcuffed him, and took him down to the basement and into a station wagon. They pushed him down on the floor boards and sped toward the New County Jail, which was on "extreme alert." All prisoners were in their cells, and the booking area was deserted except for two veteran officers. They quickly put the prisoner through the formalities. He answered no questions, but they measured him and weighed him—he was 5 feet 3 inches and 120 pounds; they moved him through two electronically controlled steel gates; they gave him blue denim trousers (that fit) and a blue chambray shirt; and they took his picture and his fingerprints again. Then they marched him through a long, echoing corridor to the jail hospital, where a medical technician swabbed his left arm and picked up a needle and syringe. The prisoner recoiled.

"It's just a blood sample," said the deputy.

The prisoner shuddered. "How much you taking?"

"Ten c.c.'s."

The prisoner nodded. Next they X-rayed his left knee and ankle and his left hand. The leg X-rays showed no fractures, but the prisoner's complaints caused the sheriff to bring in a wheel-chair. He was then taken to the second floor infirmary, which had been vacated of all other prisoners that morning. They put him in a bleak little concrete cell and left a two-man guard watching him through an ample window.

Across town, near the Ambassador Hotel, a traffic officer found a pink and white 1966 De Soto Firelite, license number JWS-093, parked illegally. He wrote out a citation, No. 39-43559 M, and put a copy under the windshield wiper. The officer couldn't have searched the car without a warrant, but if he had, he would have found nothing more incriminating than two spent .22 cartridges on the front seat and a book in the back entitled *Healing: The Divine Art*.

By now, the police knew that the assassin's pistol had been purchased at the Pasadena Gun Shop by Albert L. Hertz of Alhambra for his daughter's "protection" during the 1965 Watts riots. Hertz told officers that his daughter, Mrs. Dana Westlake, had moved to Marin County, north of San Francisco. Sheriff's deputies telephoned her.

"I gave it to a neighbor in Pasadena named George Erhard," she said. "He was a collector and I didn't want the darn thing around. I have two children." In Pasadena, police found Erhard working at Nash's Department Store. "Sure, I had the gun," he said. "I sold it to a guy named Joe. He works here."

"Joe," who preferred to be called by his real name, Muntir Sirhan, had reported early for work

that morning, heard about the shooting of Robert Kennedy, and recognized the TV pictures of the assailant as his brother, Sirhan Sirhan. Muntir, 21, hurried to his home, a modest cottage at 696 East Howard in Pasadena. His mother, he noted with relief, was already at work; he awakened his older brother, Adel, 29.

"Sirhan didn't come home last night, did he?"

"I don't know. Did he?" Adel was a professional player of the oud, the large, gourd-shaped guitar of the Middle East. He worked nights and slept mornings; for him 9 A.M. was the middle of the night. He snapped to quickly enough, however, when Muntir told him that the police were holding Sirhan for shooting Robert Kennedy.

Within 15 minutes Adel and Muntir presented themselves at the Pasadena Police Department. "Have you got a morning paper?" Adel asked the desk sergeant timidly.

"No," the sergeant barked and turned away. The brothers went outside. Adel returned to the station alone with a copy of the Pasadena *Independent Star News*. "I think this is my brother," he said, tapping the picture of Sirhan on the front page. The police took him upstairs for questioning. An FBI man soon joined them.

Back at Nash's Department Store, Muntir parked the car, went up to his boss's office and met some FBI agents, who said he'd better come with them. "What for?" he asked.

"You bought a gun from George Erhard?" As an alien and a felon on probation (he had been convicted for possession of marijuana), Muntir had no right to have a gun.

"No," said Muntir. "My brother did."

The agents brought George Erhard into the office. "Is this the fellow who bought the gun?"

Erhard said it was, but Muntir insisted he was mistaken. It was his brother, Sirhan. Muntir insisted on taking the FBI men to see Adel. He and Adel had already gone to the Pasadena Police Department; they had nothing to hide. By the time they got to the police station, Adel had left for home with police and federal agents.

"You have nothing to hide here, do you?" asked Los Angeles Police Sergeant William Brandt, who had been dispatched to see if he could find any evidence of a conspiracy.

"No," said Adel.

"Then you don't mind if we come in and take a look?"

"No," said Adel. "You can come in."

The officers soon found more than they'd hoped for in the bedroom of their suspect. On the floor, next to Sirhan Sirhan's bed, lay a large, spiral-bound notebook. On a table, which served as a desk, was another notebook. There were some other odds and ends: a small, spiral-bound notebook with notations on only two pages; a good deal of Rosicrucian literature; other readings in the occult; a brochure advertising a book on mental projection by Anthony Norvell; and a large brown envelope from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service on which someone had written, "RPF must be disposed of like his brother was." At the bottom of the envelope another scrawl read, "Reactionary." Sergeant Brandt thought this was good evidence of "willful and deliberate premeditation." So, in fact, were the two notebooks.

Dr. Poppen arrived at Good Samaritan at 10:50 A.M. Dr. Cuneo gave him a complete rundown and took him to the Senator. With Ethel Kennedy looking on, Dr. Poppen made his own examination, timed the beeps on the cardiograph, checked the blood pressure, intravenous records and X-rays, then turned to Ted Kennedy, Smith and Mankiewicz. He told them the Los Angeles doctors had done it all. There was nothing to do but wait.

At 11:02 A.M., the prisoner had another visitor, a dark man with a handsome smile. "I'm Peter Pitches. I'm the sheriff of Los Angeles County."

"Yes, I know," said the prisoner. "I recognized you." The prisoner had seen him many times, as much of the nation has, leading the Rose Bowl

Parade on New Year's Day astride his palomino horse.

"Let me explain our interest here," said Pitches. "You're committed to our custody. We have a responsibility to see that you're protected. There have already been threats against your life."

The prisoner blinked, surprised to learn that Pitches cared about his safety. Then he asked Pitches about his rights and privileges in jail.

"You have the same rights any other prisoner has," Pitches replied. One of these was the right to counsel, and moments after Pitches left, a small man with bright, probing eyes and a magnificent gray beard appeared in the prisoner's cell. "I," he said simply, "am from the American Civil Liberties Union. I'm Al Wirin."

The prisoner motioned for Wirin to sit down on the bed. "You know I did it," he whispered. "I shot him." He pulled the imaginary trigger of an imaginary gun. "I shot him."

Wirin nodded. Something about his silence warned the prisoner. "Are they bugging this cell?" he asked.

"The sheriff assures me they are not. However, it would be safer to assume they are," Wirin said.

"Well, I'd like the sheriff himself to tell me they are not bugging me." The prisoner knocked on the door and asked a deputy if Sheriff Pitches was still around.

He was. "Can I help you?" asked Pitches.

Wirin told him that the prisoner was concerned about the possibility that his cell might be bugged. "He wants your word that it isn't."

"Absolutely," said the sheriff. "This cell is not bugged."

"Will you put this in writing?" asked the prisoner.

"Hell, no," said the sheriff. "My word is my bond."

The prisoner shrugged and smiled. After the sheriff left, the prisoner pulled Wirin very close. "I haven't told them my name," he said, "but I'll tell you." He whispered in Wirin's ear: "Sirhan Sirhan." Wirin had him repeat it. He told Wirin about his family in Pasadena; they were all Arab immigrants from Palestine. He wanted Wirin to see if they were all right, and to tell them that he was all right. He was concerned about his car. "I parked it on a side street not far off Wilshire. There are some bullets in the car."

Wirin asked if he could tell the police about the car. Sirhan paused. Wirin said the police knew who he was now. Wirin had heard Los Angeles Mayor Sam Yorty announce it on the radio. Sirhan said Wirin could tell the police about the car—they'd find it sooner or later anyway. Wirin asked him why he'd called for the ACLU.

"It represents the minorities..."

"Yes," said Wirin, "it does."

"You'll represent me?"

"No," said Wirin.

"Why not?"

"Well, in the first place," said Wirin, "I'm Jewish."

"Ohhh," groaned Sirhan. "I'm dead already."

"I'll try to be honest and fair," said Wirin. "I'll help you find an attorney. The ACLU is interested in due process of law and constitutional rights. But there's no constitutional right to... Wirin spread his hands, unable to say "assassinate."

The prisoner decided a disclaimer was necessary. "Now, I'm not against Jews," he said. "I'm against Israeli imperialism."

Wirin said he'd see about an attorney for Sirhan.

"I want a good one. I want the best," Sirhan said. Wirin nodded, wondering who would take what would surely be an unpopular case. Sirhan had one more request. "Tell my mother to clean up my room," he said. "It's a mess."

Sirhan may have been hoping his mother would discover (and destroy) the notebooks he'd left in his room. But it was too late for that. Even then the police were scanning them with satisfaction. One page was a

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