

Experts Rule Out 2d Gun In Robert Kennedy Death

By Reuters

LOS ANGELES, Oct. 6—Seven top firearms experts ruled out today the possibility of a second gun's having been used at the scene of Senator Robert F. Kennedy's assassination here in 1968.

The seven experts, working on the evidence independently at the request of Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Robert A. Wenke, said in their joint report that there was "no substantive or demonstrable evidence" that a second person had fired a gun.

Filed Sealed Reports

The panel began testing the evidence in secret in a jury room filled with scientific

equipment. Each expert conducted a separate series of tests and on Saturday turned over his sealed report to Judge Wenke.

The primary goal of the limited court-ordered investigation was to determine whether a second gun, in addition to the .22-caliber Iver-Johnson pistol wrestled from the hands of Sirhan Sirhan, had been fired in the hotel pantry.

The re-examination was ordered by Judge Wenke on Aug. 14 at the request of Paul Schrade, a former United Auto Workers official injured in the shooting, and the CBS television network, which is planning a documentary on the assassination investigation.

The petition of Mr. Schrade and CBS challenged the ballistics investigation performed by DeWayne Wolfer, the chief technical investigator in the case, who is now the head of the Los Angeles Police Department's crime laboratory.

Much of the controversy surrounding the investigation centered on what appeared to be microscopic differences between the bullets retrieved from the body of Senator Kennedy and those from William Weisel, who was also injured in the shooting.

Another controversy was an apparent mix-up in the serial numbers. An envelope containing bullets allegedly fired from Mr. Sirhan's pistol was marked with the serial number of a similar weapon used for test purposes by Mr. Wolfer. The police have shrugged off the discrepancy as a "clerical error."

No Evidence for 2nd Gun, RFK Death Probers Report

New York Times News Service

LOS ANGELES — A panel of firearms experts has unanimously agreed that there is no evidence to suggest that a second gun, in addition to the convicted assassin's weapon, was fired in the June 5, 1968, killing of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

But the seven-member panel, in a three-page "comprehensive joint report" released by a state court yesterday, said that it had been unable to determine whether three of the bullets it examined were fired from the pistol used by Sirhan B. Sirhan, who is serving a life sentence at San Quentin. Indications were stronger for the other four bullets fired that night.

The experts said deterioration of the bullets over the years had made identification impossible.

PROponents of the "second-gun theory" considered the identification of two of the three bullets crucial in determining whether anyone besides Sirhan fired a weapon in the Ambassador Hotel pantry that night.

The two bullets — one removed from Kennedy's body and one taken from another victim — showed in ballistics tests what some investigators have said are apparent differences in the identifying markings left by a gun barrel, suggesting that perhaps the bullets were fired from different guns.

Retesting of the evidence in the Sirhan case was ordered Aug. 14 by Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Robert A. Wenke on a request by Paul Schrade, a former United Auto Workers official who was injured in the shooting, and by the CBS television network, which is planning a documentary on the assassination investigation.

TWO WEEKS AGO, the panel began testing the evidence in a jury room filled with scientific equipment. Each expert conducted a separate series of tests, and on Saturday each turned over to the judge his own sealed report along with the joint report.

Meldon Levine, Schrade's attorney, said he would reserve comment on the findings until a news conference today. He indicated that although the report presumed that only one gun had been used, his client would not accept that conclusion without studying each report in detail.

Thomas Krantz, a lawyer who represented the district attorney's office in the retesting, said that although he hoped the panel's findings would end speculation about a conspiracy, he realized that there were several other theories in addition to the second-gun theory.

SIRHAN'S attorney, Godfrey Isaac, said that he was now "forced to believe there was only one gun" fired, and would be concerned with no future legal proceedings in connection with the second gun on behalf of his client.

The retesting by seven of the top firearms experts in the country, who were flown here at county expense, came Sept. 26 when four test bullets were fired from the Sirhan gun into a six-foot-tall water tank.

The test was considered

something of a milestone in the case since critics of the police investigation have insisted for years that the refiring was a simple way to end second-gun theory speculation.

THE EXPERTS attached lengthy worksheets to their report, detailing what tests they had made.

The report was read in a packed courtroom. Wenke dispelled the suspense quickly, saying the experts had found no reason to believe that anyone other than Sirhan had been involved in the shooting.

"There is no substantive or demonstrable evidence to indicate that more than one gun was used," the experts reported to Wenke.