

Excerpts of Witness Testimony Bearing on Possible Firing of
More than Eight Shots in the RFK Assassination

The Iver Johnson revolver fired by Sirhan Sirhan during the Robert F. Kennedy assassination held a maximum of eight shots. Two bullets lodged in Senator Kennedy's body and one each was recovered from the five other victims at the scene. An eighth bullet traversed the Senator's chest and, according to police, penetrated a suspended acoustic tile (making no exit hole), struck the ceiling above and was "lost somewhere in the ceiling interspace."

Problems exist with official explanations of how even acknowledged bullet damage in the shooting could have been caused by only eight shots. If any additional bullets were present in walls, doors, or other crime scene fixtures, this would clearly demonstrate the firing of another weapon besides Sirhan's at the assassination. (Identifications given of witnesses below refer to their positions as of 1968. Portions of quotations underlined reflect emphasis added.)

* * * * *

-Official FBI report, dated June 9, 1968, containing formal captions (p. 48) to Bureau photographs taken of locations at the RFK crime scene:

- "E-1 View taken inside kitchen serving area showing doorway area leading into kitchen from the stage area. In lower right corner the photo shows two bullet holes which are circled. The portion of the panel missing also reportedly contained a bullet.
- "E-2 A close up view of the two bullet holes of area described above.
- "E-3 Close up view of two bullet holes which is located in center door frame inside kitchen serving area and looking towards direction of back of stage area.
- "E-4 Close up view of upper hinge on door leading into kitchen area from back of stage area. View shows reported location of another bullet mark which struck hinge."

-John M. Shirley, a visitor to the hotel pantry area on the day following the shooting: "On the morning of June 6, 1969, I accompanied John R. Clemente to the Ambassador Hotel... Mr.

Clemente took several photographs including a long-shot and close-up of the wooden jamb on the center divider between the two padded swinging doors through which Mr. Kennedy and his party had entered the service area after leaving the Embassy Room. In the wooden jamb of the center divider were two bullet holes surrounded by inked circles which contained some numbers and letters. I remember a manager pointing out those particular marked bullet holes to another person, who appeared to be a press photographer." (Signed statement, 3/23/69)

-Martin Patrusky, Ambassador Hotel banquet waiter and trial prosecution witness: "Four or five days or maybe a week later (after the shooting) the Los Angeles Police Department tried to reconstruct the scene of the crime and where everybody was standing... Sometime during the incident, one of the officers pointed to two circled holes on the center divider of the swinging doors and told us that they had dug two bullets out of the center divider... I am absolutely sure that the police told us that two bullets were dug out of these two holes... I remember very clearly his telling us this when they were recreating the scene and I would be willing to testify to this under oath and under penalty of perjury." (Signed statement, 12/12/75)

-Angelo DiPierro, Ambassador Hotel maitre d': "After Senator Kennedy had been removed from the pantry, many people, including the police and myself, started to look over the entire pantry area to piece together what had happened. That same morning, while we were still looking around, I observed a small caliber bullet lodged about a quarter of an inch into the wood on the center divider of the two swinging doors. Several police officers also observed the bullet... I am quite familiar with guns and bullets, having been in the Infantry for 3½ years. There is no question in my mind that this was a bullet and not a nail or any other object." (Signed statement, 12/1/75)

-Dr. Thomas Noguchi, Los Angeles County Coroner: "On the date June 11, 1968, I went to the pantry area of the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles to make an 'at scene' investigation of the scene of the homicide. I had requested that DeWayne Wolfer of the Los Angeles Police Department be present, which he was. I asked Mr. Wolfer where he had found bullet holes at the scene. I forget what he said, but when I asked him this question, he pointed, as I recall, to one hole in a ceiling panel above, and an indentation in the cement ceiling. He also pointed to several holes in the door frames of the swinging doors leading into the pantry. I directed that photographs be taken of me pointing to these holes." (Signed statement, 12/1/75)

-Wesley Harrington, Ambassador Hotel carpenter: "While in the pantry area, he (Harrington) was briefed as to the occurrence

that had taken place earlier. His attention was directed to the center post of the pantry doors that lead to the Embassy Room and he noticed what appeared to be two bullet holes... Subject opines that the holes were not made from counter sunk nails due to their size and the method in which they were shaped." (LAPD interview report, 12/12/75)

-FBI Special Agent William A. Bailey, who was dispatched to the assassination scene shortly after the shooting: "(A)pproximately four to six hours after the attempt on Senator Kennedy's life... I was assigned to interview witnesses present at the time of the shooting. I was also charged with the responsibility of recreating the circumstances under which same took place. This necessitated a careful examination of the entire room and its contents. At one point during these observations I (and several other agents) noted at least two small caliber bullet holes in the center post of the two doors leading from the preparation room (pantry). There was no question in any of our minds as to the fact that they were bullet holes and were not caused by food carts or other equipment in the preparation room." (Signed statement, 11/14/76)

-Deputy Sheriff Thomas Beringer, a member of an emergency Sheriff's Office contingent dispatched to the crime scene shortly after the shooting: Beringer told reporter Dan Moldea that "I remember one person trying to dig a bullet out of the wall with a knife, a silver knife, for a souvenir." He stated that this person was prevented from removing the object from the wood, which was located "where the two (double doors) come together." (Interview, "RFK's Murder: A Second Gun?," Washington Post, 5/13/90)

-Deputy Sheriff Walter Tew, a member of the Sheriff's Office contingent with Beringer and others: The four holes identified as "bullet holes" by the FBI were circled and bore various notations, including uncertain letters and the apparent characters "723 LASO." Reporter Moldea was able to determine that LASO badge 723 in 1968 was Deputy Walter Tew, upon which it became evident that the previously undeciphered letters were "W T e w." Tew was in fact present that morning, and the markings were clearly made by him for evidence identification in the aftermath of the shooting. He died in June 1988, without apparently ever having been contacted in any of the official "re-investigations" of the case. In contrast to other Sheriff's personnel at the scene, he is nowhere listed or mentioned in the disclosed LAPD case files. (WP article, 5/13/90)

-Charles Collier, the civilian photographer who took the official LAPD crime scene photos on the morning of the shooting: Asked by reporter Moldea where bullet holes were located, Collier

replied, "in the walls in the pantry of the kitchen." He stated that these were identified to him as bullet holes by crime scene investigators, although he was not present when they were later opened up. Collier added that "a bullet hole looks like a bullet hole, if you've photographed enough of them." (Interview, WP article, 5/13/90)

-Officer Kenneth E. Vogl, a member of the LAPD contingent guarding the crime scene during the crime lab team's investigation: Vogl told reporter Moldea that he saw one or more "fragments of spent bullets" on the pantry floor, which he was told to point to for photographs. When asked on a scale of one to ten how certain he was that these were bullet fragments, Vogl replied, "Oh, it was a ten. There's no doubt. I saw fragments." No such bullet fragments are recorded as being recovered or booked in LAPD records. (Interviews, WP article, 5/13/90)

-Officer David Butler, a member of the LAPD Scientific Investigation Division (SID) team at the crime scene: Never before interviewed by a reporter concerning this case, Butler told reporter Moldea that bullets and bullet fragments were recovered in the pantry area, saying that he had been present at the time. In a subsequent interview Butler backtracked on what he had observed directly, but reported seeing small evidence packages, placed on a table at the scene by SID investigators and labelled "bullet evidence," "firearms evidence," or the like. These items are nowhere listed in police booking or other records. (Interviews, WP article, 5/13/90)

-Sergeant Raymond M. Rolon, one of the top LAPD commanders at the hotel during the hours following the shooting: Rolon told reporter Moldea that during a tour of the crime scene area by an investigator that morning he was shown holes in a door frame, identified to him as "bullet holes." Like the other officers cited above, however, Rolon was not aware of the significance of bullet holes in that location until informed of it subsequent to his statement. (Interviews, WP article, 5/13/90)

-Robert Wiedrich, a Chicago Tribune reporter dispatched to the Ambassador Hotel on the morning of the shooting: In an article published the next day and rediscovered over twenty years later, Wiedrich wrote of the crime scene area, "On a low table lay an 8 foot strip of molding, torn by police from the center post of the double doors leading from the ballroom. These were the doors thru which Sen. Kennedy had walked, smiling in his moment of victory. Now the molding bore the scars of a crime laboratory technician's probe as it had removed two .22 caliber bullets that had gone wild." Wiedrich was contacted in 1990 and apprised of the significance of his report. He could not recall with certainty whether he had seen the bullets in question or was

merely told about them by sources at the scene. ("Felt Him Fire Gun, Hotel Worker Says," Chicago Tribune, 6/6/68)

-Karl A. Uecker, assistant maitre d' of the Ambassador Hotel, the first man to apprehend Sirhan during the shooting: In an oral history interview with California State Archivist John Burns, Uecker stated that on the morning of the shooting, "I went back to the kitchen (after being questioned at Rampart police station). That's why I noticed two shots... The two holes were by the door here (gesturing to pantry center divider on diagram)." Uecker said he was certain that the holes were new because he walked by this location thirty to fifty times daily in the course of his work. He concluded that they came from the shooting "because these holes never were there before and I knew where the shots were going to." (Oral History Interview, California State Archives, 4/13/90)

* * * * *

Even if the above-cited accounts, and related evidence, are not regarded as definitive, they clearly sustain the necessity of an impartial official re-examination of the number of guns fired in the Robert Kennedy assassination.