

# Sirhan Sirhan and the "Walking Bible"

A television preacher who was fired from Los Angeles TV station KCOP after it was alleged he was involved in the assassination of Robert Kennedy has won a civil suit against the station.

Jerry Owen, known as the "Walking Bible," was first connected with Sirhan when he told investigators following the assassination that he had picked up Sirhan Sirhan on the day of the assassination and drove him to the Ambassador Hotel, where Kennedy was later killed. Police investigators say they had checked out Owen's story and concluded that he was simply seeking publicity and ignored him.

Owen was later fired from his position as host of a weekly TV program at KCOP because "he was involved in the killing of Robert Kennedy."

For most investigators and journalists, the Rev. Owen story ended when police dubbed him a publicity-seeker. The fun-

damentalist preacher's connection with Sirhan resurfaced with a vengeance when bizarre new allegations connecting Owen to a possible conspiracy in the Kennedy assassination were raised in the final days of Owen's \$1 million slander suit against KCOP.

Former Los Angeles Deputy District Attorney Vincent Bugliosi, who tried the Sharon Tate/Manson murder case and is the author of *Helter Skelter*, entered the case at the eleventh hour and argued that Owen was in fact deeply involved in the assassination. Bugliosi's attempts to prove his allegations were cut short when, despite a court order, police officials refused to release investigative files on Owen. Bugliosi had sought all records, documents, taped interviews by police with Owen and fingerprint tests allegedly conducted on the Owen car that might have proved the Owen contention that he had, in fact, given Sir-

a lift on the eve of the assassination.

The police department resisted all efforts to obtain those materials on the advice of the District Attorney's office.

Bugliosi did manage to provide a series of dramatic allegations when he produced a new witness linking Owen to the Kennedy murder. The witness, Los Angeles County rancher Bill Powers, who Bugliosi describes as "in fear of his life," reluctantly took the witness stand and stated that a "couple of days" prior to the assassination Owen visited Powers at the Powers ranch, which is next to Owen's ranch in Santa Ana.

Powers stated that Owen, who was generally without funds, had in his possession 25 to 30 \$1,000 bills and that he arrived in a 1964 Lincoln with a black man in the front seat and a person "strongly resembling" Sirhan Sirhan in the back seat.

H.A.F.P.  
8/18

WHY WOULD  
OWEN INITIATE  
CONTACT WITH  
H.A.P.D.?

MAKES NO SENSE.

## WALKING BIBLE

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from Powers at that time, and it was that truck that Owen was driving when he allegedly picked Sirhan up.

### More Evidence

Powers also testified that he distinctly remembers Sirhan's name mentioned by Owen a "month or so" before the assassination. Sirhan's name came up when Owen allegedly complained about the training methods Powers and one of Powers' employees was using in the training of Owen's horse. According to Powers, Owen suggested that he knew some people at the track who could do a better job, and mentioned Sirhan's name as "one of those persons." Powers remembers the name because it was unusual and because of the widespread publicity received following the assassination.

Sirhan's name came up again some five or six months after the assassination when Powers met Owen at the Hilton Hay Co. in Santa Ana. Powers testified that at that time Owen asked him if the police had talked to him about Sirhan.

Powers was also visited on six separate occasions by law-enforcement investigators, and on one occasion, he states, the FBI told him that Sirhan's fingerprints had, in fact, been found on the glove compartment and rear window of the truck Owen had purchased from Powers.

Bugliosi told the *Free Press* in an ex-

clusive interview that a second bombshell in the trial came as the result of a lucky hunch. Owen's attorneys had called 20-year-old Jackie Gray to the stand in an effort to prove that it was he and not Sirhan who was in the back seat of the Owen car and that Powers had mistaken Gray for Sirhan. Bugliosi took a shot in the dark when he asked Gray if his father (the black man who testified he was in the front seat) and Owen ever talked about Sirhan. Gray's reply, "That's all they ever talked about," sent reporters racing for phones.

### Telling The Truth

Over continued objections about the witness's competency (he is described as a mental defective), Bugliosi elicited further testimony that the elder Gray and Owen wanted him to be just like Sirhan, that he had been introduced to Sirhan in 1967, one year prior to the assassination, and that Owen often gave Sirhan money and clothes.

Bugliosi has told the *Free Press* that despite Gray's acknowledged mental deficiencies, he is convinced that Gray was telling the truth.

Without access to police reports that would possibly explain the reason for the numerous official visits by law-enforcement personnel to Powers, and establish whether, in fact, Sirhan's fingerprints were found in Owen's car, numerous haunting questions surrounding the bizarre connection between a convicted assassin and a fundamentalist preacher simply add fuel to an already burning controversy. — Tom Thompson