

Sirhan's Gun Tested

Los Angeles

Sirhan B. Sirhan's gun was test-fired yesterday in the "second gun" inquiry into the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy more than seven years ago at the Ambassador Hotel here.

Four shots were fired yesterday from the .22 caliber Iver-Johnson eight-shot revolver into a gray water tank set up in a basement room of the Los Angeles County Hall of Administration.

Patrick Garland, a firearms examiner with the Virginia Bureau of Forensic Sciences, fired the weapon. He was assisted by Cortland Cunningham, chief of the firearms and tool mark unit of the FBI Laboratory in Washington, D.C.

The test bullets, fired in sequences of two, were recovered for comparison by a panel of experts selected to examine evidence introduced at Sirhan's trial in 1969.

Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Robert A. Wenke ordered the inquiry in response to actions filed by Columbia Broadcasting System and Paul Schrade, one of the five other victims wounded when Kennedy was shot.

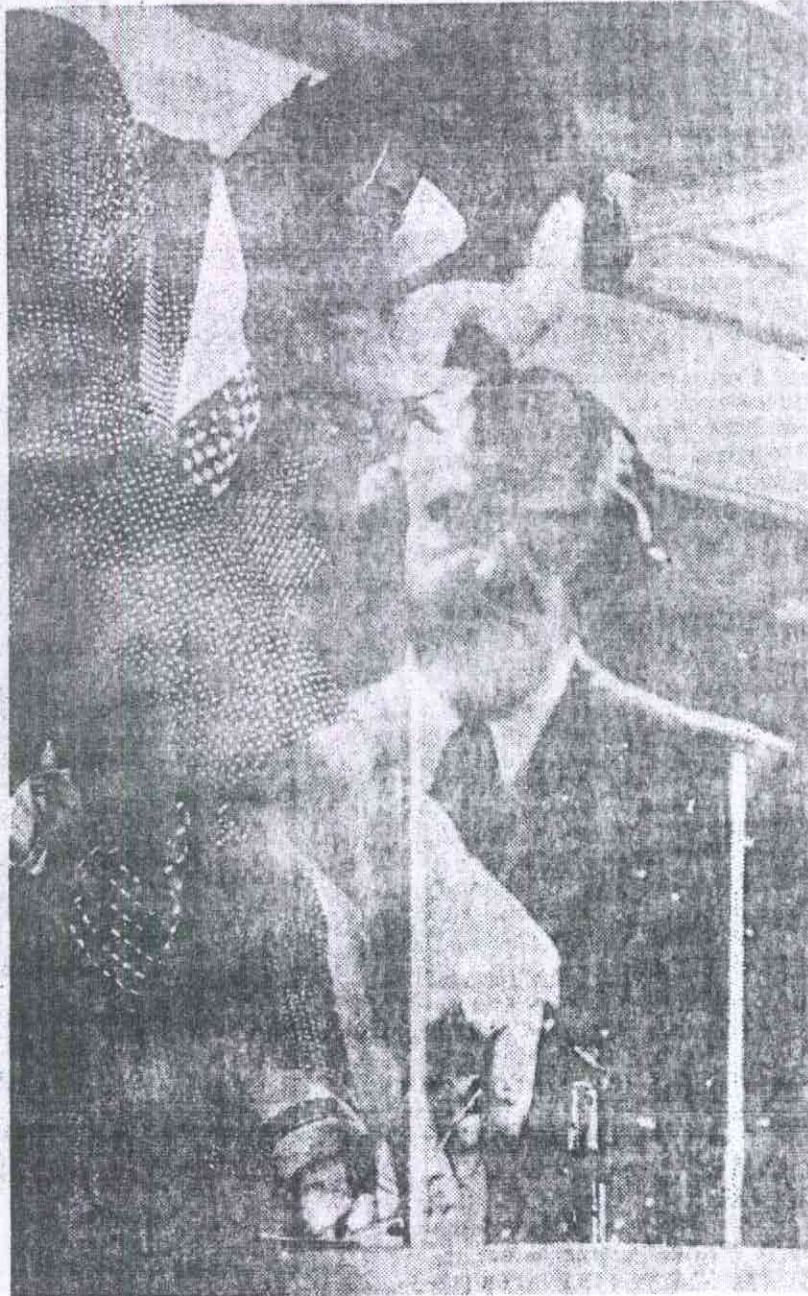
Seven firearms identification experts started work Wednesday in an equipped and guarded jury room of the county courthouse under careful procedures drawn up by Wenke and a battery of attorneys, including Sirhan's lawyer.

One of the questions the experts were directed to address themselves to is, "Do the exhibits in any way support a conclusion that a second weapon was fired at the time of the assassination."

Conspiracy speculation aside, questions about the possibility of a second gunman have grown principally out of apparent anomalies discovered in the bullet evidence.

At the heart of the controversy were photomicrographs taken by criminalist William W. Harper late in 1970 at the Los Angeles County Clerk's office.

Harper's photographs appeared to challenge identification



UPI Telephoto

FIREARMS EXPERT PATRICK GARLAND
He fired revolver to test two-gun theory

of bullets made by Los Angeles Police Department criminalist DeWayne A. Wolfer, now head of the department's crime laboratory.

Wolfer testified that a bullet taken from the base of Kennedy's neck and bullets taken from victims William Weisel and Ira Goldstein were fired from Sirhan's gun and "no other gun in the world."

In an affidavit, dated Dec. 23,

1970, however, Harper declared his examination of the Kennedy and Weisel bullets led him to conclude they had not been fired from the same gun.

Another criminalist, Herbert L. MacDonell of Corning, N.Y., reached a similar conclusion in an affidavit signed in November, 1973.

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