

Names/Faces

Sirhan Gun Test Ordered

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The presiding county court judge has reopened the investigation into the 1968 assassination of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, ordering that new ballistics tests be made on the gun used by Sirhan B. Sirhan.

Superior Court Judge Robert A. Wenke issued the order yesterday as the district attorney launched a new probe into the slaying for which Sirhan was convicted and sent to prison for life.

The ballistics tests have been sought by those who believe in a "second gun" theory — that even though Sirhan was captured at the scene and wrestled into submission gun in hand, there must have been an accomplice.

JUDGE ROBERT A. WENKE told attorneys to report to him by Sept. 11 on whether they are agreed on procedures to test the weapon before a panel of ballistics experts.

Kennedy was fatally shot at the Ambassador Hotel just after he had won the key California primary in his bid to win the Democratic presidential nomination and follow in the political footsteps of his assassinated elder brother, President John F. Kennedy.

The weapon taken as evidence in the hotel pantry slaying was an eight-shot .22-caliber pistol.

Earlier in the day, attorney Thomas F. Kranz, 36, onetime campaign advance man for Robert Kennedy, was sworn in as a special deputy district attorney to spearhead the probe into the assassination.

KRANZ SAID "the most important question is to take a very fresh approach to all evidence . . . that might have any bearing on the situation that might have occurred that evening" — June 5, 1968.

One of the key figures calling for a new probe and examination of the weapon is former New York congressman Allard K. Lowenstein, now an aide to California Gov. Edmund G. Brown Jr.