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Judge Won't Open Files on RFK Death

Los Angeles

A judge refused yesterday to order the Police Commission to open its files on the 1968 Robert Kennedy assassination.

Superior Court Judge Norman Dowds said he was barred from issuing such an order by a state law exempting law enforcement bodies from requirements of public disclosure laws.

The CBS network and Paul Schrade, a Kennedy supporter who was wounded at the Ambassador Hotel the night the New York senator was killed, had filed suit seeking public disclosure of the commission's files.

The Los Angeles City Council recently joined a growing group of persons and organizations who contend that certain evidence related to the assassination might be conflicting. Among the unanswered questions, they say, is the number of guns fired in the hotel pantry.

Evidence at the trial of Sirhan Sirhan, convicted of murder in the case, indicated that the suspect acted alone with a single weapon.

The commission and police officials have resisted efforts to make the files public, saying that some of the information could embarrass innocent persons connected with the case.

Although Dowds refused to order that the files be opened, he commented that "the police commission and the police department could well adopt a policy of broader accessibility to the file."

Associated Press