

'Polka Dot Girl' at RFK Slaying Named, but Found Not Involved

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LOS ANGELES, Feb. 17—
The "Girl in the Polka Dot
Dress" at the assassination of
Sen. Robert F. Kennedy was
named today, but, the testi-
mony indicated she had noth-
ing to do with the slaying.

Prosecutors identified the
girl, Valerie Shulte of Santa
Barbara, to clear up conflict-
ing testimony from a part-time
waiter who swore last June
that he had seen a shapely
brunette huddling with Sirhan
Bishara Sirhan moments be-
fore the shooting.

The young waiter, Vincent
Dipierro, admitted in effect
today that he had given the
young woman a conspiratorial
air by varnishing his facts
with fiction.

Dipierro, a student at Santa
Monica City College, at first
insisted on the witness stand
that he had seen a pretty girl
in a dress with "black polka
dots" standing close to Sirhan
when he shot the Senator—"or
after the shooting, I'm not
sure."

See SIRHAN, A9, Col. 5

A Kansas pathologist
says film evidence is "com-
patible" with theory Presi-
dent Kennedy was shot
from the front. Page A9.



Associated Press

Ex-Rams star Roosevelt Grier arrives to testify at trial.

SIRHAN, From A1

Miss Schulte is a blonde, not a brunette. She was wearing a green dress with yellow polka dots. And she appears to have been yards away from Sirhan at the moment he fatally wounded Kennedy in a crowded pantryway at the Ambassador Hotel.

Under cross-examination by chief defense counsel Grant B. Cooper, the bespectacled Di-

pierro acknowledged telling Los Angeles police last July that "there was no lady standing next to Sirhan."

Testifying in a monotone, the young witness admitted that he got the idea after talking with Sandra Serrano, a young Kennedy campaign worker who said she heard a "polka dot girl" run off shouting, "We shot him, we shot him."

Investigators concluded at length that Miss Serrano had been "overwrought."

Subsequently, Dipierro told police that "inevitably I went along with what she (Miss Serrano) said as being a person I imagined I saw."

Today, however, Dipierro tried to have it both ways. He maintained that he did notice a girl in a polka dot dress in the pantry and that was why his eyes flickered over to Sirhan.

At length, prosecutor David N. Fitts produced several photographs of Miss Schulte.

"Is that the girl you saw in the pantry?" he asked gently.

"I believe it was," Dipierro said.

With a sigh, Fitts later told reporters that Miss Schulte would probably be called as a witness now that "we've gotten into this can of worms."

Intensive Search

Investigators, he said, found her after an intensive search for any "polka dot girl" that might have been in the pantry that night.

"She wasn't near Sirhan," he added. "I think she got knocked down in the confusion and crawled away somewhere."

Before leaving the witness stand, Dipierro also acknowledged that he might have seen the girl after the shooting—when Sirhan had been wrestled over to another part of the room in a scramble for his gun.

The next witness, California Democratic leader Jess Unruh, told the courtroom that he heard Sirhan cry out, "I did it for my country," shortly after the shooting.

Unruh was vague about when he heard the young Arab immigrant make the remark, but believed it was around the time police were taking him off in a patrol car.

Clash With Counsel

Defense counsel Emile Zola Berman took Unruh to task for his imprecision, saying that he had seemed more certain in a statement that he gave the FBI last June.

The two men crossed swords again when Berman pointed out that not even Unruh, "a big man in the party," knew in advance of the last-minute change in plans that took Kennedy through the pantry, headed for a press conference, rather than downstairs to another ballroom at the Ambassador where an overflow crowd was waiting for him.

"Politics changes very rapidly, my friend," Unruh told

Berman testily. "I don't know what you're trying to imply."

"You don't have to worry about that," Berman shot back. "I'm just trying to get the facts."

Superior Court Judge Herbert V. Walker halted the exchange at that point, ordering Berman not to argue with the witness.

Accompanied Police

Unruh, who went along with police on the ride to the station house, also testified that Sirhan did not appear drunk to him. The defense contends that the slight, 24-year-old immigrant was "intoxicated."

Recalling the assassination with evident distaste, Unruh alluded repeatedly to the chaos that followed the shooting.

Some "idiot" photographer, he said, even pulled off Unruh's suit jacket while clambering onto a serving table to "get a better shot of the (Kennedy's) body."

"Some of the press people were unbelievably obnoxious and indecent that night," he said. "I think we all acted somewhat idiotic that night."

Roosevelt Grier, the former Los Angeles Rams tackle who was serving as a Kennedy bodyguard, told of finally getting Sirhan's gun away from him.

'Like Firecrackers'

The shots, he he said, "sounded like firecrackers . . . something light going off. It seemed kind of like everybody just started falling out of place."

"I went behind a big tray. I saw the gun out of Sirhan's hands. So I started to look for the Senator."

Huge and sad-eyed in the witness box, Grier said he saw the gun out of Sirhan's hands for a moment, but then noticed he had it back again.

"That's when I went for him," he said. "I wrapped his legs in my arm . . . put him back on top of (a serving) table and got the gun out of his hand."

"Did you have any trouble taking the gun out of his hand?" prosecutor Fitts asked the 6-foot-five, 280-pound witness.

"Unh-unh. No sir," Grier said.

The unofficial Kennedy bodyguard said he held Sirhan down, kicking and knocking away others who were trying to get at him.

"I just stayed with him until the police came," he said, almost inaudibly. "By that time . . . I was crying."