amateur sleuths

By DAVID HART
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The assassination of Robert F. Kennedy haunts Paul Schrade, who was just two steps away when the shooting started on June 5, 1968, in the Ambassador Hotel.

Schrade, one of Kennedy's advisers in the presidential campaign, was wounded in the head when the assassin, Sirhan Sirhan, opened fire. He has never been satisfied with the police version that Sirhan acted alone. Was there a second gunman?

Schrade has searched for the answers to his lingering questions in a collection of police photos, newspaper clippings, legal documents, even an X-ray of the bullet lodged in his skull.

Along with a handful of scholars, conspiracy buffs and freelance writers, Schrade is hoping to finally lay to rest his private investigation when Los Angeles police release their files on the case later this year.

Last week, the Los Angeles Police Commission agreed to release an edited version of the 1,500-page investigative summary. A sub-committee will be set up to study the disclosure of the

remaining documents, some 50,000 pages stored in five file cabinets.

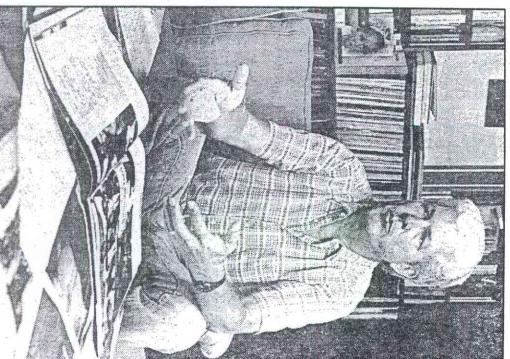
The night of the assassination, Kennedy thanked Schrade in his final speech at the Ambassador for helping to organize the labor vote. Schrade, now an American Civil Liberties Union organizer who lives in the Hollywood Hills, was then an executive with the United Auto Workers.

After the speech, Schrade followed Kennedy into the hotel kitchen where Sirhan waited. As the shooting started, Schrade said he remembers seeing stars, trembling violently and then blacking out. He fell just behind Kennedy. Reporters said among Kennedy's last words before lapsing into unconsciousness that night were: "Is Paul all right?"

"I was OK, but he wasn't,"
Schrade said. "And we lost a
great champion and a good
man."

The memory of Kennedy, the unfulfilled dreams and the promise of what might have been still drive Schrade and others who were inspired by Allard Lowenstein, the former New York congressman, to investigate the case on their own.

Please see RFK Pg. 5



Scott Garrity/Daily News Paul Schrade pursues his own investigation of the RFK assassination. He still carries in his head a bullet meant for Kennedy.

Questions persist in RFK assassination

RFK from Pg. 3

Lowenstein — himself gunned down by an assassin in 1980 involved in Kennedy's death. suspected that a conspiracy was

stein's suspicions were aroused. information available on the case, he said. There was so little His attempts to find out what actually had happened were thwarted by the lack of public information in fact, that Lowen-In 1977 he wrote: "I do not

dy. I do know what happened when we tried to find out. Evenknow whether Sirhan acting alone murdered Robert Kennemy instincts and wishes, I arto hide it." hide do not lie, cheat and smear that people who have nothing to rived at the melancholy thought

ran from the scene screaming "We've shot him," to the so-called "Manchurian Candidate" theory, which holds Sirhan was cy theories and concluded none of them amounted to anything. polka-dot dress who supposedly ranging from the woman in the Still, the questions are endless and the theories numerous vestigation Los Angeles police looked into 17 separate conspirabrainwashed into committing the crime. At the time of the original in-

The number of bullet holes re-ported would suggest that ansome of the wounds were caused by a weapon fired from 1 to 3 inches away? nesses told police they saw with Sirhan before the shooting? How could Sirhan have shot Kennedy other gun was used. Who was es, said, if the autopsy showed the attractive woman that witfrom 1 to 3 feet away, as witness-

revolver that night. nesses. Sirhan was apprehended conceded that he had fired the at the scene and convicted of the killing. And Sirhan's lawyers hotel. There were numerous wit-It seems certain that Sirhan shot and killed Kennedy at the

But at the urging of Lowen-stein, Schrade pursued five sepa-rate lawsuits in 1975 and 1976, court order to refire Sirhan's gun, but the ballistic results, ac-cording to Schrade, proved inconclusive. the assassination. He won a seeking police information on

Another person interested in the Kennedy case as a result of Wisconsin. Joling, a forensic scientist from Lowenstein's influence is Robert

Joling said he was first approached by Lowenstein in 1975 about the case and couldn't say

we did."

At the time, Joling was president of the American Academy of Forensic Scientists. Soon he became convinced that there years, he has spent, by his own estimation, \$35,000 researching was more to the assassination the question. than the police version. Over the

> sonal cause for Stone. Lowenwas on Lowenstein's staff. But Kennedy case in 1975 because he

soon the project became a per-

Joling was instrumental in winning the court order in 1975 to refire Sirhan's gun. And in 1981, he analyzed three audio tapes of the shooting at the Stanshot revolver. night. Sirhan's gun was an eighting that 10 shots were fired that ford Research Institute, conclud-

And now, with the impending release of new police informaage of 60, Joling now looks on solving the assassination case as tion about the case, Joling's in-terest has been renewed. At the his hobby.

"It is like a jigsaw puzzle that you have been putting off for years," he said. "I would like to devote my remaining years to a al challenge." pastime that is fun. It is a person-

no. "He was very bright, and you couldn't help but admire him," Joling said. "He had a certain charisma that all good politicans have and the rest of us wish one-time aide, campaign coordi-It's the legacy of Lowenstein that also drives Greg Stone, a liberal Democrat from New nator and speech writer for the York. Stone also edited a collec-

speeches published in 1983 enti-tled "Act of Courage and Belief." tion of Lowenstein's articles and

Stone first researched the

stein's questions became Stone's questions.

continued on. death by a former aide, Stone "After all, part of what a great

After Lowenstein was shot to

leader does is not to just do good things, but also inspire other unings, but also inspire other people to do good things," Stone

Another person interested in seeing the Los Angeles police documents is Jack Kimbrough, a for a Hollywood tabloid. self-described free-lance writer

"We're talking about a cover-up," Kimbrough said as he waved enlarged evidence photos at police commission members last week. "There were 13 shots from an eight-shot revolver. Put that in your pipe and smoke it."