

Seconds of Terror -- How It All Happened

By Richard Harwood
Times-Post Service

Los Angeles

It happened in a kitchen passageway in the Ambassador Hotel. It was a little after midnight.

Robert F. Kennedy was looking forward to a small party with a few newspaper reporters and some other friends.

He had been in good spirits all evening, joking about his young wisdom as a campaign manager eight years ago and about his unwisdom as a candidate himself.

"I thought I knew everything then," he said, laughing. "Now all I know is what they tell me on television."

BALLROOM

A few minutes later he went down to the Ambassador ballroom, greeted his followers, thanked them for his victory and walked into the kitchen on his way to a news conference in a room at the end of the passageway.

Budd Schulberg, the au-journalist, were a little in the front, and Pete Hammill, a front of him. His wife Ethel was a few feet behind in a crowd of campaign workers and newsmen.

Kennedy turned to a worker in the kitchen, shook his hand, and started to walk on.

At that moment a small young man thrust out his arm at full length and began firing rapidly with a small pistol. He was only five feet from the senator.

BLOOD

We were about 20 feet away in the room to which Kennedy was going. The shots sounded like firecrackers but somehow everyone sensed what had happened.

We ran into the passageway and he was lying on the cement floor, bleeding from



AP Wirephoto

Paul Schrade, another victim, lay with his head on a campaign hat as someone fanned him with a magazine

the right side of his head.
The kitchen erupted into madness.

Jack Gallivan, a young Kennedy assistant, and George Plimpton, the writer, grabbed the gunman first. Then Roosevelt Grier, the enormous tackle for the Los Angeles Rams, slammed the man with the gun up against a serving cart and began wrestling for his gun.

Rafer Johnson, the Olympic hero, leaped on him, too. So did Bill Barry, the big and gentle Irishman who once worked for the FBI and who has been the only security man Kennedy has had in this campaign. He is a security

man without a gun.

People were screaming: "Oh no, oh no."

BATTLE

It looked like Grier and Johnson and Barry were getting the gun.

beating the gunman to death

When the shooting started, but they were just trying to a newsmen grabbed Mrs. Kennedy and pulled her back. When it was over she beside her husband. She was lifted up and put down knelt at his side. His sister,

Jean Smith appeared out of the hysterical crowd, and knelt down beside him, too.

Suddenly, he regained consciousness for a moment and raised up on one of his legs. He asked people to give him air.

The fight with the gunman was still going on. Grier threw him on top of a serving cart and people in the passageway rushed over to beat him and strangle him; Grier and Barry and Johnson knocked them back.

Barry took off his belt to use as a tourniquet but it wasn't needed. People were crying out for a doctor and finally an ambulance arrived. It seemed like hours had passed but it was only a few minutes.

As Kennedy was lifted from the floor he gained consciousness again and said, obviously in great pain: "Oh no, no, don't" then he closed his eyes and was silent. He left behind, on the floor, a great pool of blood.

They took him down a service elevator and put him in an ambulance. Mrs. Kennedy got in beside him. So did Fred Dutton who, more than anyone, has been managing the campaign.

In the front seat of the ambulance were Barry and Warren Rogers, the Washington correspondent for Look magazine.

BREATH

It was, Rogers later said, a bumpy ride to Central Receiving Hospital, a mile or so away. Mrs. Kennedy gestured to Barry to tell him that her husband was finding it hard to breathe.

At the hospital, he was taken immediately to the emergency room. Doctors and nurses were waiting.

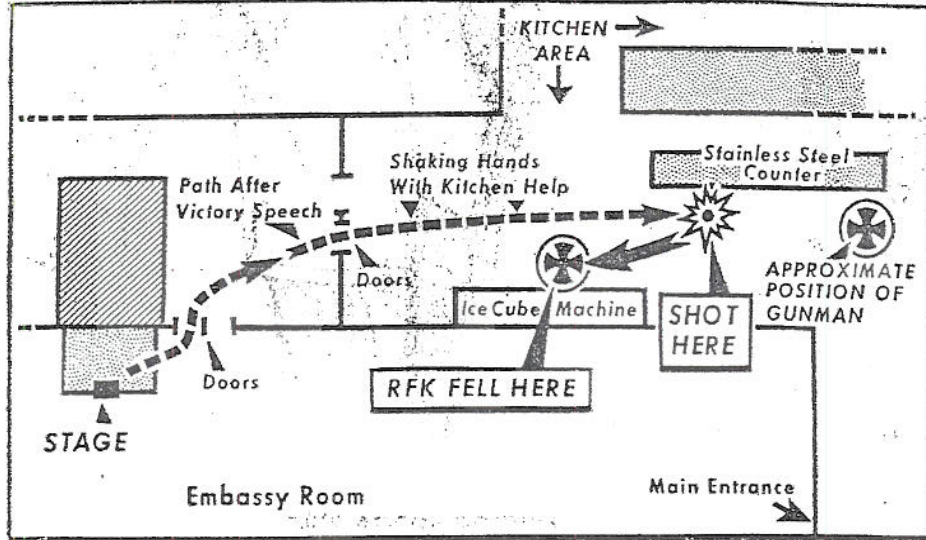
A surgeon, Dr. Albert Holt, said Kennedy was almost dead — comatose, in deep shock, not breathing and with virtually no blood pressure.

Dr. Holt stood on a stool and began external heart massage. Kennedy was given adrenalin. A heart-lung machine was brought into use.

"He revived," Dr. Holt said.

He was given fluids in both arms and a bandage was put on his head. Mrs. Kennedy, Barry and Dutton were with him.

A nasty incident occurred. Mrs. Kennedy left the emer-



UPI Telephoto

This is the area in the Ambassador Hotel where the gunman attacked Senator Kennedy



UPI Telephoto

The chalk X shows the spot in the passageway where Kennedy was shot down

San Francisco Chronicle

Published by

The Chronicle Publishing Co.
901 Mission Street
San Francisco, California
94119

Second-Class Postage Paid
at San Francisco and at
additional Mailing Offices.

Monthly by Carrier

Daily & Sunday \$3.75
Daily only \$2.75
Sunday only \$1.75

gency room to bring in a priest. A hospital policeman stopped her and protested that no one could go into the room. He waved a badge in her face.

She identified herself, demanded that the priest be admitted, and slapped the badge out of his hand. The officer struck her in the chest.

Dutton, who was with her, slugged the officer. Barry came up and held the officer while the priest entered the emergency room.

People started coming out of the hospital with conflicting stories about Kennedy's wounds: one man said he was shot in the stomach; another said he was shot in the hip.

PRAYER

Frank Mankiewicz, Kennedy's press secretary, was told that there were two head wounds. A Roman Catholic priest, Phaet Thomas Peacha, came out and said he had given Kennedy the last rites of the church. The priest was shaken and uncertain what condition Kennedy was in.

"I'm just praying for him," he said.

By this time, the gunman had been taken away from the Ambassador Hotel. Throughout the struggle in the kitchen, he made no sound. His eyes rolled and he looked insane or under the influence of narcotics.

As they dragged him out of the passage-way and into the press room enroute to the lobby, policemen surrounded him; one was carrying a

shotgun.

The man was not bloodied and had obviously not been seriously hurt. But as they took him into the lobby, the crowd surged around him, trying to get to him to hurt

him. The police pushed them back. Fights broke out in the lobby. Everywhere people were screaming.

Rafer Johnson came out of where they had taken Kennedy. Then he rushed over to

the passageway and asked Central Receiving. Kennedy was not there long. They took him within a few minutes to Good Samaritan Hospital for the surgery and the long struggle for life.



AP Wirephoto

Mrs. Kennedy pleaded with the crowd in the hotel kitchenway to stand back and give her husband breathing space