

A New Sirhan Hearing Ordered



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JUDGE WENKE
He approved suit

Los Angeles

The presiding judge of the county court system ordered the reopening of the Robert F. Kennedy case yesterday to determine whether someone other than Sirhan Sirhan may have also fired a gun in the 1968 assassination.

Superior Court Judge Robert Wenke approved a suit calling for Sirhan's pistol to be refired and the slugs compared to those removed from the senator's body and five other persons wounded in the shooting.

Wenke set September 11 for a hearing to determine the circumstances under which a reexamination of the ballistics evidence in the 1969 trial would be conducted.

Sirhan, who was found guilty of first-degree murder in Kennedy's death and who is now serving a life sentence at San Quentin, was not present in court but was represented by attorneys.

The suit calling for a new examination of the ballistics evidence was brought by Paul Schrade, a United Auto Workers executive who was standing next to Kennedy in the Ambassador Hotel pantry in June, 1968, and who was wounded.

The Columbia Broadcasting System joined in Schrade's move to reopen the case.

The action was also supported by the Los Angeles county counsel, county supervisors, the office of California Attorney General Evelle Younger and Sirhan's lawyers.

The district attorney's office, while backing the action, said it was gravely concerned about how the new tests were conducted and how they might affect Sirhan's status.

During the 1969 trial, more than a dozen witnesses testified they saw Sirhan firing the gun at Kennedy at almost point-blank range.

The Palestinian immigrant himself did not deny that he shot the senator and at one point asked his attorneys to change his plea to guilty.

There have been many claims that slugs removed from Kennedy's body did not match those of one of the wounded and that although Sirhan's gun contained only seven bullets there were indications that more than seven bullets were fired.

United Press