

'WAS RAPID-FIRING DEATH PISTOL'

Sirhan at Gun Club, Jury Is Told

By GENE HANDSAKER

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Twelve hours before Sen. Robert F. Kennedy's assassination, witnesses say, the accused man was rapid-firing the death weapon on a target range.

Other witnesses say three bullets hit Kennedy—not two, as previously reported—and that the killer stepped from beside a smiling, shapely mystery girl and fired his revolver with "a very sick-looking smile on his face."

These were highlights of testimony made public yesterday by the county grand jury which last Friday indicted Sirhan Bishara Sirhan, a 24-year-old Jordanian immigrant, for the murder. The transcript—258 double-spaced typewritten pages—became public when filed with the county clerk.

TWENTY-TWO witnesses—Sirhan not among them—pictured the slaying scene of terror and hysteria and its aftermath:

The kitchen area of the Ambassador Hotel jammed early June 5 with jubilant supporters escorting the New York senator and celebrating his victory in California's Democratic presidential primary...

Eight .22-caliber bullets exploding in "a deliberate... bang-bang cadence" like fire-crackers or popping toy balloons...

KENNEDY falling, fatally wounded, rearing back sharply.

"Both hands went up. He was just about to shake hands..."

Five bystanders falling wounded...

The crowd's stunned, screaming reaction: "The suspect turned... and was trying to escape... People were trying—were hitting him and cursing at him, and it was utter confusion. I mean everyone was trying to kill him."

Testimony from hotel employees, police and medical men gave this picture:

A HALF hour before the shooting, Sirhan had been waiting in the hotel kitchen, asking a porter three or four times if the senator was expected to pass through.

From the Embassy Room stage where he had proclaimed victory, Kennedy was led by the hand by a hotel employe to the place where Sirhan was standing.

The employe, an assistant maitre d', said the kitchen passage was due to a last-minute change of mind, that earlier Kennedy had been expected to go downstairs to address a

group unable to get into the main ballroom. The employe did not say why the plan was changed.

HENRY Adrian Carreon, an elementary school playground director and police science major at East Los Angeles College, testified he and a friend, David Montellano, were target-shooting about noon June 4 on the San Gabriel Valley Gun Club's pistol range.

"To the left of us there was an individual around five feet away, shooting very rapidly on the range with a revolver," said Carreon. "On the range you are supposed to shoot and pause. Usually the range officer goes up to the individual shooting in this manner and he will inform them that it's not supposed to be done..."

Carreon identified the individual from photos as Sirhan.

ASKED twice, Sirhan identified his revolver as an Iver Johnson, Carreon said.

Carreon said Montellano noticed that Sirhan had one box of bullets set aside from his others and asked Sirhan, "Isn't that a special type of bullet?"

The bullet, said Carreon, is called "the mini-magnum; and this type of bullet, when it penetrates on an object, usually tears and splits out into different directions where the regular bullet of a .22 caliber goes in a hole and... it will come out the same size."

CARREON said Sirhan was noncommittal about the bullets. Shown a gun while before the grand jury, Carreon identified it as the one he saw on the practice range.

Dr. Thomas T. Noguchi, chief medical examiner who performed a six-hour autopsy on Kennedy's body, told newsmen just after the postmortem that he found two bullets and two wounds.

But the transcript quoted him

as telling the grand jury he found three wounds and two bullets, indicating Kennedy was hit three times.

NOGUCHI said the fatal bullet entered the right mastoid, behind the right ear, penetrating the brain, and two others about two inches apart entered the right armpit.

He said one of the latter was found in the neck and the other exited in the front of the right shoulder. Neither, he said, would have been fatal.

Noguchi said the revolver muzzle was "no more than two or three inches from the edge of the right ear." Witnesses at the scene described the gunman as four to six feet away.

TESTIMONY about the girl at the killer's side was given by Vincent Thomas Di Pierro, a student and part-time Ambassador Hotel waiter.

His account: He noticed the girl and Sirhan standing on a tray stacker or holder, Sirhan grasping with his left hand one of four pipes that are part of the holder.

"The only reason I noticed him, there was a very good-looking girl next to him," said Di Pierro. "That was the only reason I looked over there."

"... I could not see his right hand; he looked as though he was clutching his stomach, as though somebody had elbowed him."

"He was semicrouched... I saw him get down off the tray stand. The next thing I saw was him holding the gun."

Di Pierro said the slayer moved around the hotel captain, and "he stuck the gun straight out, and nobody could move. It was—you were just frozen; you didn't know what to do."

"AND then I saw the first powdering or plastering. When he pulled the trigger, the first shot, Mr. Kennedy fell down."

Sticking out the gun, the killer "looked like he was on his tiptoes because he wasn't that tall."

Di Pierro was about five feet from Kennedy. One bystander, "shot in the head, fell in my arms. And then the other boy that got shot in the thigh, he fell on top of me, and they pushed me down, they fell top of me."

A grand juror asked Di Pierro if he could identify the man if he saw her

"To some extent, I could. I saw her when she was



—AP WIREPHOTO.  
HENRY A. CARREON  
Saw Sirhan at gun club.