

RFK probe rally due

IVAN DRYER

In the American system of jurisprudence a man is to be considered innocent until proven guilty "beyond any reasonable doubt." According to that maxim, Sirhan Sirhan should be considered innocent until the witness testimony and evidence unearthed in the Theodore Charach probe is fully tested in a court of law. Charach's findings have cast more than a reasonable doubt on Sirhan's guilt as the murderer of Robert Kennedy.

That Sirhan Sirhan could be considered innocent while held in virtual solitary confinement on San Quentin's death row should be front page news. And it was in the June 12 *Free Press*, but not for the remainder of the press and most of the other news media. They are sitting on one of the major news stories of the decade and are being repeatedly scooped by the "underground" *Free Press*. And not accidentally so.

After this issue became a very personal one to me when my wife was attacked Saturday, June 27, by two intruders demanding information in the case (see the July 3 *Free Press*), I personally telephoned the city desks, assignment editors, or news directors of every major local newspaper and TV station, and many of the large radio stations as well. Except for a few outlets, such as KHJ radio, my appeals for coverage to help prevent a recurrence of such violence by exposing it to the people were ignored or suppressed. Since I was told that City News Service served as the news clearing house for almost all local media except the newspapers, I spoke to them on Sunday. (Most of the media I called asked if City News Service had the

story—and I thought that it did.) The press and media were invited to our home Monday at noon to receive the details of the incident and see the cuts on my wife's face and the bloodstains from those cuts. One reporter for the *Hollywood Citizen News* showed up. The *Citizen News* didn't run her story.

Tuesday, I called Mr. Eric Schuman, Assignment Editor of City News Service, asking him why he hadn't released the item. I pleaded with him to do so for our protection (for by now I was very angry and even more shaken by the whole thing). He said that he had serious reservations about the credibility of anything related to Charach's investigation (even if somebody is choked and cut because of it) and he was waiting for a report from the North Hollywood police in our case. (Schuman, a former KNXT employee, had earlier put a freeze on all items relating to the probe—including the news of the original lawsuit.)

Evidently the report was favorable because on Wednesday, KHJ-TV sent out a crew, as a result of picking up the item from City News Service, and filmed an interview with my wife and myself. The interview was shown on the Baxter Ward news that night and again the next day on the Channel 9 morning news. The interviewing reporter said he thought it likely that Channel 9 Tempo would contact us for an in-depth TV interview. They haven't. Neither has anyone else. Either it was by then too late to be newsworthy or... Meanwhile, we are still sleeping uneasily (although the police have been watching the house); my wife is still being followed when she leaves alone; two cars cruised and parked in front of our house at length this past week (we got the license number of one); and the *Free Press* is still the only game in town for reporting what is going on.

It should not be said that others aren't still interested. The *Los Angeles Times* has said it is doing a thorough investigation of our situation and of Charach's assertions. However, while they did say the police had an "unusual curiosity" about our case, they have as yet printed nothing. And CBS news producer Peter Noyes has found time to contact Sirhan appeals attorney Luke McKissack and others on several occasions in order to "clarify" what happened in the Ambassador pantry on June 5, 1968. Perhaps his action was in order that any open minds might not be unduly prejudiced by the witness testimony in Charach's tapes (much of which was transcribed in the July 3 *Free Press*) or so that the testimony might not conflict with his own theories and their dissemination.

As the *Free Press* reported last week, KTLA's Robert K. Dornan show (on which Charach, Mrs. Sirhan and ourselves originally appeared the night after the attack took place) cancelled our return appearance scheduled for July 18. In view of this, and of the important announcements Mrs. Sirhan will make at a news conference later this week, we felt an alternate forum was called for:

Saturday, July 25, The Echo Park Commission on Law and Order will provide an opportunity for the cancelled Robert K. Dornan segment to take place without Robert K. Dornan, KTLA's auspices or any mysterious outside pressures. We will even invite ex-chief Tom Reddin, who was advised by KTLA attorneys not to appear on the Dornan show because whatever he said might be used against him if a new trial were opened, according to Dornan's producer Mike Casey.

The press will also be invited to hear Mrs. Sirhan, Mr. Charach and other witnesses discuss the case and listen to some of Charach's recorded evidence. Also present will be Jeff Brent, Continental News reporter with Charach at the Ambassador, who recorded the actual assassination and the subsequent interviews of eyewitness Donald Schulman who claimed then (as verified by a Jerry Dumphy newscast that night) and does now (despite severe pressures to recant) that a security guard fired and hit RFK.

This benefit rally and hearing of evidence will take place at 8:00 p.m. at the Sepulveda Unitarian Universalist Society Church, which you'll remember as the site of Chicago Seven Attorney William Kunstler's appearance earlier this year (see the Calendar section for details).

At the rally, the Echo Park Commission will announce further plans for its March on Washington set for Nov. 22 of this year to demand new, honest and open investigations of the American political assassinations of the 1960's. Photographic evidence dealing with the JFK conspiracy and its coverup will also be presented, and items of evidence will be made available to the public.

It is often asked, "Sure, this is important, but what can I do?" Visit us and we'll give you some simple but very effective—and proven—ideas. It is not impossible unless we continue to think it is.