

# *Secret Testimony*

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# NEW KENNEDY

# FACTS

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Francisco Chronicle

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FRIDAY, JUNE 14, 1968

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**FINAL**

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# How Kennedy's Assassin Plotted Deadly Ambush



VINCENT di PIERRO IN THE KITCHEN  
'You didn't know what to do'

AP Wirephoto

Twelve hours before, one man testified, he had seen the same man practicing rapid firing with the same gun on a San Gabriel valley pistol range.

## WAIT

A half hour before the crime, another said, Sirhan had been waiting in the Ambassador hotel kitchen — asking a kitchen porter nervously, three or four times, if Kennedy was expected to pass through the room.

## Witnesses' Secret Testimony

Times-Post Service

Los Angeles

Sirhan Bishara Sirhan practiced, plotted and lay in wait to shoot Senator Robert F. Kennedy, witnesses told a grand jury in testimony kept secret until yesterday.

And when he fired, he hit the Senator with three bullets—not two, as reported earlier—the Grand Jury transcript disclosed.

The mortal bullet hit Kennedy in the brain. Two others struck a half inch apart in his right armpit—apparently as his hands flew up, instinctively, across his face.

Sirhan stepped from the side of a "very good looking girl" in a polka dot dress and fired rapidly, "a very sick-looking smile on his face," from about three feet away, witnesses told the grand jury.

Senator Kennedy, followed by a throng of supporters and newsmen, left the Embassy room stage where he had claimed victory in the June 4 California presidential primary — and, testimony revealed, was led by the hand by a hotel employee right to the spot where Sirhan was waiting.

Details of the testimony at last Friday's grand jury hearing became public record when it was filed in the county clerk's office.

## STUDENT

Henry Adrian Carreon, a college student and playground director, said when he saw a man he identified as Sirhan about noon June 4 at the San Gabriel Valley Gun Club, Sirhan had al-

See Back Page



ready fired three or four hundred practice shots. He was standing amid empty shell casings, Carreon said.

His testimony indicated Sirhan was practicing getting off his shots very rapidly.

Carreon said he was at the range firing with a friend, David Montellano.

"To the left of us," he said, "five feet away, there was an individual shooting very rapidly on the range with a revolver. 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."

#### PISTOL

He said he and Montellano spoke to Sirhan. Asked twice, Sirhan identified his pistol as "an Iver Johnson," Carreon said.

Montellano, noticing that Sirhan had one box of bullets set aside from the others he was using, asked Sirhan if he were using "a special type bullet," Carreon said.

The bullets, Carreon said, are called "the minimagnum."

"This type of bullet," Carreon said, "when it penetrates an object usually tears and splits out into different directions, where the regular bullet of a .22 caliber goes in a hole, and when it goes into an object, it will come out the same size."

Sirhan was noncommittal about the bullets, he said.

#### SHOTS

The testimony relating to how many times Kennedy was shot began when Coroner Thomas Nuguchi was asked:

"And would you tell us how many wounds there were?"

The coroner replied:

"A total of three gunshot wounds, sir."

Dr. Noguchi said the wound which killed the Senator entered the right mastoid (Behind the right ear), while the other two hit in the back of the right armpit.

The latter two shots, according to Dr. Noguchi, would not have been fatal.

Q—"Doctpr, as a result of your examination, did you come to an opinion as to the cause of death of Senator Kennedy?"

A — "Yes. The cause of death was a gunshot wound of the right mastoid, penetrating the brain."

Dr. Noguchi said powder burns on the surface of the edge of the right ear showed the wound to the head was inflicted at a "very, very close" range.

left — when, he said, "something rushed by on my right side . . . then I heard the first shot, and Mr. Kennedy fell out of my hand. I lost his hand. I looked for him, and I saw him falling down."

Uecker then grabbed Sirhan, and wrestled with him as other shots blasted into the corridor of the kitchen pantry, hitting five other persons. All of the five survived.

Vincent di Pierro, a student and parttime waiter at the Ambassador, gave the grand jury which indicted Sirhan for murder a dramatic account of the shooting, of Sirhan's struggle to escape afterward — and of the good-looking girl he saw talking with Sirhan earlier.

#### DRESS

She was wearing a polka dot dress, he said. It was on the basis of his testimony — and of a woman who told of seeing a woman in a dress of similar description run from the hotel — that police based an all-points bulletin for a young woman possibly involved in the case.

Di Pierro told the 22-member panel that he was walking with Kennedy through the kitchen and was five feet away when they reached the pantry's icemaking machine. Said Di Pierro:

"It was there that I noticed there was a girl and the accused person standing on what is — what we call a tray stacker, where we had all the trays. . . ."

He was asked what he noticed about Sirhan.

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

looked at the girl and I noticed him — the reason I took note of him. . . . He was grabbing on (to a pipe on the tray holder) with his left hand.

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

The next time he looked at Sirhan he was holding the gun, di Pierro said.

"He kind of moved around Mr. Uecker," he said. "He kind of motioned around him and stuck the gun straight out. And nobody could move. It was — you were just frozen. You didn't know what to do."

On the first shot Kennedy "kind of reared back" and began to fall, he said. "And when he stuck the gun (out)," he said of Sirhan, "he

looked like he was on his tiptoes because he wasn't that tall."

What happened next?

"The suspect turned almost immediately, and after all the shots were fired, he was trying to escape . . . he tried very, very hard to get away. But Mr. Rafer Johnson and Mr. (Roosevelt) Grier and Mr. Uecker were all holding him against the stainless steel table.

#### CONFUSION

"And people were trying — were hitting him and cursing at him, and it was utter confusion. I mean, everyone was trying to kill him.

. . . I think it was Mr. Johnson who tried to get the gun."

Pressed for details of the girl in the polka dot dress, di Pierro said:

"I would never forget what she looked like because she had a very good looking figure — and the dress was kind of lousy . . . it looked like it was a white dress and it had either black or dark-purple polka dots on it.

"It kind of had — I don't know what they call it, but it's like — looked like a bib in the front, kind of went around like that."

As the girl and Sirhan stood together on the tray rack, before the shooting, "he looked as though he either talked to her or flirted with her, because she smiled," di Pierro said.

"Together, they were both smiling.

#### SMILING

"As he got down, he was smiling. In fact, the minute the first two shots were fired, he still had a very sick-looking smile on his face.

"That's one thing — I can never forget that."

What did the girl look like?

"She had dark hair that was cut, I would say, just above the shoulders, just around in here. And it just kind of looked like it was messed up, at the time, I mean. She could have changed that—she could have come with curls. I don't know. It was just messed up at the time.

"She had what looked like a short nose. She wasn't too — facially, she wasn't too pretty. She was not that pretty.

"And, like I say, figure — she had a very good figure."

He said that after the shooting he did not see her. He

said he hadn't seen her before.

#### WOMEN

Authorities have questioned at least three young women who have stepped forward to identify themselves as having worn polka dot costumes to the Kennedy affair the night of the killing. All were released after questioning. One officer said "there may have been 20 girls there in polka dot dresses."

It was Jesus Perez, a kitchen porter, who told the grand jury of having seen Sirhan a half-hour prior to the shooting.

"He asked me about three or four times if Mr. Kennedy (were) coming that way, coming through that way. And I answered, 'I don't know,' because, really, I don't know what way he comes."

Perez was asked when he saw Sirhan first. I was, he said, about 11:45 p.m., half an hour before the shooting.

#### CALL

Policeman Arthur Placencia, the first officer to reach the kitchen after the shooting, said he went there answering a call that there was "some kind of difficulty or police problem" at the Ambassador.

"When we got to this area where we got the suspect, there were people holding this suspect down on top of this sheet metal table," he said.

The first thing he and his partner thought of, he said, was the safety of Sirhan. He said they pulled Grier and several others off him and then "just started pushing" to force their way out of the room with the suspect. The crowd kept shouting, "He did it. He is the one that shot him."