

# Excerpts From Testimony Before Jury

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LOS ANGELES, June 13—Following are excerpts from testimony of some of the 23 witnesses who testified last Friday before the grand jury that indicted Sirhan Bishara Sirhan for the first degree murder of Senator Robert F. Kennedy. The transcript of the grand jury proceedings was made public today. Questions were put to the witnesses by various members of the District Attorney's staff.

VINCENT T. Di PIERRO, college student and Ambassador Hotel part-time waiter, son of the hotel's banquet manager, Angelo Di Pierro:

I got separated from Senator Kennedy by about five feet [as the Senator entered the Ambassador Hotel pantry, where he was shot] and I walked with him up to the ice machine. And it was there that I noticed there was a girl and the accused person standing on what we call a tray stacker.

Whether or not the second person was involved, I don't know. . . . The only reason I noticed him—there was a very good-looking girl next to him. . . . He was grabbing on with his left hand [to a pipe on the tray stacker]. I could not see his right hand. He looked as though he were clutching his stomach, as though somebody had elbowed him.

Q. Was he in a straight up position or was he crouched or semi-crouched? A. Semi-crouched. . . . From that moment on, I just looked at the girl, and I saw him get down off the tray stand. And when I went to turn, the next thing I saw was him holding the gun.

Q. How close did—we will call him the suspect—get to the Senator? A. It couldn't have been more than six feet.

Q. How close to the Senator was the suspect when this gun started firing?

A. Four feet—four to six feet. . . . He kind of went around Mr. Uecker, and he from here—he looked like—though he pulled his hand out from here and came around. . . . And then the other boy that got shot in the thigh, he fell on top of me, and they pushed me down, they fell on top of me.

#### Senator's Hands Went Up

Q. Did you see what happened to the Senator before you went down? A. He was on his way, falling—he was



Associated Press

TESTIFIES ON ASSASSINATION: Vincent T. Di Pierro, part-time waiter at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, stands at spot where Senator Robert F. Kennedy was shot. He appeared before grand jury dealing with the murder.

on his way, falling—he was falling down. The first shot, he kind of reared back very, very sharply.

Q. Did you see any movement of the Senator's arms after the first shot? A. Both hands went up like that [indicating].

Q. As near as you can, will you recall for the jury the events immediately after the shooting? What happened?

A. Well, 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 [the athlete, a member of the Kennedy party]—and by this time Mr. [Roosevelt] Grier [the athlete, also in the Kennedy party] and Mr. Uecker were all holding him

against the heater. It's the stainless steel table. 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 tried to help keep the suspect subdued, but it was, you know—wasn't really worth it because everyone else grabbed him already and were beating up on him.

Q. But he was apprehended at this time? A. Yes, almost instantly.

Q. Did some police officers arrive? A. Yes, they did, but at the time involved, I have no idea.

Q. Now going back to just before this shooting, you observed a nice looking girl [in the hotel pantry where Senator Kennedy was shot]? A. Yes, sir, I did.

Q. Could you identify her again if you saw her? A. To some degree, yes, sir, I could. I would never forget what she looked like because she had a very good looking figure—and the dress was kind of lousy.

Q. Flousy? A. Lousy.

#### Missing After Shooting

Q. Now, after the shooting, you remained at the scene; did you happen to see this girl again? A. No, after the shooting I did not see her. I only saw her before.

Q. You didn't ask her name or anything? A. No, sir, I didn't.

Q. Did any of the fellows or guys you work with by chance—? A. No, no one had, other than myself, had seen her, I don't believe.

Q. You have inquired around, I take it, since? A. I have only talked to one fellow that was across from

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## That Indicted Sirhan for Kennedy Murder

me, that had seen me, that was with me the whole time. I asked him, and he said that he had seen her but that he didn't know where she went or what her name was.

Q. Could you describe what she was wearing? A. Yes. It looked as though 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 that kind of went around. It's just like that [indicating].

Q. A lace dickey, probably?

A. It was like over the material itself; it was the same as the clothing. And she was—she—the person who is accused of shooting him was—like I say, they were both on the—standing standing together.

Q. Back of the tray stand? A. Yes. And what happened, he looked as though he either talked to her or flirted with her, because she smiled. This is just before he got down.

So at least, their association, in proximity of the tray stand, they are smiling, perhaps—? A. Together, they were both 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.

Q. Could you describe the facial characteristics first of all of this girl? A. Yes. She had dark hair that was cut, I would say, just above the shoulders, just around in here [indicating]. And it just kind of looked like it was messed up, at the time, I mean. She could have mean. She could have come up with curls. I don't

know, it was just messed up at the time. Her face—facial expression, she had what looked like a short nose. She wasn't too pretty. And like I say, figure—she had a very good figure.

JESUS PEREZ, a kitchen helper at the Ambassador Hotel:

Q. Now, you see the two photographs which are in front of you [pictures of the defendant]. Did you see the person that's in those photographs around the hotel that night? A. Yes. He was talking to me about half an hour before the shooting.

Q. And where were you at that time that he was talking to you? A. In the steam table in the front—in the steam table—I was there, and he was close to me here. And he asked me about three or four times if Mr. Kennedy coming that way, coming through that way. And I answer I don't know because—really, I don't know what way he comes.

Q. But he asked you about three or four times? A. Yes, he asked me about three or four times if Mr. Kennedy come through from there, coming out from there. . . . He was there talking with me and other boys. And some Mexican boy, he said something, and the man was

—he—he told me, "What he said?" And I tell him, "He is talking about the beautiful girl. He no talking about you." He said, "Oh."

Q. This was about half an hour before the Senator got shot that night or before the shooting got started? A. Yes. We was about half an hour standing there.

Q. Do you remember when you first saw this person? A. Yeah, I remember him. He was there in the steam table, getting some picture, doing something, you—he was standing there.

Q. How early in the night did you see him there? A. I say 15 minutes before 12.

#### Mrs. Kennedy Protected

IRWIN STROLL, 19, Kennedy campaign volunteer worker:

I started going through the kitchen door [as the Kennedy party left the ballroom]. . . . I got in front of Mrs. Kennedy by accident. Then we went through the door and all of a sudden the procession stopped and it was like fire-crackers, just pop, pop, pop all over the place, and smoke, and, well, I did this, I pushed Mrs. Kennedy—just a reaction, and everyone in front turned around.

I turned around and saw Mrs. Kennedy on the floor with Roosevelt Grier covering her. . . . I saw her on the floor with Roosevelt Grier hovering over her, protecting her.

IRA GOLDSTEIN, 19, radio newsman:

I was just barely skinned by a bullet . . . in the left thigh. . . . I staggered to a chair . . . and the first thing I said was, "How is Senator Kennedy? What happened to him?"

And this woman walked by, and she said to me, "How dare you talk about my husband that way," and she slapped me across the face.

And I said, "I am sorry,

lady, but I was shot, too. I'd like to know how the Senator was . . ." or ". . . is."

And she said, "Oh, I am sorry, honey," and kissed me. This was Mrs. Ethel Kennedy.

At that time she was not in tears. She was a little hysterical, though, but she wasn't crying.

Arthur Placencia, policeman, who, responding to a radio call, arrived in the Ambassador pantry a few minutes after the shooting:

Q. Were you in police uniform? A. Yes, sir.

Q. Telling everyone you were taking him [Sirhan] into custody? A. We had to keep telling them, "We are police, step aside."

And after a while we got tired of telling them. We just started pushing. . . . My partner had him from the right, from my partner's right, and the suspect's left, and [Jesse M.] Unruh [Speaker of the California Assembly] was on the other side—kept hollering, "We don't want another Oswald, we don't want another Oswald."

Because I know I was going to have to make a report on him, I asked him, just like

any other suspect, I asked him, "What is your name?" He didn't say anything.

Q. Would he communicate at all with you on the ride to the station? A. Well, when I was giving him—Travis turned around, my partner, White, and told me, "You better give him his rights, partner."

#### Tells Sirhan of Rights

Q. For the subject—or the suspect, of his constitutional rights? A. Yes. So I took out my officer's Field Notebook, and I started reading off the rights. And after I read them off, I asked him, "Do you understand your rights?" And he looked at me, and I asked him again; and then he mumbled something.

So I told him, "Look, I will give them to you again." So I read them off again. Then I asked him again, "Do you understand your rights?" Then he looked at me and said, "Yes."

And then I said, "Do you wish to remain silent?" And he just didn't say anything. Then he looked at me again and he said, "Yes."

Then I said, "Do you wish an attorney present?" Then at that time he just said, "Yes." So after that I didn't ask him anymore.

And then, after that, I asked Jesse Unruh, I said, "By the way, who did he shoot?"

And he goes, "Bobby Kennedy."

And I said, "Oh."

DR. THOMAS T. NOGUCHI, coroner of Los Angeles County:

Q. And would you tell us how many wounds there were?

A. A total of three gunshot wounds sir. . . . A gunshot wound in the right mastoid; gunshot wound two was found in the back of the right armpit, known as the right axilla; and the gunshot wound 3 was also found very close, approximately — it's about half inch below the gunshot wound No. 2.

Q. So that you would regard wound No. 1 then as

being the wound that did cause death, is that right?

A. That's correct sir. . . . There was an extensive brain damage on the right side of the brain, mainly the brain called cerebellum. . . . There

also was marked swelling of the brain as well as flattening by the pressures inside of the brain and causing a flattening of the brain stem.

Q. Do you have any opinion as to what might have been

the distance from which that bullet was fired?

A. Allowing variation, I don't think it will be more than two or three inches from the edge of the right ear.