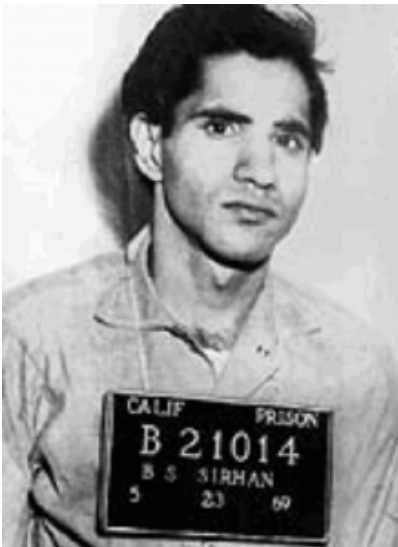


Is Sirhan guilty? Unanswered questions about RFK's assassination

written by Stephen Millies
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Sirhan Sirhan

Senator Robert Francis Kennedy had just won California's Democratic presidential primary when he was shot in Los Angeles shortly after midnight on June 5, 1968. He died early the next morning, less than five years after his brother — President John

F. Kennedy — was gunned down in Dallas.

Sirhan Bishara Sirhan, a Palestinian immigrant who was convicted of killing Bobby Kennedy, [has now been recommended for release](#) by a parole board. California Gov. Gavin Newsom can either approve or deny his freedom.

Sirhan Sirhan has spent 53 years in jail. Some members of Robert Kennedy's family favor Sirhan's release while others — including RFK's widow, Ethel Kennedy — are opposed.

In most countries a 53-year-long prison sentence is considered barbaric. As noted by the parole board, the 77-year-old Sirhan poses no threat to society.

A bigger question is whether Sirhan Sirhan was actually guilty of killing Bobby Kennedy. Paul Schrade, who was wounded by Sirhan, doesn't think so.

Schrade, a 93-year old former United Auto Workers union official, points out that all of Bobby Kennedy's three wounds came from behind. But almost every witness in the Ambassador Hotel where Kennedy was killed said that Sirhan was always in front of RFK.

There are many problems with the official story of Robert Kennedy's assassination. Evidence points to a second shooter.

Los Angeles coroner Dr. Thomas Noguchi testified that the mortal wound was fired behind Kennedy's right ear at point blank range.

None of the witnesses described Sirhan as being that close. Some said that Sirhan was three or more feet away.

Hotel maître d' Karl Uecker insisted: "There was a distance of at least one-and-one-half feet between the muzzle of Sirhan's gun and Senator Kennedy's head. ... Sirhan

never got close enough for a point-blank shot, never.”



Los Angeles coroner Thomas Noguchi points to two apparent bullet holes.



Close-up of these bullet

holes which the FBI described as 'close-up view of two bullet holes.'

How many bullets?

Then there's the path or trajectory of the three bullets that struck Kennedy and the one that went through his suit coat. While the fatal bullet fired behind his ear went upwards at a 15-degree angle, the other bullet paths rose at steep angles of 59, 67 and 80 degrees.

As described in "Shadow Play" by William Klaber and Philip Melanson, this was "as though a gun had been pressed to the senator's back and pointed up so as not to protrude."

However, according to Edward Minasian's grand jury testimony, Uecker slammed Sirhan's shooting hand down onto a steam table after two shots were fired. The remaining shots fired by Sirhan were diverted away from Kennedy.

The greatest challenge to the police single-shooter theory is the number of bullets fired in the hotel pantry. Sirhan used a .22-caliber Iver and Johnson Cadet eight-shot revolver. All bullets were fired and Sirhan never reloaded the weapon.

Two bullets, including the fatal shot in Robert Kennedy's head, were recovered from his body. One bullet went through RFK's body while another bullet went through his suit.

That leaves four bullets. But five people were wounded: Elizabeth Evans, Ira Goldstein, Paul Schrade, Irwin Stroll and William Weisel.

The police solved this arithmetic problem by claiming the bullet that went through Kennedy's suit from behind without wounding him then struck Schrade. But Schrade

was always four to five feet behind Bobby Kennedy.

As Paul Schrade asked LA Police Chief Daryl Gates in 1986, “How [can] a bullet traveling up and away from me can make a 90-degree turn and end up in my head?”

This is reminiscent of the “magic bullet” that the Warren Commission claimed to have struck both President Kennedy and Texas Gov. Connally in Dallas. This bullet supposedly went through both men before landing in Connally’s thigh, making impossible turns to do so.

Nina Rhodes, a witness to the assassination of Robert Kennedy, told the FBI that she estimated that 10 to 14 shots were fired. The FBI later falsified Rhodes’ statement, claiming that she only heard “eight distinct shots.”

Several reporters were recording when RFK was shot. According to Dr. Michael Hecker of the Stanford Research Institute, who analysed a tape, “No fewer than 10 gunshots [were fired].”

Destroying evidence and intimidating witnesses

Dr. Noguchi was photographed pointing with his fingers at two apparent bullet holes in the doorframe of the pantry doorway. The FBI later took a photo of these holes with the caption, “close up view of two bullet holes.”

LA police officers Charles Wright and Sgt. Robert Rozzi were photographed pointing at another apparent bullet hole in a pantry hallway door frame. Wright later said he was almost certain that it was a bullet.

FBI agent William Bailey was in the pantry a few hours after the shooting and saw two bullet holes in a door frame. “These were clearly bullet holes,” he told authors Klaber and Melanson, “the wood around them was freshly broken away and I could see the base of a bullet in each one.”

Lia Urso was in the hotel pantry three hours after RFK was shot. She told author Philip Melanson that she saw what she thought were bullet holes in the ceiling tiles. If these holes did contain bullets it would mean more than eight bullets were fired and that there was a second shooter. Yet these door frames and ceiling tiles were illegally destroyed by police while Sirhan's initial appeal was pending.

The police claimed that they didn't have room for these items from what the media were calling "the trial of the century." Los Angeles City Attorney Dion Morrow told the LA City Council that "you can't fit ceiling panels into a card file."

The LAPD also destroyed 2,410 photographs that presumably could fit in filing cabinets.

The prosecution badgered one of its own witnesses, Larry Arnot, a retired Pasadena, Calif., firefighter. He was working the counter of the Lock, Stock 'n' Barrel gun store on June 1, 1968, when Sirhan Sirhan purchased .22 caliber ammunition.

Arnot identified the sales receipt for the ammunition that was found in Sirhan's car and said there were two other individuals with Sirhan.

Who were these two people? An honest investigation would want to know if they were associates of Sirhan and if they were manipulating him.

Arnot's truthful testimony angered prosecutor David Fitts. He reminded Arnot of a lie detector test given to him by police Lieutenant Enrique Hernandez. The cop intimidated Arnot into saying he didn't remember Sirhan even though he did.

The browbeating given to Larry Arnot angered the gun store's owners, Donna and Ben Herrick. Donna Herrick had seen Sirhan in the store previously with two companions.

But she wasn't called as a witness. "They didn't want her to testify, because she

wouldn't change her story," said Ben Herrick.

Disappearing polka dots

Sandra Serrano was a 20-year-old office worker who was a volunteer with the Kennedy campaign. She was sitting on a stairway outside the hotel ballroom.

Around 11:30 p.m. three people pushed by Serrano to go up the stairs. They were a young woman in a polka dot dress accompanied by two men, one of whom Serrano later identified as Sirhan.

After RFK was shot, two of the people ran down the stairs. The woman in the polka dot dress shouted: "We shot him! We shot him!"

Sandra Serrano told what she saw and heard to NBC reporter Sander Vanocur.

Vincent DiPierro, a part-time hotel waiter, had his glasses splattered with blood by the shooting. He observed the woman in the polka dot dress with Sirhan inside the pantry.

Police Officer Paul Scharaga drove to the Ambassador Hotel's parking lot after a radio report of trouble. The Bernsteins, who were an older couple, told Scharaga they had seen a woman wearing a polka dot dress and a young man. They were laughing and shouting: "We shot him! We shot him!"

Many other people observed the woman in the polka dot dress. An all-points bulletin went out to police departments across the country describing her.

It was soon withdrawn. Why?

Sandra Serrano was given the same third-degree treatment by Lt. Hernandez and his lie detector that Larry Arnot got. She was threatened by Hernandez into saying she was mistaken.

“I don’t ever want to have to go through that again,” said Serrano in 1988. “I said what they wanted me to say.”

Show trial

Capitalist politicians in California insisted they didn’t want “another Dallas.” Lee Harvey Oswald, JFK’s accused assassin, never got a trial. Police allowed the most important witness in U.S. history to be killed by Jack Ruby, a strip club operator with ties to organized crime.

Sirhan Bishara Sirhan did get a trial, but it was a show trial. His defense attorneys—Emil Berman, Grant Cooper and Russell Parsons—admitted that Sirhan had shot Bobby Kennedy. They hoped to save Sirhan from the state’s gas chamber by pleading “diminished capacity.”

The prosecution initially agreed to a plea bargain that would have spared Sirhan’s life. In a rare move, Judge Herbert Walker rejected it. Prosecutors later double-crossed defense counsel by demanding a death sentence at the penalty phase of the trial.

Ballistics testimony was given by De Wayne Wolfer, who worked in the LAPD’s crime lab. Grant Cooper barely cross-examined Wolfer, who was later exposed as incompetent.

William C. Harper, a real ballistics expert, warned Cooper about Woolfer. The defense lawyer turned down Harper’s offer of assistance because Cooper didn’t question the police story of the shooting.

Sirhan’s defense attorneys instead put a parade of psychiatrists and psychologists on the stand who only confused the jury.

The Warren Commission never came up with a motive for Oswald to kill JFK. The Los

Angeles prosecutors claimed that Palestinian Sirhan Sirhan killed RFK because of the senator's support for sending 50 Phantom jets to the apartheid state of Israel.

The result was that the jury convicted Sirhan and voted to kill him. Fortunately the California Supreme Court overturned the state's death penalty, although it was later reinstated.

Dallas vs. Los Angeles

The real difference between the assassinations in Dallas and Los Angeles were in the different aims of the U.S. military-industrial complex.

President John F. Kennedy was killed in a coup d'état that put Lyndon Johnson in the White House. It occurred 13 months after the Cuban missile crisis when the Pentagon wanted to invade Cuba and possibly launch a nuclear first strike against the Soviet Union.

Having JFK assassinated gave the military brass a second chance by falsely portraying the patsy Lee Harvey Oswald as an agent of Cuba and the Soviet Union. But the coup didn't gel.

Many capitalists didn't trust their fallout shelters. A huge escalation in the Vietnam War was LBJ's consolation prize to the Pentagon.

The Tet offensive by Vietnamese liberation forces that began Jan. 31, 1968, shattered any illusions that the U.S. could win. Senator Gene McCarthy challenged Lyndon Johnson and nearly defeated him in the New Hampshire primary.

Johnson dropped out of the race while remaining in the White House. Bobby Kennedy began his presidential campaign.

A big split occurred within the ruling class. This wasn't between pro-war and anti-

war forces.

Many on Wall Street felt that the U.S. was being “bogged down” in Vietnam. They thought a bigger threat to their rule was in western Asia where Rockefeller’s and Mellon’s oil fields were.

Meanwhile the Black liberation struggle was surging forward and so was a growing anti-war movement. Dr. Martin Luther King’s assassination on April 4, 1968, led to rebellions against racism in dozens of cities.

Washington, D.C., was on fire six blocks from the White House. A hundred Black communities had revolted in 1967.

The four month period when it looked like the U.S. would soon withdraw from Vietnam was terminated with Bobby Kennedy’s assassination. A coup wasn’t needed.

Those who plotted RFK’s death knew the rub-out had to be done cleaner than the Dallas nightmare. Sirhan had to be brought to trial. A string of witnesses didn’t have to be bumped off.

There was one possible exception. Former Congressperson Allard Lowenstein, who led efforts to reopen an investigation into Robert Kennedy’s assassination, was murdered in his law office on March 14, 1980.

A Palestinian political prisoner

Over and over again, the prosecution and media brought up Sirhan’s alleged notebooks with their bizzare writings. “RFK must die” would be written repeatedly. They point to this as proof of Sirhan’s murderous intent.

Dr. Eduard Simson examined Sirhan 20 times when he was on San Quentin’s death row. Simson was the prison’s senior psychologist.

Simson noted that Sirhan's handwriting in these notebooks often differed drastically from his handwriting at San Quentin. Did someone else write these notebooks? Or did Sirhan write them under hypnosis?

To this day Sirhan Sirhan says that he doesn't remember shooting anyone in the Ambassador Hotel, which was torn down in 2006. How is that possible? Was Sirhan being programmed?

That's not an impossible concept. Naomi Klein wrote in "The Shock Doctrine" about MK-Ultra and other CIA mind control experiments.

Sirhan Bishara Sirhan was four years old when his Palestinian Christian family was driven out of their Jerusalem (Al-Quds) home by the Nakba. This was the catastrophe of Palestinians being driven out of their homeland by the creation of the Zionist settler state. Sirhan's family eventually moved to the United States.

Sirhan was learning to be a jockey when his horse ran into the railing during foggy conditions. Although Sirhan wasn't seriously hurt, he continued to have headaches and fuzzy vision.

He consulted at least eight doctors but none could help relieve his pain. Sirhan turned instead to books and groups promoting mysticism and hypnosis. Some have asked if these conditions could be used to have him manipulated, even to the point of shooting people.

It was physically impossible for Sirhan to have shot Bobby Kennedy from behind. The more likely shooter was Eugene Cesar, who was employed part-time by the Ace Guard Service and was with Bobby Kennedy when he was assassinated.

Cesar, who died in 2019, hated the Kennedys and was a supporter of the super-racist George Wallace. He can be seen in Ted Charach's documentary



“The Second Gun.”

Cesar told Charach that “John [Kennedy] sold the country down the road. He gave it to the commies. ... He literally gave it to the minority.” He said that “the Black man . . . has been cramming this integrated idea down our throats, so you learn to hate him.”

Don Schulman, who was a runner for a Los Angeles TV station, told radio reporter Jeff Brent that he saw a security guard fire his gun three times. Cesar was right behind Kennedy with an unholstered gun.

Schulman’s account was carried on radio, TV and some newspapers. Yet the police were uncurious about Cesar. They didn’t check his gun to see if it was fired or even check its caliber.

The arrest and conviction of Sirhan Sirhan led to an outpouring of anti-Arab racism. This was a forerunner to the tidal wave of anti-Muslim hate following the 9/11 attacks.

The plotters who had Bobby Kennedy killed also stole 53 years of life from Sirhan Sirhan. He should be pardoned and allowed to come home to his family.

Unless otherwise noted, this article is based on [“Shadow Play. The Murder of Robert F. Kennedy, the Trial of Sirhan Sirhan, and the Failure of American Justice.”](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bjOjsOKS4gs>



<https://www.struggle-la-lucha.org/2021/09/17/is-sirhan-guilty-unanswered-questions-about-rfks-assassination/>