

to celebrate the
Union as an end of the fast and the hope for non-violence.
Because that's why he was fasting--to try to create a less
violent atmosphere in the farm workers' struggle.

So we on the International Executive Board had decided
to give Chavez \$50,000 for the first union hall, which was
ultimately dedicated by Walter to the memory ^{of} Roy. Roy had
been the first major national labor leader to go to Delano
in '65 and a constant supporter. We had a fight on the
International Executive Board. Mazey, in his own finicky
way, wanted to be part of the design of the structure, and,
as we always said, his administrative assistant would even
decide what kind of doorknobs we were having and so
forth. And finally Walter threw up his hands and said,
"Look, if we can work out a loan agreement with the Farm
Workers Union and we've got a voice in this, it's going to
be such a cumbersome operation that I think we ought to
just give them the money." So that's the way the board
finally decided it. So I was there to give them the
\$50,000 and Bob was there to celebrate the end of the fast.

Bob got such a reception there because he'd been there
before a couple of times and was a real firm supporter of
the boycott, the strike, like no other liberal in American
politics had ever been. It was one of the things that
really was attractive about him. And such a strong feeling
for him was expressed there that I said to Bud Simonson,

20399

who was head of the Packinghouse workers union here in California at the time--we drove up and back together--I said, "We've got to talk to him again."

So we went over to Delano airport and he was still there waiting. Peter Edelman was on the phone, and I remember Ed [Edwin] Guthman and John Seigenthaler were with Bob. I saw an opportunity to really zero in on Bob. I said, "You know, you can't deny these people the presidency. There's just too much at stake here. I think you're the only one who can really end the war in Vietnam" and I said, "You've just got to run." I just really pressed him at that point. And just hanging around for a little while after, I said to Peter, "I hope I wasn't being too forceful in that, but I see no other way of dealing with Johnson and the war and the farm workers' problems and the War on Poverty and stuff. he's just got to do it." And he said, "No, it's the best thing you could have done."

I hadn't understood at that point that his decision had pretty much had been made at that point, because the way I've read the reports is that that day he went to Los Angeles and called Ethel [Kennedy] to call Dick [Richard] Goodwin and to let Gene McCarthy know that I think the New Hampshire primary was just a few days off--that he was reconsidering getting into the race, ~~or not~~. So he did put McCarthy on notice very late, but he did.

TAPE NUMBER: IX, SIDE TWO

APRIL 19, 1990

CONNORS: So Bobby got into the campaign, then.

SCHRADE: Yeah, that week it began to become public that he was reconsidering. And I think that same week, maybe the week after-- Let's see. The same week, yeah, I had to be in New York and Washington. I was doing some work with Ted Watkins, the Watts Labor Community Action Committee. We had some joint meetings to do some things for his committee. We wound up in Washington. We had a previous appointment with Bob Kennedy set about the Watts Labor Community Action Committee because Bob had been involved with us there and in some ways modeled the Bedford Stuyvesant [New York] restoration project along the lines we were working on, because we started earlier and he liked what we were doing. So I called either ^{Walter} Adam or ^{Edelstein} Peter over in the office and said, "We had this appointment but all hell must be breaking loose over there", because he had announced publicly that he was reconsidering. And he said, "Well, he's got [Walter] Cronkite in and a couple of other people in, but come on over. We'll get you some time because he wants to see you." So we finally wound up there just hanging around, and the place was crazy.

So Bob finally said to us, "Come on, I've got to go to the airport and meet with the family and friends about my

Q
Full
with
9/6/90

decision. We'll talk on the way out to the airport and my guy will bring you back in." So we had very little discussion. Frequently, in an effort to make a decision, he would just be so involved in himself and not able to articulate. He was just hanging his head. And most of what he said on the way to the airport was, "The young people are going to hate me for this. The young people are going to hate me for this." [laughter] I said, "Come on, now. There's a lot of young people who have been waiting for you to do this. A lot of young people aren't out there with Eugene McCarthy. He doesn't have every young person in the country, and you've got better politics than he does. Come on out of it." And it didn't really work very well, because we didn't really talk about the Watts situation. He was just so involved in himself and just agonizing over this decision. As I remember, he didn't get that much firm support from the group he met with in New York--his brothers and sisters and key advisers and so forth--but the decision came down to run. That put us in a position here-- You know, here I'd practically demanded he run, was involved in convincing him he ought to run so I felt pretty much obligated at that point to support him. But I began to see that this was going to create ~~a~~ real stress with the relationship with Walter and the board of the UAW. So I talked it over with some of my friends here

37 402

and decided that I didn't have a choice again.

We helped put together the delegation. A couple of Kennedy supporters up, I think, near Sacramento, a couple of women who foresaw something like this was going to happen, had filed for a delegation, because we had to get on the ballot here in California. Nobody had filed. None of ~~some of~~ our really shrewd politicians here in California had thought about it. So we grabbed that, with their consent, of course, and began putting together a delegation, and we tried to get as many labor people on as we could. We got a few. A couple of them had to pull back because they got pressure from union presidents and so forth. But I decided not to go on because I thought that that was going to be such a bold move at this point since Walter and most of the board were locked in with Lyndon Johnson. So what I decided to do was I put out a hardline statement supporting Robert Kennedy and very critical of Lyndon Johnson because of the war in Vietnam and failure to really meet the requirements on the War on Poverty because of the war in Vietnam, that we were in a terrible bind, and we needed Robert Kennedy. Well, that, of course, hit the national media. So we spent the weekend doing the mechanical job of putting the delegation together. Then I had to go into Detroit for a board meeting and took the overnight in.

I remember this clearly. I got to Solidarity House by cab and, as I was getting out, Walter was coming into the parking lot, and I said to him, "I've got to talk to you about things that are happening in California politics before I leave at the end of the board meeting this week." And he said, "It's the first thing on the agenda. So I knew the shit had hit the fan again. And it was the first thing on the agenda. So we discussed it. I told the board, I said, "This is a decision I had to make because I think the country is in really bad shape because of the war in Vietnam and because we're not doing what we have to do in the War on Poverty, and Johnson's the cause of it, and he's got to be confronted on these, and Robert Kennedy seems to me as the best in terms of the UAW, in terms of workers' rights, in terms of what we're trying to do as a union, and in terms of our politics, and ending the war. So the board got pretty ^{mad} bad at that point, you know. I remember Bard Young, in particular, a really conservative guy from Detroit, one of the Detroit directors, saying, "You've defied us on the war, you're defying us on Lyndon Johnson. You can't get away with this. We've got to have some sort of unity here on this board" and so forth. So it became kind of a really a raucous kind of a board meeting.

CONNORS: Personal-type attacks.

SCHRADE: Yeah. And I was a real target because I was

75 404

taking a different decision on crucial issues, and, as a regional director, should be more restrained about this. But, again, it was really a question of conscience and a question of what was right for the union as well as for the people involved. So I wouldn't budge. Finally it was determined that we would have a good and welfare session, which really was kind of a woodshed session at the end of the board meeting where we often talked politics or took on somebody who's, like I was, defying some decision of the board, although that didn't occur very often.

Then, that night, I was with Doug [Douglas] Fraser and Leonard [P.] Woodcock, Jack Conway, and a few others, Jack [Nelson] Edwards, I guess. I think we were over at either Doug Fraser's house or Steve [Steven I.] Schlossberg's house. Steve was general counsel^{ph} at that point. They were generally sympathetic with what I was doing but also knew that I was in really serious difficulties with the board. And a call came in. It was Jesse Unruh, who was heading our delegation for Robert Kennedy in California. He was at Rutgers making speeches and said, "We havn't got a decision from Cesar Chavez on going on the delegation." And I said, "Well, we all know that he's going to have a problem with George Meany," and I said, "I'm having a problem here with Walter about my position." So I said, "It's going to be pretty difficult for Cesar to do that."

Q
is this
correct,
& put
concern of
the board

Rangers?

30/105

So I said, "Well, Bob was supposed to talk to him today, he was supposed to call." And I said, "What happened?" And he said, "I don't know." So I said, ^{"I will"} "Call Robert at home."

So I called Bob Kennedy at home and asked him what had happened with Chavez. He said, "Well, he sounded so sick and so weak that I didn't have the heart to ask him to go on the delegation, because I know the problem he's going to have with George Meany. So I asked him to help us on a registration and get-out-the-vote drive. And I said to him at that point, "That doesn't sound like the cold-blooded, ruthless son of a bitch that you're supposed to be." And he didn't laugh for a few seconds--because I thought it was funny--and he said, "Well, he's got these problems." I said, "I know, and I do here with Walter", and I explained a little bit of what was going on. I said, "Well, I think it's essential that he be on the delegation" because that was the time when the farm workers' union was very important as an organization. They had really good structure through the cities and the rural areas. And Bob said, "I think so, too." I said, "Well, look, let me call him and see what I can do."

So I called Chavez and told him that I was having these problems with Reuther and that I had a decision to make, too, and that I thought it was important that he be on the delegation. And he said, "Well, I think it is, too,"

21/10/6

but I've got all these problems." So we talked a while, and he finally said, "Look, let me call a membership meeting and see what's going to happen." I said, "We've only got two days." He said, "No, I'll call it tonight." I said, "Does that give you much time?" And he said, "Yeah."

So I got a call from Jim Drake, I remember, one of the ministers in the movement, very close to Chavez. He called at, I think, four o'clock in the morning or something, and he said, "Look, we've just had our meeting and they've unanimously instructed Chavez to go on the delegation." I said, "How many members ^{did} do you have?" He said, "Eight hundred." And I said, "Wow! A really good organization; that's what we really need." So I said, "George Meany is not going to understand that, that instruction from the membership, the great democratic leader he is." So he laughed. That background, I think, is important for what happened.

Then, first thing in the morning, we were back in the board meeting, and Walter said, "We're back on the California problem." He said, "I got a call from vice president Humphrey this morning saying the president was very upset with what's going on in California with the Kennedy delegation and Hubert said to me, "The president wants to talk to you about this." And he said, "Well, I'll

32 407

be home for another half hour. If he wants, he can call me or get me at the office in a little while." So within minutes Walter said that Johnson was on the phone and saying "Now is the time for my friends to stand by me" and "Bobby doesn't have any answers in Vietnam that I don't have," and so forth. So that goes back to our earlier discussion that Johnson really hadn't made up his mind at that point about getting out, because he was doing this.

CONNORS: Still considering himself in that race.

SCHRADE: Yeah, and still trying to hold on to his support. So Walter then talked a bit about what that meant and so forth and said, "What about this, Paul?" And I said, "Well, I can't go through all the details of what happened to me last night, but I'm further involved in the Kennedy campaign, and after what happened to me here yesterday and what's happening here now," I said, "I've got no other decision to make than to go on the delegation of Robert Kennedy." So I just decided to escalate at that point. I said, "Fuck," you know, "what's the use?" I was willing to accept the consequences at that point, which could have meant opposition, defeat at the next convention. But I also felt that there was some hope in the situation, that the war would wind down, that we would end it in some fashion, that Robert Kennedy would get elected. So there was some hope that things would change

radically in the situation.

Then we went through a good and welfare session and questioned whether the regional directors had the right to do this sort of thing or not. But one of the other things that I mentioned to you when we were not on tape before was that one of the real surprises at that board meeting, because of my involvement with Leonard Woodcock and his being so pro-Vietnam war was that, when I said this, that now I've decided to go on the delegation, Woodcock, who was sitting on my right at the board meeting, popped in and said, "If I were Paul and facing this kind of political decision in California, I would do the same thing that he's doing," and "I will never vote for that son of a bitch again," speaking of Johnson.

CONNORS: Meaning Johnson.

SCHRADE: And so he completely broke with his pro-Johnson, pro-Vietnam position without really informing anybody of why. And I still have that question today. I intend to talk to him at some point, if I can, because I think it was crucial in his life ~~of~~^{to} making that switch, because he did become a very active part of the Robert Kennedy group on the board early on. I know he alienated himself from people on the board who shared his position on the war, that this was a real struggle against communism, the spread of communism and all that. So it was a real shocker to

34
409

Q. Night was?

them. ~~But the thing did deteriorate (?)~~ again. We mentioned this before, that, once that Johnson, a couple of weeks later, got out, the same pressure wasn't there. My same defiance wasn't as profound in terms of the board, and people had begun to join the Robert Kennedy campaign and the Humphrey campaign or McCarthy. I don't think there were any board members for McCarthy. It was a split between Humphrey and Kennedy.

CONNORS: What was the split? Do you know?

SCHRADE: Well, the day of the primary-- Let's see, a couple of things occurred. It was about one-third for Humphrey and one-third for Kennedy, people who'd actually taken positions.

Q. ...
A. ...

I remember Ray ^{Berndt} Beirne, who was ^{the} director in Indiana, helped put on the campaign for Kennedy where it was tough. Indiana was tough, but we won Indiana in, let's see, I guess it was May, because we had a UAW convention in Atlantic City in May. The day before Humphrey came, the day Kennedy came to our convention, Indiana had come in. It was a real great victory for us. So we had this wonderful confrontation between Humphrey and Kennedy at the convention, each speaking on different days. What happened was a highly professionalized UAW campaign for Hubert with all the stops out, with signs--the delegates had these wonderfully printed signs and so forth--and we were coming

on as kind of the insurgent group in the UAW. And that night, we took all the Humphrey signs and turned them over and painted them up as Robert Kennedy signs. [laughter] I remember the two Reuther daughters were there, Walter's daughters were there, and John Herling and Mary Herling, the labor newsletter guy, and Victor [Reuther] and his sons and Sophia Reuther were there. So when Robert Kennedy came in the next day, we just didn't know how the convention was going to receive him. Well, we brought him into the convention, marched him into the convention, and all hell broke loose. I know I got thrown over on a table and people just went crazy. It was probably equal in terms of support in the convention, because a lot of the delegates knew that Walter was for Humphrey, and Humphrey was an old friend of the UAW, and Kennedy was not that well known. But I think we at least split the convention at that point. I remember Bob starting off, he said, "Well, I come to this convention knowing that I have support from one Reuther here," and he pointed to Sophia Reuther, Victor's wife, who had just been elected a Kennedy delegate in the District of Columbia. And he was very good, very charming, a good speech, and good on the issues and stuff. So we felt that we made a real mark and made some headway in the convention.

The other thing that I think tells us something about

UAW support was that Walter came out on the day of the primary here in California. I remember I voted that day and then joined him and Leonard Woodcock and our bargaining committee over at McDonnell Douglas [Corporation]. We opened up negotiations with McDonnell Douglas that day. Irv [Irving] Bluestone was with Walter, ~~I guess he was ALA~~ ^{We} ~~{Alliance for Labor Action}~~ at that point and had a press conference about negotiations. Then Walter and Irving and I flew to meet with Einar Mohn, the vice president of the Teamsters. He was one of the really good vice presidents of the [International Brotherhood of] Teamsters on the West Coast here, and we had a really good relationship dealing with Farm Workers; we had a mutual assistance, no-raid agreement with Einar. I think at that time Walter was exploring this ALA idea, the Alliance for Labor Action, with the Teamsters and some other unions. So we had that meeting, and I flew back to L.A., and Walter and Irv went on to see Linda [Reuther], their daughter, Walter and May's daughter who was living near San Francisco at the time. So I flew back that evening, and that's when the results-- I think one of the things that determined that I go down to the hotel that night to be with Bob Kennedy was that ~~that~~ the first reports that I got coming in from the L.A. airport--and I lived between the airport and the Ambassador Hotel-- I was heading for home because I generally stayed

3/4/2

away from victory parties and stuff. It was just too crazy, and I needed my rest, anyway. The reports came in that we were behind McCarthy. Humphrey wasn't doing very well at all in the primary and McCarthy was leading, so I thought I'd better go down because this was going to be a real shocker if we lost. We had already lost Oregon; I think that was hanging over us. So I went down to the hotel and was around the Embassy room for a while with most of the people waiting for results. Then the tide began to turn and it looked like we had a real chance. Somebody came down--I remember it was Barbara Schley, who was a friend of Kennedy's in the campaign, wound up on a police commission and was head of the EEOC [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission] at one point, a really great person--she said that Bob wanted to see me. So I went upstairs. The family was there and most of his staff and friends and so forth, and we were just hanging out waiting for results. I remember Bob then wanted to be where he could reach certain people, because we really began moving and it looked like a real solid victory, even though not a wide margin. So I told him he ought to talk to Walter, and I had Linda's phone number in their hotel. We tried to reach them, but they were obviously out to dinner or something and never did, because he wanted to talk to Walter at that point. That's what he was doing before he

went down for the victory speech, calling people all over the country. You could just tell, at that point, that the response he was getting with the win in California was going to really push him into being a major contender for the nomination in the [Democratic National] Convention.

One other person we really tried to reach was Allard Lowenstein, who I'd worked with in the ADA [Americans for Democratic Action] and had tried to get Bob into the race and vigorously pushed him and finally gave up on him and went to Eugene McCarthy. He was over at McCarthy headquarters but never did reach Allard, because Allard would have moved, too, I think at that point. And Allard played a very prominent role in the dump Johnson movement in the country. He was very important. He could have really been very helpful. || Let's see, as we headed downstairs, Bob said he wanted Cesar Chavez, and Cesar was in the hotel at one point. We tried to reach him before but found out that he had left. But Dolores Huerta, the vice president of the farm workers union was still there. So Bob said to me, "Look, would you write her name down for me? I just don't want to mispronounce it. I want to get it right." So I stopped in several of the hotel rooms there on the fifth floor, and I walked in and rummaged over somebody's desk looking for a piece of paper. It was Dick Tuck's room, and he said, "What are you doing? Get out of

my goddamn room." I said, "All I want is a piece of paper. I've got to write down Dolores's name." He got really pissed at me for doing that. Anyway, we went down, and then it all occurred.

We were really very happy with the victory, and Bob's victory speech was well received. Several of us were mentioned who had been helpful in the campaign. I know I got off the platform early--we were standing with him because it got so damn crowded and hot and getting very tense. In a way, people were just hysterical about the victory. So I walked into the pantry area, waiting for him, and he came by and said, "I want you and Jesse-- meaning Jess Unruh--with me." He was heading ~~in~~ for a press conference with the print media at that point. They'd been complaining that the TV was getting everything and they weren't getting anything. He was also going down to another big celebration in another large room downstairs. So we were stopping by the Colonial Room for the press conference. And I remember those last moments where he was shaking hands with the guys in the kitchen, a couple of the kitchen workers, obviously Latinos, and I remember thinking, "This is what the campaign is all about. We've got a president in the making here" and just in was a state of euphoria. And we turned to leave, and that's when the shots started. I really didn't know what

AS HB

had happened. I didn't see any gun. I got hit early and was down and out, and it wasn't until later that I found out that Bob was very seriously wounded and finally, a day later, died.

CONNORS: You went unconscious?

SCHRADE: Yeah.

CONNORS: So that all the-- When did you come to?

SCHRADE: I don't know. It must have been minutes later. I remember one of the sensations I had was people trampling on me, and that was-- People really went crazy in there. You know, I was on the floor, bleeding from the head.

CONNORS: Where were you shot?

SCHRADE: In the head.

CONNORS: Back of the head? Or--?

SCHRADE: No, in the front above the hairline.

CONNORS: Did the bullet lodge in there?

SCHRADE: Well, the way the doctors described it, there was about a third of the bullet was there, so fragments were there, because they were hollow-point .22's, and they just break on impact, and about two-thirds just flew out. Fortunately it was from some sort of an angle, so it went through the first layer of skull very close to the main artery on top. That would have probably done it to me, but it just missed. I remember coming to, and the doctor was with me and a couple of nurses--

SH/16

CONNORS: At the hotel on the floor?

SCHRADE: Yeah.

CONNORS: By that time, medics were there?

SCHRADE: Yeah. I was the last one to be taken out. I remember I was told that. Besides Bob, there were five of us wounded, the other four not seriously. Most people thought I was dead at that point, anyway, but I did come to.

And there's always humor in these situations. The doctor said, "We're taking you to L.A. ^{Receiving} Hospital." And I said, "But I'm a member of the Kaiser plan." He laughed. He said, "I'm from Kaiser and these two nurses are from Kaiser. You're one of ours, and we'll see that you'll get there." It was a police procedure. Any shooting victims went to L.A. receiving for a check in and some exploration. It seemed to be a waste, but that's what happened.

CONNORS: So you were in the hospital for some time after that?

SCHRADE: For about ten days, I guess. There was really no serious injury at that point. ^{There} ~~It~~ was a lot of pain, very weak for months afterwards, sort of whiplash symptoms reoccur occasionally. But I think the greatest agony was that here we were with Bob Kennedy, who I still say was the best liberal we've ever had in this country, and just lost

42419

him and at a time when he was ready to take off and would have been a great president. But we lost all that.

CONNORS: So those must have been-- The first thoughts there--

SCHRADE: Very depressing--

CONNORS: Yeah, depressing kind of situation where you're convalescing because of this gun.

SCHRADE: And then also saying it was the struggle I had to go through to get to that point and then see it all wasted. Because I was really concerned about challenging my mentor, Walter Reuther, on the question of war and the question of Kennedy, but then finally convinced him I was right about all that. I think there was some satisfaction in that, but not in losing a guy like Kennedy in the process. Horrible time.

CONNORS: Did you accept the finding that it was a single gunman and that Sirhan Sirhan was the only one involved in this thing, and it was as they said?

SCHRADE: I did for a long time because I really wasn't too concerned about it. You know, it was obvious that Sirhan was there firing, he was captured, his gun was taken, and the police determined this. His defense lawyers never challenged any of the evidence. The only thing I wanted to see was him prosecuted. But I also joined with Ted Kennedy and the family in saying he ought not be executed. Ted

48
418

wrote a wonderful letter to the district attorney on that saying that Bob was a man of compassion and generosity and would not want another life taken for his. So I had problems within the union as a result of all this, I had my own personal psychological problems over it, had constant nightmares over what happened, so I wasn't about to question the investigation or what was happening.

It wasn't until sometime ~~after~~ⁱⁿ 1974 that Allard Lowenstein approached me. A couple of other people had, but I just sort of talked about what I knew about it and forgot it. But Allard was the most persuasive, and I knew he admired Robert Kennedy very much and was really a very decent human being. He began raising these questions about the possibility of a second gun. And he approached it on the basis-- You know, the other people were saying this was a CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] conspiracy or the mafia did it or Jimmy Hoffa did it or the pro-[Fidel] Castro Cubans did it or the anti-Castro Cubans did it, and to try to figure all that out, it was just too much for me at that point. But Allard was raising it on the question of evidence, of physical evidence, that there was a possibility of a second gun firing based upon the ballistics, based upon the forensic evidence. So it began making sense. And I talked to Monica [Weil Schrade] about it for a long time, and she was concerned about it, that,

44 419

if there was somebody else, then my life might be in danger, too, if we began approaching a solution to the thing. But I finally decided, based mainly upon the persuasion of Allard, that I could play a role in this by being able to have standing in court to challenge evidence by being one of the victims.

So we got a group of attorneys and Geoff [Geoffrey] Cowan, Mel Levine, a few others, Bill Norris, now a judge, to begin working on this, because the questions that Allard was raising were solid ones and his approach was good. He was always the diplomat, always the person who would raise these questions in a very logical, reasonable way. We went and met with [former Los Angeles Police] Chief Ed Davis and raised sixty questions with him, put them in writing. He held meetings with the district attorney just to go through the official process to find out what could be done. But all the doors were closed. There was a hardline stonewalling on any discussion, any answering of questions, and so forth. So it became a real struggle.

And we went to court. In '75, ~~Maxter Ward~~ ^{for} was serious about the questions and we were able to get a unanimous support from the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to join in a lawsuit. So there were real allies of this. And Judge Robert Wenke accepted our lawsuit. So we had a reinvestigation in a very narrow way, because Wenke could

County
Supervisor

Q
Yes

25/20

only deal with the evidence produced in the case, not all of the evidence that was still in the LAPD [Los Angeles Police Department], which they refused to give us. And because Wenke was confined with only the evidence used in the trial, it gave us a very limited area, although certain things were found out. There was a group of experts set up, ballistic experts, forensic experts, scientists, CBS [Columbia Broadcasting System] chose one, the L.A. Times chose one, the County Board of Supervisors chose one, the district attorney chose one, the LAPD had one, I believe, and I had one, people who were party to this. So there was seven experts who refired the gun and split on the decision, some saying yes, it was Sirhan's gun and Sirhan's gun alone, and other groups saying no, we cannot say that it was Sirhan's gun and Sirhan's gun alone based upon the refiring of the bullets and evidence. So it left us up in the air again with no real decision on whether there was a second gun. And still those questions remain. We went through all kinds of-- We tried to get the LAPD files. At that time, the public records act was not substantial enough to give us a right to the LAPD file.

We then began a campaign in the mid-eighties for the files. And finally, through Barbara Schlef, who was on the police commission and a friend of the Kennedy's, she played a very good role, we finally got a mayor's commission set

and filed
a lawsuit
along with
CBS for
those
files.

421

up to decide what to do with the LAPD files, because there was a lot of evidence in the files that had not been used. There'd been evidence that had been declared missing by the LAPD, had been destroyed by the admission ~~to the~~ LAPD, and so we felt that those files ought to be out in the public, accessible to the public, to scientists, to scholars who wanted to investigate further. So Mayor [Thomas] Bradley was good about this and set up this commission. They studied it for a while, and the archives, the police file and a lot of the other stuff, is now in the California State Archives--

CONNORS: State Archives, yeah.

SCHRADE: --with John Burns as the director. And he's been very good about making these accessible to the public and preserving them and pulling in more of the files to give a more complete look at it. So that's one answer to your question.

Another part of it is that there's been further investigation recently which goes more to proving the second gun theory, that there was a second gun operating in there. Part of it was that in 1975 or '76 we found an FBI agent on the case who said, "Yes, there were." He observed, during his investigation of the case, two extra bullets in the doorjamb behind us in the pantry of the Ambassador Hotel, and all eight bullets from Sirhan's gun are

4/22

accounted for. So any bullets beyond those eight mean there was a second gun firing, which continues to lead to this question: if so, who was the other person firing? We've got additional information on that recently, and it seems to me that the case will continue. Whether it gets into the official arena where determinations can be made or not, we don't know, but there will be further information produced on that sometime this year.

CONNORS: A few years ago, there was an interesting article in one of the Washington D.C. monthlies, I think it was Regardie's?

SCHRADE: Regardie's, yeah.

CONNORS: By-- Now I can't remember--

SCHRADE: Dan Moldea.

CONNORS: That's the guy who talked about this woman in the polkadot dress who everyone--not everyone--but enough people saw and heard say, "We got him, we got him" or--

SCHRADE: Yeah, "We killed him." But that's the kind of thing that you can't really come to any conclusion about. She may have said "we" in the general: ^{we} we the people of America have killed Robert Kennedy, or "we"--I and someone else--did this and were personally involved. How can you decide that? You just don't know. Those kinds of statements-- And that's the kind of theoretical, kind of nebulous kind of thing you get into with this case. You

28423

know, Sirhan had ^{over} \$400 in his pocket. Was this some sort ^{of} payment? And he was generally not affluent, not working very much. He had some Arab connections. He was against Robert Kennedy because Robert Kennedy was advocating more fighter planes for Israel. He had some sort of Mafia connection because of his employment out at the Santa Anita race track as an exercise boy. You know, some people come up with the theory that the CIA did this because Robert Kennedy represented a threat to the CIA in its operations in Vietnam. He was the person who turned off the CIA in the assassination attempt on Castro. It could have been Jimmy Hoffa. But how do you prove these things? These are all the kinds of things you get into, all of which can make some sense, because Robert Kennedy had some of the toughest, murderous opponents that anybody could have in politics in the United States. So this makes sense to a lot of people. But how do you get to proving anything about that other than just sort of going through this intellectual game about conspiracy theories?

CONNORS: It can really make you crazy.

SCHRADE: Yeah.

CONNORS: And very unproductive in other ways.

SCHRADE: So Allard set us on the right course on this. You go after the physical evidence. What does that show? We've proven beyond doubt that the Los Angeles Police

15 424

Department is both incompetent and competent in covering up and stonewalling. Incompetent in its investigation, made lots of errors, abused and destroyed evidence, did terrible things in terms of a professional police investigation. But that still doesn't prove that they were involved in the assassination or are covering up anything. Our job has always been to prove, based on the physical evidence, that something else occurred than what they said occurred. So you can make all these-- You can prove a lot of things about the case, but how do you prove that somebody else was involved with Sirhan or somebody operating independently from Sirhan was firing the second gun? There's a lot of evidence leading to that conclusion, but the smoking gun is still not there.

50/425

TAPE NUMBER: X, SIDE ONE

JUNE 5, 1990

CONNORS: We ended last time on-- Actually, we were talking about 1968 and the shooting, the assassination of Bob [Robert F.] Kennedy. We also talked a bit about the 1968 Democratic convention. I'd kind of like to start up with just rounding off that particular discussion. You mentioned the peace plank.

SCHRADE: Uh-huh. [affirmative]

CONNORS: And that was defeated.

SCHRADE: Defeated, right.

CONNORS: After that, now-- First of all, the peace plank was put forward by a coalition of the other peace candidates. Is that how that worked?

SCHRADE: Yeah, [Eugene] McCarthy and the Kennedy people and [George] McGovern were the three groups, some overlapping, of course, but they were moving that and trying to negotiate with Hubert [H.] Humphrey, who was the candidate at that point. But the threat of Lyndon [B.] Johnson over the Humphrey candidacy and the peace plank was such that we were not able to win that one.

CONNORS: So it was left that there would be no peace discussion within the platform, and what? I mean, what did they--?

SCHRADE: There's probably something in the platform, but

X 426.