

1 STATEMENT OF **RAFER JOHNSON**
2 TAKEN AT THE AMBASSADOR HOTEL
3 WEDNESDAY, JUNE 19, 1968, 9:45 A.M.
4 QUESTIONED BY: SGT. F. J. PATCHETT, #7872
5 SGT. J. R. MacARTHUR, #4372
6 SGT. CHARLES COLLINS
7 SUMMARY REPORT DICTATED BY LAPD OFFICERS. REPORTED AND
8 TRANSCRIBED BY SHARON THIELMAN, CSR, ON JUNE 28, 1968.

9
10 **Rafer Johnson** resides at 5470 West Boulevard, Los Angeles,
11 telephone 294-1270.

12 Johnson indicated that along with Grier, and other
13 members of Senator Kennedy's campaign group, that he had spent
14 the evening in the Senator's suite on the Fifth Floor at the
15 Ambassador Hotel. When the time came for the Senator to
16 address a group in the Embassy Room, they left the suite and
17 took a service elevator to the kitchen area adjacent to the
18 Embassy Room. The Senator entered the stage via a set of
19 stairs on the left side (left side facing from the stage to
20 the room). Johnson positioned himself on the left side of the
21 stage during the speech.

22 It was his understanding that at the conclusion of
23 the speech, the Senator was to exit the same way, however, at
24 the conclusion he observed the Senator turn around and go
25 through some curtains at the rear of the stage. Johnson then
26 exited by going through the door immediately next to the stairs
on the left side of the stage. The door entered into a foyer
area adjacent to the kitchen. Johnson recalled that the room

1 was quite crowded and the complexity of the situation was
2 increased by the presence of television cameras and cables.

3 At the time of the shooting, he placed himself in
4 the vicinity of the doors leading into the kitchen, however,
5 he had not yet entered the kitchen. He estimated he was two
6 or three paces from the door. He recalled hearing what he had
7 first thought was the pop of two balloons but then in looking
8 into the kitchen area he observed smoke. He immediately ran
9 into the kitchen area and headed toward the direction of the
10 smoke. He recalled seeing a man lying on the floor who he
11 thought was dead (probably Paul Schrade). He then saw
12 Senator Kennedy lying on the floor and paused momentarily over
13 the Senator.

14 He related that at the time he felt there was
15 nothing he could do for the Senator and so he turned and went
16 in the direction of a group of men scuffling with the man.
17 He heard someone shouting, "Get the gun, get the gun". At
18 that time, he observed Rosie Grier, along with other men,
19 holding a suspect. He saw the gun in the suspect's hand and
20 dove across the table in an effort to grab the gun. He got
21 his hand on the gun but Rosie Grier had better control of it.
22 Rosie removed the gun from the suspect's hand and gave it to
23 him. Johnson stated he kept the gun in his possession until
24 his arrival at Rampart Station at which time he turn the gun
25 over to a police officer named McGann (Sgt. McGann, Homicide
26 Division).

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FILE # I-243

TAPE #28926

PERSON INTERVIEWED: JOHNSON, Rafer

DATE/TIME 6-5-68

SEX _____ RACE _____ HAIR _____ EYES _____ HT _____ WT _____ DOB _____

RESIDENCE ADDRESS _____ PHONE _____

BUSINESS ADDRESS _____ PHONE _____

INFORMATION: (WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY & HOW)

THE FOLLOWING IS A SYNOPSIS OF TAPE #28926 RECORDED ON JUNE 5, 1968, AT PARKER CENTER. PRESENT AT THE INTERVIEW WERE RAFER JOHNSON AND FROM S.U.S. SGT. CALKINS AND SGT. MCGANN.

(NOTE: This interview was made only hours after actual shooting, therefore officers were only interested in securing good witnesses).

P/R states he was located outside of the pantry doors when he heard what sounded like a balloon popping. P/R forced his way thru the crowd to reach the Senator, at this point he heard 3 or 4 more shots. P/R glanced and saw the Senator on the ground. P/R then saw Rosie Grier wrestling with the suspect. P/R grabbed the suspect's hand (which was holding a gun) and held it until P/R could get possession.

P/R relates no shots were fired while he held the suspect's hand. P/R and Grier held the suspect until the police arrived, at which time they released suspect to police custody. P/R maintained possession of the gun until this interview, at which time P/R released custody of the gun to Sgt. Calkins. P/R relates he does not believe there were more than one suspect in this shooting.

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INVESTIGATORS MAKING INTERVIEW:
Poteete (I/V by Calkins & McGann)

APPROVED BY:
McKerrett *bx*

RAMPART DETECTIVE DIVISION

INTERVIEWS - JUNE 5, 1968 KENNEDY SHOOTING DR 68-521 466

INTERVIEWED BY M.J. MC GANN
R. L. CLAKINS HOMICIDE DIV.

STATEMENT OF RAPER JOHNSON
5470 West Blvd.
90043
Ph: 294-1270

Can I.D. susp. and gun. (Heard one shot, Kennedy entered door. Then heard several more, by the time 2nd shot fired, he was at door.) Susp. pacing Kennedy who was walking eastbound surrounded by newsmen. When Johnson entered through door, he saw Rosey Grier heading toward susp. who was holding the gun. Grier got to the susp. and grabbed him before Johnson did. Susp. was still waving gun out in front of him. Johnson thought it was held in his left hand. Johnson took possession of the gun. Susp. was held by Grier, Johnson, and other unk persons. Susp. turned over to uniform officer at scene. Susp. taken out through main lobby. Susp. described as Male Latin, 25/26, short, thin, dark curly hair, med. length, blue denim pants, jacket unk color, blk socks. Johnson asked, "Why did you do it" Susp stated in English, "I'll explain it." As Johnson passed Kennedy, he noted Kennedy, an aide, and possibly a woman down.

STATEMENT OF DICK AUBRY
3627 Chesapeake Ave.
L.A. 90016
Ph: 292 6504 (Home)
Ph: 233-8757 (Bus.) Negro Press Bur.

DATE 6-5-68 2:04 AM

Susp. described as M Latin, 26/27, 5-2 (short) med. wt. Kennedy walking through door after giving speech. Aubry approx. 6 to 7 feet ahead of Kennedy party. Heard reports from gun, looked around and saw above described susp. to his rt. rear. The susp.

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At the same time that JOHNSON was holding the assailant, ROOSEVELT GRIER was holding the man around the waist and by the left leg. GEORGE PLIMPTON was holding the man's right arm and was holding his right side. A hotel employee, who JOHNSON described as having a fair complexion with a sunburn, was holding the assailant around the neck. Another hotel employee who appeared to be an Italian or Armenian was also holding this individual. At this time a male voice said, "Let me have the gun. Let go ROSIE", (meaning ROOSEVELT GRIER). "Let go RAFER." JOHNSON then shouted to this individual who was speaking, "shut up". JOHNSON then shouted to GRIER, "ROSIE let me have the gun." The male voice then said, "Let RAFER have the gun." JOHNSON then repeated to GRIER, "ROSIE give me the gun", and GRIER complied with his request. JOHNSON placed the gun in his left pocket and released his grip on the assailant. JOHNSON remained next to this man and while he was standing there said to this individual "Why did you do it?" The man did not answer. JOHNSON, moving his face directly in front of the assailant and looking directly into his eyes repeated "Why did you do it?" The man did not respond. JOHNSON then clenched his fist and placed the back of his fist on the assailant's forehead. JOHNSON then repeated, "Why did you do it?" The assailant answered "I'll explain it." The assailant did not speak any other words while he was in JOHNSON's presence. Several minutes later, JOHNSON observed two uniformed Police Officers approaching and he left the assailant and moved to where Senator KENNEDY was laying. Two men with a stretcher were with the Senator and ETHEL KENNEDY said to them "Don't move him. Don't lift him". JOHNSON heard the Senator say "no don't." The Senator was then placed on the stretcher and taken to the freight elevator. JOHNSON stood guard at the elevator door and only allowed the KENNEDY family and a few other people to enter the elevator. JOHNSON wanted to remain with the Senator so he ran from the kitchen area into the lobby and took the nearest elevator to the fifth floor where he assumed Senator KENNEDY would be taken. Since he did not find the Senator on the fifth floor, he returned to the ground floor of the hotel and found the area where the ambulances were parked. He then learned that the Senator was taken to the