

SIRHAN

Continued From Page A-1
nard Finch in the sensational
Finch-Tregoff murder trials.

Former president of the Los Angeles Bar Association and one of the West Coast's top criminal attorneys, Cooper agreed to serve without fee in fulfillment of a "duty" to see that Sirhan receives a fair trial and competent defense.

Parsons, a veteran of almost 50 years' experience specializing in appeal cases, previously was retained as the attorney of record for the Jordanian immigrant.

Cooper will enter the case after representing a defendant in a case charging that millionaire Harry Karl and entertainers Phil Silvers, Tony Martin and Zeppo Marx were cheated of thousands of dollars in card games at the Los Angeles Friars Club.

DATE 6-28-68

PAGE A-6

____ THE WASHINGTON POST
& TIMES HERALD

X THE EVENING STAR

____ THE SUNDAY STAR

____ THE WASHINGTON DAILY NEWS

EXCLUSIVELY YOURS



Was Radio Question A Threat to RFK?

BY BETTY BEALE

Sally Quinn, daughter of Lt. Gen. and Mrs. Bill Quinn, was in California to help with Robert Kennedy's campaign and described at the French embassy yesterday an incident that took place in Oakland on the morning of Memorial Day. She had set up an interview with Kennedy supporter George Plimpton for a radio talk show on KNEW at 10:30 a.m., and she was there with George when the first television question came in.

The question, which shocked Plimpton into frozen silence, was: "Is Bobby Kennedy prepared to die?"

When the question met with stunned silence, the questioner continued somewhat along this line: "You know his brother was assassinated and Bobby's likely to be assassinated, too." By this time George had recovered his composure and replied, "One must realize there is always a risk in running for public office."

The unknown man continued jabbing on about the subject until the interviewer cut him off.

Sally does not remember whether the voice was a foreign one or not, but a replay of the program might be interesting. Prominent New Yorker Plimpton was pictured in a news magazine this week grappling with Sirhan Sirhan to get the gun from him right after the fatal shooting.

THE FRENCH EMBASSY was the scene of the Chevaliers du Tastevin, annual wine festival, held in Paris to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the French Revolution.

young and with-it. The diplomatic couple, who are the newest addition to the Italian embassy, are all four of those things themselves.

Bartolomeo (son of Countess Attolico of Rome), the new press counselor of the embassy, and his bright little wife Nicoletta, gave the party in their modern art-filled Georgetown house and garden.

As pretty as it was, it couldn't compare with the garden of his mother's Roman villa. It's on the old Appian Way, and the garden is bordered by walls built by the ancient Romans.

The gathering celebrated Sheila Isham's impressive new show at Jefferson Place Gallery.

And it drew the Corcoran Gallery's new director, James Harithas, and Sam Gilliam whom Harithas called the finest Negro painter in America.

Sam's only concession to the frequently hippie aspects of the art world was his long colorful handmade tie that extended from the knot at his collar to his trousers and back up again to be tucked into and hanging from his shirt pocket.

It's apparently a new wrinkle, and if it takes the place of long droopy hair on men, it will mark a new milestone in civilization's progress.

Among the young supper guests sipping, supping and scintillating in the drawing room, the study, the garden and the downstairs dining room were Princess Francisco Borghese, of the Roman Borghese family, and her

name to the famed Borghese Gardens. The tall, beautiful girl, who has been visiting in this country, was a guest at the Italian embassy but was catching a train back to New York that night.

ITALIAN AMBASSADOR and Mrs. Ortona also were there, the ambassador reporting that a story in a Rome newspaper proved Chinese Communists' influence in the recent Italian riots.

Avis Bohlen, daughter of Ambassador and Mrs. Chip Bohlen, told the Smithsonian's Willie Warner that she is writing a book about Peter the Great, and will return to Paris in a couple of weeks to continue the work. Her father having served as ambassador to both Russia and France, Avis speaks both languages fluently, which is an obvious asset in the research.

Both the Warners and the Fitzhugh Greens were sunbanned from sailing in their respective boats to the Eastern Shore. The Warners were signing up Mario Valmarco (who recently wrote a book about architecture) and his wife as crew members for the next sail.

The Edward Morgans were there, Wendy in a beautiful red enc scrolled white dress, opaque white stockings and white patent shoes.

The evening ended with some dancing to rock beat in the dining room where Sheila in a mini skirt and Sam Gilliam and other social and artistic types let their hair down.

"THE EVENING STAR"
WASH. D. C.
FRI. JUNE 14, 1968
SECT. B-3
SOCIETY - HOME, COL 1, 2, 3

173-135-506 D-31

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
JUN 17 1968	
FBI - WASH. F. O.	
Bohlan REC	
Holtman	

Sirhan Pleads Not Guilty, Trial Is Set for Nov. 4

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Sirhan Bishara Sirhan pleaded not guilty today to a charge he murdered Sen. Robert F. Kennedy. His trial was set for Nov. 1.

The 24-year-old Jordanian immigrant said only 10 words during a 22-minute hearing in denying his guilt and approving a trial date later than guaranteed by his constitutional right for a "speedy trial" within 60 days after arraignment.

Sirhan also pleaded not guilty

to five counts of assault with intent to commit murder. Five bystanders were shot June 5 when Kennedy was fatally wounded after winning the California Democratic presidential primary. They have recovered.

Two previous hearings for plea were continued pending psychiatric examination by two defense experts.

Sirhan wore an open-necked, button-down light blue shirt and dark slacks for his appearance today in a heavily guarded courtroom on the 13th floor of the Hall of Justice. His mother and three brothers, Adel, Sharif and Saidallah, were in the small spectator section.

His attorney, Russell E. Parsons, asked for a trial date no sooner than Nov. 1, saying an attorney who will assist him is involved in another case.

Superior Court Judge Richard A. Schauer said he will name a trial judge Oct. 4.

Sirhan then was returned to his cell, only steps from the courtroom.

Earlier, the judge refused a request from Dist. Atty. Evelle J. Younger to modify an order sharply restricting public statements about the case by public officials, attorney and witness.

Younger argued that "where it is possible, we believe that people should know as much as possible about what their government is doing."

DATE 8-2-68

PAGE A-1

___ THE WASHINGTON POST
& TIMES HERALD

X THE EVENING STAR

___ THE SUNDAY STAR

___ THE WASHINGTON DAILY NEWS

___ WASHINGTON-AFRO AMERICAN

Sub D

173-135132

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
AUG 6 1968	
FBI - WASH. F. O.	

Coglian

Innocence Plea Filed By Sirhan

By Ron Einstoss
Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES, Aug. 2—Sirhan Bishara Sirhan pleaded not guilty today to murder in the June 5 slaying of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

A trial date of Nov. 1 was set by Superior Judge Richard Schauer.

Although Sirhan entered a plea of innocence, it does not necessarily mean he is denying his guilt.

He is charged with murder, with malice aforethought.

A guilty plea would have been an admission of first-degree murder—a wilful, deliberate and premeditated killing, with malice aforethought—which carries the death penalty or life in prison.

The only way for a defendant to have a determination made of the degree of murder—unless he specifically is charged with second-degree or manslaughter—is to be tried, either by a jury or a judge sitting without a jury.

This apparently is what Sirhan, in the face of seemingly weighty eyewitness and circumstantial evidence against him, did.

At a news conference that followed the 24-year-old Jordanian immigrant's appearance in court, Russell E. Parsons, Sirhan's attorney, seemed to confirm this when he said:

"I haven't seen any evidence yet that he (Sirhan) had any malice . . ."

Parsons also said a not guilty plea "permits us to show the what and why—what See SIRHAN, A4, Col. 3."

DATE 8-3-68

PAGE A 1

☒ THE WASHINGTON POST
& TIMES HERALD

☐ THE EVENING STAR

☐ THE SUNDAY STAR

☐ THE WASHINGTON DAILY NEWS

☐ WASHINGTON-AFRO AMERICAN

173-135-Sub P-33

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
AUG 6 1968	
FBI - WASH. F. O.	

Coghlan

Sirhan Trial Set; Attorney Retains Defense Option

LOS ANGELES, Aug. 3 (UPI) — The man accused of assassinating Sen. Robert F. Kennedy before two dozen witnesses has followed a time tested rule of criminal defense — never plead guilty.

Cool and occasionally smiling during a 22-minute court appearance yesterday, Sirhan B. Sirhan, 24, said "not guilty" in a clear firm voice to answer the charge of fatally shooting the brother of the late President.

Superior Court Judge Richard B. Schauer set the Jordanian's trial for Nov. 1.

Sirhan's attorney, Russell B. Parsons, did not have his client enter a plea of "not guilty by reason of insanity" as many had expected. However, the attorney kept open his option to offer such a plea at a later time.

STRATEGY

After the hearing, Mr. Parsons indicated he will try to show the former race track exercise boy was not guilty of premeditation or malice in shooting the New York senator the night of his victory in the California presidential primary.

"This defense will permit us to show the what and why of the case," the attorney said. "Those are the real issues. If this is the man, did he do it? What prompted him? Why did he do it? Is he responsible?"

California law defines first degree murder — which carries the death penalty — as murder committed "with malice aforethought." If Mr. Parsons can show the crime was not premeditated, a jury might find Sirhan guilty of second degree murder, carrying a sentence of five years to life. If the attorney could prove lack of malice, it would open the door to a manslaughter conviction. The sentence for that is 1 to 5 years.

DATE 8-3-68

PAGE 5

THE WASHINGTON POST
& TIMES HERALD

THE EVENING STAR

THE SUNDAY STAR

✓ THE WASHINGTON DAILY NEWS

WASH. POST AMERICAN

173-135-SubD-34

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
AUG 9 1968	
FBI - WASH. F. O.	

Cogburn

^{A 12}
LOS ANGELES—The prosecution revealed yesterday that an investigation had produced no evidence of a conspiracy or any suspect other than Sirhan B. Sirhan in the assassination of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

Deputy District Attorney Lynn Compton, appearing at a hearing, which set a new date of Dec. 9 for beginning of Sirhan's trial, produced the transcribed testimony of 67 persons who said they saw the 24-year-old Jordanian at the Ambassador Hotel the night of June 4-5, when Kennedy was fatally wounded.

The testimony of 15 other persons, who said they saw Sirhan practicing at a target-shooting range on June 4, was also presented and made available to Sirhan's attorney, Russell B. Parsons, to prepare the defense.

Superior Court Judge Herbert V. Walker announced at the hearing that he intended to ~~take~~ ^{lock} up the jury every night of the trial once it is sworn.

Washington Post
10/15/68
A12

173-135-Sub D-35

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED <i>15</i>	FILED <i>15</i>
OCT 16 1968	
FBI — WASH. F. O.	
COGHLAN <i>Phc</i>	

Sirhan Search Held Legal

By Gene Handsaker

LOS ANGELES, Oct. 10 (AP)—A judge today denied a motion to suppress evidence that the defense said was seized illegally from the home of Sirhan Bishara, charged with murdering Robert F. Kennedy.

Superior Judge Henry Walker held that police had "reasonable authority" to enter the home with a search warrant, because of Sirhan's brothers' consent.

Sirhan, 24-year-old Syrian immigrant, faces a charge Dec. 9 on a charge he murdered Kennedy. The shooting was shot June 5 after what was the California presidential primary election and died later. Sirhan was arrested at the scene.

The evidence—papers, writing and other items—has been deemed important to the prosecution's case.

Brother Gave Permission

The judge noted that he was not ruling on the admissibility of the evidence, but only on whether or not it should be suppressed.

The ruling followed testimony from one of Sirhan's brothers that he told police they could search, and from Sirhan's mother that she gave no authorization.

Defense attorney Russell E. Parsons argued: "There was no reasonable cause for visiting the house. He (the brother) had no right to consent to a search of his boy's room. They would have had great difficulty obtaining a search warrant from any magistrate."

The head prosecutor countered that the search followed a conference with "the oldest male occupant, who had no objections."

The judge noted that the brother "took the key, opened the door and allowed them in . . . the motion to suppress evidence is denied."

The decision followed testimony by police and relatives of Sirhan.

Mother at Work

The mother, Mary, said she was at work at a nursing school at the time of the search and neither authorized it nor gave permission for anything to be removed. "It is my house. I am buying it," she said.

Items removed from Sirhan's room included two large notebooks, a small brown spiral notebook, a U.S. Treasury envelope with pencil writing on it, a filmstrip with three photos of Sirhan, a cardboard box with pencil writing, a damaged .22 cartridge, two physicians' business cards, two gun cleaning patches and some powder solvent.

The evidence is deemed important by both sides. Police have said the notebooks contain 18 to 20 pages of handwriting, some in Arabic, some in English. Mayor Samuel W. Gray said after the evidence was taken that Sirhan apparently wrote "a direct reference to the necessity to assassinate Sen. Kennedy before June 5, 1968."

At the time of the search Sirhan was in custody but had not identified himself to authorities who were questioning him.

177-1315-Sub D-36

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
OCT 10 1968	
FBI - WASH. F. O.	
COPIES 18	

The Washington Post
Page - A7
Beta 10/23/68

Sirhan Trial Closed-TV Plan Studied

LOS ANGELES (UPI) — A television camera hidden in a fake air conditioning unit may transmit proceedings of the Sirhan B. Sirhan murder trial via closed circuit to reporters in another room.

Superior Court Judge Herbert J. Walker, who will preside at the trial of the man charged with assassinating Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, said yesterday he will hold a hearing probably next week, to see if there are any objections to the hookup, planned because of limited seating space in the courtroom.

Walker said postponement of Sirhan's trial until after the first of the year also will be considered at the hearing. The 24-year-old Jordanian immigrant was scheduled to go on trial Dec. 9.

If arrangements for closed circuit coverage can be worked out, it would mark the first time in California that court proceedings have been televised.

The judge said "well over 100" reporters sought credentials to cover the trial, and only 35 of 75 seats in the courtroom picked for the trial are available to news media.

C-3

5
11-19-68

A-3

173-135-5060-37

et N
Coughlan Rec

Grant Cooper, the attorney who twice got a hung jury in the famous Finch-Tregoff murder trials in California in 1961, has taken over the defense of Sirhan B. Sirhan, held in the slaying of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

DATE 12-3-68

PAGE 3

____ THE WASHINGTON POST
& TIMES HERALD

____ THE EVENING STAR

____ THE SUNDAY STAR

☒ THE WASHINGTON DAILY NEWS

____ WASHINGTON POST & AMERICAN

173-135-506D-35

11- 10
COGHEAN OAC

Sirhan Attorney Admits Telling Lie

LOS ANGELES, Jan. 4 (UPI)—A lawyer scheduled to defend Sirhan B. Sirhan on a charge of slaying Sen. Robert F. Kennedy admitted to a Federal grand jury Friday that he lied in court in another case.

Attorney Grant B. Cooper, a member of Sirhan's three-man defense team, spent three hours before a grand jury inquiring into certain aspects of the recent friars Club card cheating trial in which Cooper represented one of the defendants.

The grand jury is studying reports that Cooper obtained access to transcripts of secret grand jury hearings that preceded the Friars Club trial. The transcripts had not been made public, and were not supposed to be available to defense attorneys.

The matter came to light when a transcript of testimony given the grand jury by come-

dian Phil Silvers was found on a counsel table near Cooper in July during the Friars Club trial.

In conferences with U.S. District Court Judge William P. Gray at the time Cooper reportedly told the trial judge he found the Silvers transcript on a table in the court room.

"I didn't tell the truth," Cooper said Friday, "because it would have pointed a finger at my client."

Cooper declined to reveal where he got the transcripts, pleading the privacy of the lawyer-client relationship. He will appear in court again Monday on the issue.

DATE 1-5-69

PAGE 16

✓ THE NEW YORK POST & OPINION

THE NEW YORK TIMES

THE NEW YORK JOURNAL OF COMMERCE

THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON HERALD

173-135-SUB-D-39

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
JAN 5 1969	
FBI - WASH. F. O.	
COGHLIN	JAC

Sirhan Defense Hinges On His Mental Capacity

By Ralph Dighton
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES—Sirhan Bishara Sirhan goes to trial Tuesday on a charge of murdering Sen. Robert F. Kennedy—and a quirk in California law could save him from the gas chamber if he is found guilty.

The quirk is a hair-splitting technicality, reinforced by several decisions since 1949 but little known outside California, which recognizes a person may be legally sane yet still not fully responsible for his actions.

A number of legal and psychiatric authorities believe the 24-year-old Jordanian's counsel might use a defense known as "diminished responsibility" to seek a verdict short of first-degree murder and a lesser penalty than death.

Presentation of evidence by both sides is expected to take two months or longer. There are indications that more than 200 witnesses will be called.

Some are expected to say that Sirhan waited in a kitchen area of the Ambassador Hotel early last June 5 as Kennedy announced to a gathering of his supporters that he had won the California Democratic presidential primary.

Then, the prosecution will attempt to show, Sirhan began blazing away with a small-caliber pistol as Kennedy and others passed by.

Kennedy and five bystanders were wounded. The Senator died later in a hospital.

The setting of the trial is

See SIRHAN, A6, Col. 3

DATE 1-5-69

PAGE A-1

✓ THE NEW YORK POST
& TRIBUNE

THE BUREAU OF

THE NEW YORK

THE NEW YORK

WASHINGTON AMERICAN

173-135-506 D-40

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
FBI - WASH. F. O.	
DOUGHLAN	

Sirhan Defense Tied to Mental State

SIRHAN, From A1

Superior Court Department 107, an eighth-floor courtroom in the gray stone Hall of Justice.

Quarter-inch steel plates have been placed inside the courtroom's four windows—a precaution taken also for pre-trial hearings on the 13th floor, where Sirhan is held under heavy guard.

Occupying the courtroom's 75 spectator seats will be a hand-picked squad of sheriff's officers, witness and newsmen. Although 114 reporters have been given credentials to cover the trial, there will be space in the courtroom for only 37. The others will observe by closed circuit television in a room four floors below.

Also seated in the courtroom will be Sirhan's mother, Mary, and brothers Adel, 29, and Munir, 21, of suburban Pasadena.

The cast charged with seeking justice for Sirhan will include:

- The presiding jurist, Superior Court Judge Herbert V. Walker, 69, a bushy-browed dean of the Los Angeles criminal bench.

- The three prosecutors, led by Lynn "Buck" Compton, 46, pipe-puffing, one-time UCLA football player who won a Silver Star medal when he jumped into France with the 101st Airborne Division, at Normandy. He is the county's chief deputy district attorney.

Three for the defense, led by Russell B. Parsons,



SIRHAN B. SIRHAN
... trial opens Tuesday

69, wispy, bespectacled lawyer who has tried 5000 cases in nearly 50 years' practice. Parsons is proudest of his role in the 1954 Charles Cahan case, in which the California Supreme Court ruled that evidence illegally obtained cannot be used against a defendant in a criminal case.

The likelihood that Sirhan's attorneys may use the "diminished responsibility" defense arises from the fact that the position has several times won a reduced sentence or even acquittal. In most states, a defendant must be found either sane or insane; in California, he can be held partially insane.

Interviews with lawyers and psychiatrists show these avenues are open for Sirhan:

- The defense may offer

evidence that the act was not premeditated, which would make it second-degree murder punishable by five years to life in prison.

- The defense may try to prove that Sirhan's mental capacity was diminished to a point where he was not capable of malice. This would be manslaughter, punishable by up to 15 years in prison.

Diminished responsibility has been claimed in several cases when the defense could not establish legal insanity but could show the person was influenced by rage, fear, obsession, drugs or even alcohol.

Sirhan pleaded not guilty last Aug. 2.

Legal authorities pointed out that the plea of innocence did not necessarily mean Sirhan was denying he killed Kennedy. Since he is charged with murder with malice aforethought, the "not guilty" plea could have meant simply that he was denying malice.

Parsons, at a news conference following the plea, said:

"I haven't seen any evidence yet that he had any malice."

He also said the not guilty plea "permits us to show the what and why—what are the real issues—if he is the man, why did he do it?"

Parsons himself thus seemed to set the stage for a diminished-capacity defense—which need not be declared prior to the trial.

Paul Caruso, a Los Angeles defense attorney not involved in the Sirhan case, says: "The basic question is not whether Sirhan killed, but if he did, why did he do it? It could be that he wasn't killing a man, but killing a symbol. Kennedy had urged military aid for Israel, a country Sirhan hated. Is it murder to kill a symbol? To me, this betrays an obsession which could diminish his mental capacity."

Caruso, in an interview, cited a 1964 case in which a young woman took a pistol to a modeling with a boyfriend who went to kill.

women. The brother-in-law moved on her menacingly and she fired five quick shots, wounding him severely. The man recovered. The woman was placed on probation.

"The defense showed that she was in a state of diminished capacity through terror," Caruso said, "because she kept on firing when it was no longer necessary. You will recall that Sirhan is accused of doing much the same thing. Sen. Kennedy was struck by three bullets, and five other persons were wounded."

"The more bizarre the case, the more unreasonable the act, the better are the chances of a diminished capacity defense."

Dr. Seymour Pollock, of the University of Southern California has been retained by the prosecution to observe Sirhan, but any conclusions he may have reached have not been disclosed.

The concept of diminished responsibility has been developing in California law since 1949, when the State Supreme Court ruled a trial judge erred in barring psychiatric testimony even though the defendant did not plead insanity.

Since then, testimony by psychiatrists has been a major factor in reaching verdicts in several cases.

Dr. John M. Squires, assistant professor of psychiatry at UCLA, said in an interview that the defense of diminished capacity has developed because California courts became dissatisfied with the inflexibility of the rule followed in most states—that a person is either sane or insane, with no shades or gray in between.

He said he is not fully in agreement with the practice, however, because there is no standard for the psychiatrist to follow.

DATE _____

PAGE _____

THE NEW YORK TIMES POST & OPINION

THE LOS ANGELES TIMES

THE SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

THE WASHINGTON POST NEWS

WASHINGTON POST AMERICAN

Courthouse Security Mobilized

Sirhan 'Ready' for Trial

LOS ANGELES, Jan. 6 (UPI) — Sirhan B. Sirhan was described today as being in an eager but "realistic mood" on the eve of his trial in the assassination of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

The tightest security in the history of American courts was being marshalled for the trial on the eighth floor of the Los Angeles County Hall of Justice, not only to protect Sirhan but also the judge, jury, lawyers and witnesses.

Sirhan will be escorted daily inside the building under heavy guard in an elevator from his 14th floor cell and thru a steel-plated corridor to the courtroom.

A defense lawyer who saw Sirhan during the weekend was asked what the 24-year-old Jordanian immigrant thought of his chances in the face of the overwhelming eyewitness evidence upon which the prosecution is basing a charge of first-degree murder carrying a maximum penalty of death in the California gas chamber.

"We have been realistic with him all along and he is in a realistic mood," the lawyer said.

"He has been very cooperative and helpful in preparing his case and wants to get it under way. His frame of mind is about what you would expect of anyone charged with a capital crime."

LAWYER IN DUTCH

Grant B. Cooper, the chief defense lawyer, was scheduled to appear in court today for further questioning about his admission that he lied about

obtaining a grand jury transcript in another recent case.

Mr. Cooper, one of the top criminal lawyers on the West Coast and former president of the Los Angeles Bar Association, said he "didn't tell the truth" because "it would have pointed a finger at my client." His hearing was not expected to delay the Sirhan trial.

Another Sirhan lawyer, Emile Zola Berman of New York, has said candidly that the principal objective of the defense is to save Sirhan from execution.

JURY SEQUESTERED

Once the jury is selected, its members will be locked up nightly in a hotel during the expected three months of trial.

The proceedings will be televised from a camera in an air conditioning unit in the rear of the court and sent by closed circuit to a screen in an auxiliary courtroom on the fourth floor set aside for the more than 100 members of the press who could not be accommodated in the trial room itself.

C
DATE 1-6-69

7

173-135-Sub B-41

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED

FBI--WASH. F. O.

COGHLIN-PCC

Around the Nation

Sirhan's Trial Begins Today in Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES—Sirhan B. Sirhan, the 24-year-old Jordanian immigrant accused of murdering Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, goes on trial today in an armor-plated courtroom.

One of his attorneys, Emile Zola Berman of New York, said the main objective is "to save his life."

A first-degree murder conviction could bring the death penalty to Sirhan. He is being tried before Superior Court Judge Herbert V. Walker, who pronounced the death penalty 21 years ago for Caryl Chessman, the rapist who died in the gas chamber in 1960.

1/7/69

A-7

Wash Post

173-135-SubD-42

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
JAN 10 1969	
FBI - WASH. F. O.	

COGNETT JAC

'A' Tightly Coiled Wraith of a Man

By RICHARD STARNES

Scripps-Howard Staff Writer

LOS ANGELES, Jan. 8 — Sirhan Bishara Sirhan, the accused assassin of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, is a too-tightly coiled wraith of a man whose prison pallor is almost luminous in its intensity.

Mr. Sirhan, in court here yesterday for the opening of his trial for murder, fidgeted and twitched his way thru a brief session in Superior Judge Herbert V. Walker's courtroom, alternately brooding over what promises to be a marathon skein of legalisms and darting brief, shy smiles at his mother and younger brother.

A slight figure at best (he once aspired to be a jockey) Mr. Sirhan looked waxen and emaciated after his seven months of close confinement in a windowless cell on the 13th floor of the huge Hall of Justice Building. For the 216 days since the slaying of Sen. Kennedy last June 5, Mr. Sirhan's world has been an austere, suicide-proof cubicle that measures six by eight feet.

Mr. Sirhan, 24, whose swarthy coloring testifies to his Arab ancestry, seemed to take interest in the proceedings in Judge Walker's court only once when judge and counsel casually alluded to the death penalty in discussing a point of law. At that point Mr. Sirhan's dark, troubled eyes seemed to retreat further into their cavernous sockets, as if only now had the man fully understood how desperate a situation he was in.

FAMILY PRESENT

The defendant's mother, Mary, a plump, careworn dumpling of a woman, and his brother, Munir, 21, sat in the last row of seats in the courtroom, watching the brief opening session closely and talking together quietly in their native Jordanian dialect.

Whatever befalls the accused assassin as the result of his trial, he seems as safe from the possibility of counterassassination as human ingenuity can render him. Security precautions taken by the Los Angeles sheriff's department are unprecedented in their thoroughness. Holders of the 40-odd pried press seats in Judge Walker's courtroom are subjected to a frisking more thorough than any can remember experiencing. Even the shake-down given reporters at the trial of Adolph Eichmann in Jerusalem eight years ago was much less thorough.

In an antechamber outside the heavily guarded 13th-floor courtroom where Mr. Sirhan is on

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2.)



Sirhan Bishara Sirhan

—UPI Photo

PAGE

1-8-69

C

THE WASHINGTON POST
& TIMES HERALD

THE EVENING STAR

THE SUNDAY STAR

X THE WASHINGTON DAILY NEWS

WASHINGTON POST AMERICAN

173-135-5060-44

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
FBI - WASH. F. O.	
Coughlin	

DEFENSE MAKES MOVES

A Pale Sirhan Faces the Court

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1.)

trial for his life, reporters must first empty their pockets and then submit to a thoro frisking. Even the soles of one's shoes are examined. Finally, another deputy examines the reporter's person with an electronic device that emits a faintly hysterical beeping whenever its invisible rays encounter metal such as belt buckles or the nails in shoe heels.

Even reporters assigned to an overflow auxiliary courtroom viewing the trial by closed-circuit television are subject to a somewhat less rigorous search, altho their post is four floors below Judge Walker's courtroom.

After all these security precautions, anything short of an escape attempt would have seemed an anticlimax, and that's just what the opening session turned out to be.

HEARS MOTIONS

Chief defense attorney Grant B. Cooper opened the trial by asking permission to argue a motion in Judge Walker's chambers. To argue it in open court, he said, would "complicate things." The three defense lawyers and the three prosecutors spent nearly an hour in chambers, and when the open session resumed Mr. Cooper offered three more motions. One, a technical motion to set aside Mr. Sirhan's plea of not guilty so that a motion could be offered to quash the indictment, will be argued at today's afternoon session.

Judge Walker, who has formidably bushy eyebrows and whose attitude seems to be one of benign firmness, ruled against Mr. Cooper's plea that two separate juries hear the two parts of Mr. Sirhan's trial required under the peculiar California law where a second proceeding is held to fix punishment if a guilty verdict is returned. Judge Walker, while ruling against the motion, said Mr. Cooper could resubmit it after the jury has determined Mr. Sirhan's innocence or guilt.

Observers expect Mr. Sirhan to be found guilty of some degree of murder. He was wrestled to the floor and a pistol taken from him seconds after Sen. Kennedy was mortally wounded. The shooting took place at the Ambassador Hotel here in the early-morning hours just after Sen. Kennedy had narrowly defeated Sen. Eugene McCarthy in the California Democratic presidential primary. Five others who were wounded have recovered and all are expected to testify against Mr. Sirhan.

If Mr. Sirhan is found guilty of first degree murder, and if the jury so decrees, the moor Jordanian immigrant may be put to death in California's gas chamber.

C
DATE 1-8-69

PAGE 2

THE WASHINGTON POST
& TIMES HERALD

THE EVENING STAR

THE SUNDAY STAR

X THE WASHINGTON DAILY NEWS

WASHINGTON-AFRO AMERICAN

173-131 20 B

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
JAN 8 1969	
FBI - WASH. F. O.	

Coyhan GC



—UPI Photo—
Mrs. Mary Sirhan, mother of Sirhan B. Sirhan, arrives for trial with another son, Munir.

^c
DATE 1-8-69

PAGE 2

____ THE WASHINGTON POST
 & TIMES HERALD

____ THE EVENING STAR

____ THE SUNDAY STAR

☒ THE WASHINGTON DAILY NEWS

____ WASHINGTON-AFRO AMERICAN

173-135

Subject of FOIPA Request

By 190-WF-174-118

Retain 6 Years 1-20-93

6