

Department of Justice

FROM OR ADDED TO THIS FILE)

DO NOT DESTROY  
CRITICAL VALUE  
NATIONAL ARCHIVES

BUREAU  
FOIPA

COMPUTER NUMBER DATE BY

255315 3/26/85

COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS

INVESTIGATION

Bureau File Number 62-587

DO NOT DESTROY 277A  
PENDING LITIGATION 277 167

See also Nos.

129, 198, 167, 104, 115, 210, 217

104  
115  
396  
277B

88.4

James Earl Ray  
Serials  
66-156-24  
64-880

c

LA - LOS ANGELES

FBI - CENTRAL RECORDS CENTER

Class / Case # Sub Vol. Serial #

0056 156 H 4 641 800

8/11/1200993



RRP003HBDT

4/19/1970

RD  
9-27-72

56

156-H

SERS.

641

THRU

800

Newspaper  
Clippings

Vol. 4

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

# SIRHAN... REFLECTIONS AND REACTIONS

By MYRNA OLIVER

Herald-Examiner Staff Writer

Tomorrow Sirhan Bishara Sirhan speaks, for himself.

It will be the first time the admitted killer of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy has testified publicly.

Defense attorneys want him to discuss his family's economic status, as part of their attempt to discredit the grand jury which indicted him. The grand jury, they say, was not representative of all age and economic groups and excluded Sirhan's.

In asking him to testify, the attorneys take the chance that Sirhan may lose his self control.

In and out of court, Sirhan has shown himself to be a volatile young man, and incarceration has far from calmed him.

Being locked up bothers him a great deal, indicated chief investigator for the defense Michael McCowan, who talks with Sirhan often in court and has seen him in his cell.

"He's climbing the walls," McCowan said.

The 24-year-old Jordanian defendant came casually to court one day, with more informal dress and less decorous behavior than any of the handful of spectators assembled to watch his battle for life.

Sirhan wore black cotton trousers, black shoes and socks, and a pale blue shirt that accented his features and the hollowness of his ever paler and thinning face.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

A-10 Herald-Examiner  
Los Angeles, Calif.

Date: 2/3/69  
Edition: Night Final  
Author: Myrna Oliver  
Editor: Donald Goodenow  
Title: Kensalt

Character:

or

Classification: 56-156  
Submitting Office: Los Angeles

☐ Being Investigated

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
FEB 3 1969	
FBI - LOS ANGELES	

36-156-JV-641

Observers were surprised at the schoolboy costume, which he had not worn publicly since his preliminary court hearings long before the beginning of the trial. His mother was surprised, too. She had bought him a suit to wear to the most crucial sessions he will ever attend, and worried that he had given up the formal, adult look it pretended to give him.

Nervous, taut Sirhan spends his days in court occasionally listening to proceedings; sharing questions or jokes with his attorneys, particularly Russell E. Parsons; reading trial transcripts or more mundane materials; and staring at his audience.

He studies the people who come to dissect him. Sirhan stares at the few young girls in the courtroom and smiles at those he seemingly knows. He looks at his observers, but flinches when his stare is returned. Like a small boy, he at once relishes attention that is unquestionably his, yet shies away from it.

On a recent day when attorneys questioned prospective jurors about the death penalty, political leanings and the youth's age, Sirhan yawned. He laughed when juror Albert Frederico had difficulty answering questions. Sirhan spasmodically rocked in his over-size chair. More nervous than interested, he half-rose in his seat to shift positions or to look over Parson's shoulder at materials on the defense table. He slipped

out of his seat a number of times, was finally restrained by his attorneys at the request of députés. He jumped at a knock on the courtroom door, at every sound.

Sirhan rubbed his eyes, smoothed wavy black hair, chewed well-bitten fingernails on his long, graceful bony hands.

He stood politely when introduced to persons in the courtroom, sat down and kicked his chair and kicked it again.

The angry young man wiped perspiration from his forehead, played with his button-down shirt collar, edged his chair nearer the table.

Sirhan poured himself a glass of water and savored it like a cocktail.

"He doesn't look like he could shoot anyone," said a girl in a yellow dress, object of several Sirhan smiles. "He looks so intelligent."

Being on constant court display appears to bother Sirhan. For there is no place for him to hide.

When Superior Judge Herbert V. Walker, who presides, called for an in-chambers session or a recess, Sirhan was the first person out of his chair. He bounced, showing youthful energy despite his long captivity and loss of weight, into a more private world, eager for a change, a break in his routine.

He moves quickly but quietly, politely. Friends and family have always praised Sirhan's politeness.

Leaving his court house stairwell to return to his place before the eyes of the fascinated, Sirhan ground out a cigarette.

He smokes a lot, his attorneys say. He tried to give it up after his imprisonment, but has gone back to as many cigarettes as he has time for outside the courtroom.

Mrs. Mary Sirhan, 56-year-old mother of the defendant, wondered about her son's courtroom antics.

"It would make anybody nervous," she said simply, standing quietly outside the courtroom during a recess. Wearing a blue dress that struck mid-calf, a black sweater and pumps with too-thin heels, her greying hair caught neatly in a bun, Mrs. Sirhan stood with her sons, Adel, 21, and Munir, 30.

The trio daily earns a smile and sometimes a wave from Sirhan. The mother, unshielded from press and public, is calmer than her son, although sometimes given to tears.

"I get my strength from above . . . every day before I come," she said with a pleasant but tight-lipped smile.

Sirhan Bishara Sirhan is a troubled young man. The trouble shows in his actions and reactions as he sits at the long defense table in Department 107 of the Superior Court in and for the County of Los Angeles.

Tomorrow is his day to speak.

**'Sirhan Bishara  
Sirhan is a  
troubled young  
man. The  
trouble shows  
in his actions  
and reactions  
as he sits at  
the long defense  
table in  
Department 107  
of the Superior  
Court in and  
for the county  
of Los Angeles.'**

**Staff photographer**

**Michael Harring**

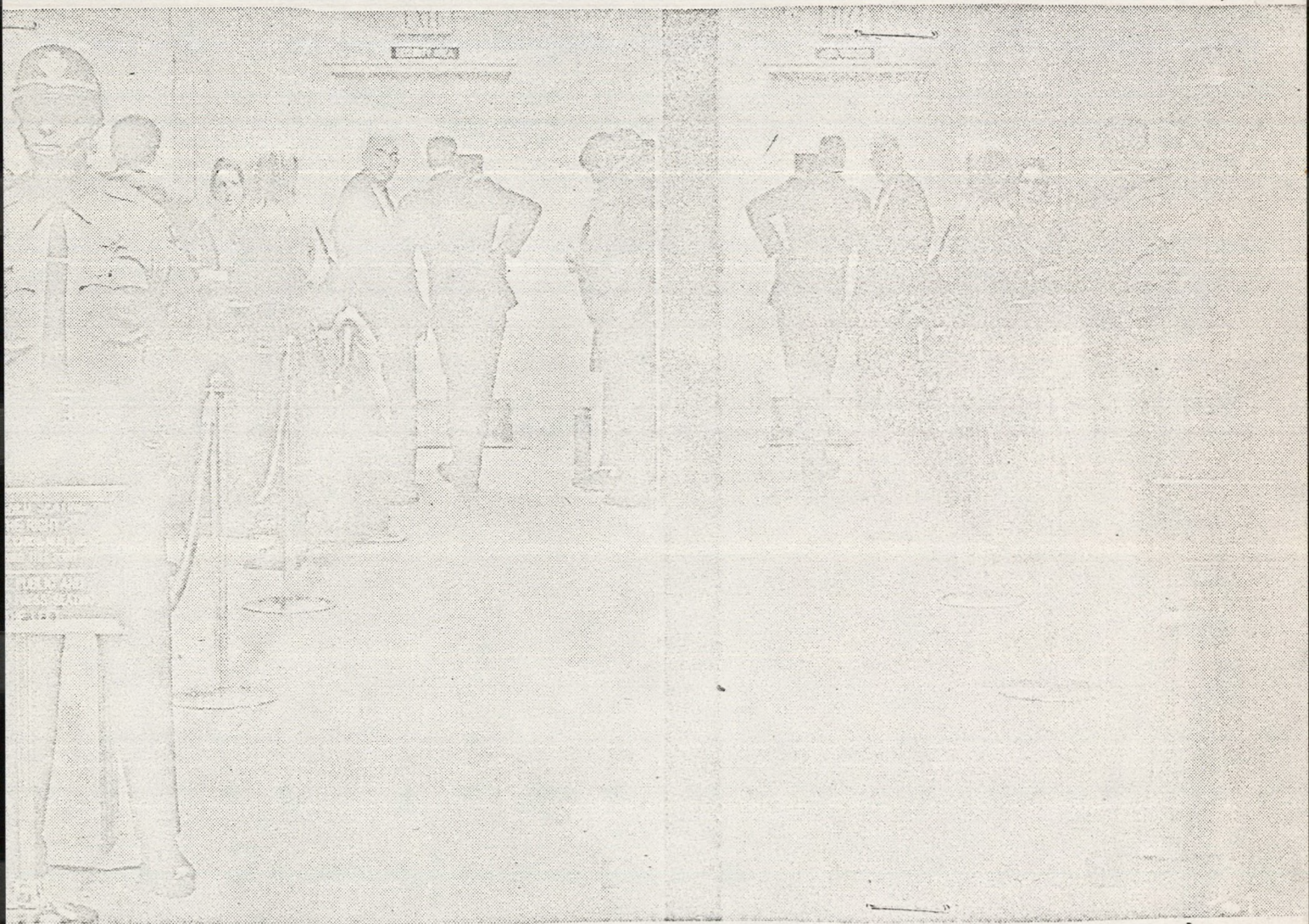
**captured some of the  
drama of the Sirhan  
trial in these shots  
taken in the Hall  
of Justice. Above:**

**Reflections on a  
marble wall  
mirror the mental  
reflections and  
speculations of  
visitors and  
officials waiting  
to gain access to  
the courtroom.**

**Left: No two**

**spectators have as  
much interest in the  
proceedings as  
Sirhan's mother  
Mary and brother  
Adel, who leave  
the courtroom arm in  
arm. Defense attorney  
Grant Cooper (below)  
waves a hand as he  
emphasizes a point in  
talk with newsmen.**





2025 RELEASE UNDER E.O. 14176

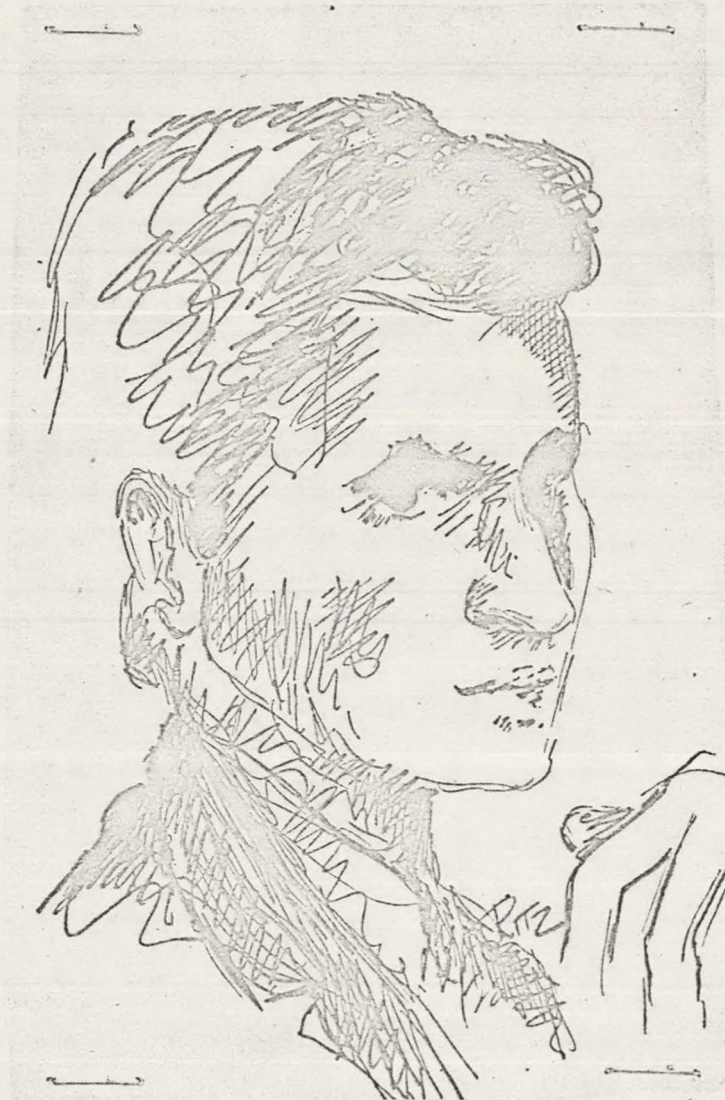












(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

# WOUNDED YOUTH SUES SIRHAN FOR \$1 MILLION

A \$1,050,000 damage suit against Sirhan B. Sirhan was filed in Superior Court Monday by a 17-year-old youth who was beaten and shot at the same time Sen. Robert F. Kennedy was fatally wounded.

Irwin Stroll, 6089 Horner St., said in his complaint he was "wrongfully, unlawfully and violently assaulted" by Sirhan at the Ambassador last June

5 "and struck in and about the face, arms and body and was shot in the leg."

Stroll, a student who was at the Ambassador as a member of Volunteers for Kennedy, asked \$50,000 in general damages and \$1 million in punitive damages. He is represented by attorney Barry A. Rose.

Sirhan currently is standing trial on a charge of murder in the death of Sen. Kennedy.

*Sirhan Sued For  
\$1 MILLION*

*re to Harvey  
2-4-69*

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

II-3 Los Angeles Times  
Los Angeles, Calif.

Date: 2/4/69  
Edition: Home  
Author:  
Editor: Nick B. Williams  
Title: Kensalt

Character:  
or  
Classification: 56-156  
Submitting Office: Los Angeles  
☐ Being Investigated

56-156-24-642

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
1 FEB 4 1969	
FBI - LOS ANGELES	

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

# Sirhan Testimony Scheduled For Today

By JOHN DOUGLAS

Herald-Examiner Staff Writer

Sirhan Bishara Sirhan today is scheduled to break his long silence and testify in Superior Court in support of a legal move to prevent his trial for the admitted slaying of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

Except for a few monosyllabic answers to procedural questions in the preliminaries of his case, today will be the first time the young Jordanian immigrant has spoken publicly on the witness stand since his arrest for Kennedy's murder the morning of June 5, 1968, in the Ambassador Hotel's Embassy Room kitchen.

According to Grant B. Cooper, chief of Sirhan's defense team, the 24-year-old ex-stableboy will testify only about his economic condition. There will be no questions about his admitted slaying of the New York senator and presidential aspirant.

Cooper and his associates, Emile Zola Berman and Russell E. Parsons, contend the 1968 Los Angeles County Grand Jury which indicted Sirhan was unconstitutionally selected because its membership did not include either poor persons, or anyone 30 years of age or younger.

Sirhan is both poor and young, the defense has argued, and was entitled to have youthful and impoverished members on the grand jury.

Chief Dep. Dist. Atty. Lynn D. Compton, in charge of the prosecution, has countered that any grand jury, no matter what its membership, would have indicted Sirhan, given the facts in the case. Compton has pointed out to Superior Court Judge

Herbert V. Walker, who presides over the case, that Sirhan's attorney's already have admitted in court that their client fired the shot which killed Kennedy.

Cooper seeks to have the in-

~~Superior Court + Judges  
Subpoenaed~~

~~Grand Jury Selection law~~

cc to Bureau  
2-5-69

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

A-1 Herald-Examiner  
Los Angeles, Calif.

Date: 2/4/69  
Edition: Night Final  
Author: John Douglas  
Editor: Donald Goodenow  
Title: Kensalt

Character: 012  
or  
Classification: 56-156  
Submitting Office: Los Angeles

☐ Being Investigated

56-156-N-643

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
FEB 5 1969	
FBI - LOS ANGELES	

dictment against Sirhan quashed because of the makeup of the jury.

Sirhan was unemployed at the time of the Kennedy murder. His assets totaled around \$1700 — the proceeds of a compensation case settlement — but this money was under the control of his mother. He carried four \$100 bills at the time of his arrest.

The mother, Mrs. Mary Sirhan also will be called to the stand today. She will tell of the family's struggle since coming here from Jordan in 1957. Bishara Sirhan, her husband, left the family in Pasadena to return to Jordan.

Mrs. Sirhan was left the sole support of her four sons and a daughter, now dead. At the time of the murder she was working in a Pasadena nursery school.

Nearly all the 133 Superior Court judges entitled to make nomination to the 1968 grand jury have been given questionnaires by the defense asking about the criteria they used in selecting their nominees.

Three judges, Arthur Alarcon, Edward Brand, and Kenneth Chantry, testified personally about their grand-jury-selection process last week. Chantry and Alarcon said it was difficult for them to find young persons and members of minority groups to be chosen before opening arguments because of the financial sacrifice demanded by a year's service on the grand jury.

Dr. Robert Schultz, University

of Southern California population specialist, has already testified that no member of the grand jury was under 30 and that none had an income of less than \$10,000 annually. Judge Brand testified that his nominees all had incomes of more than \$15,000 a year.

Dr. Schultz is analyzing the results of the questionnaires submitted by the judges and comparing them with the age and economic profile of the country revealed in the 1960 federal census. He will be recalled to the stand today.

Cooper has told Judge Walker that he believes he can complete his attack on the indictment and grand jury system during today's session of court.

If he does, the next order of business will be the swearing in of the 12 jurors already selected to try Sirhan. This may come Thursday. After they are sworn, the 12 will be sequestered (locked up) for the balance of the trial, which may be as long as three months. They will be kept at a downtown hotel, but may be visited by their "spouses of record" on weekends under a precedent-setting order issued by Judge Walker.

After the swearing of the 12 jurors six alternate jurors must be chosen before opening arguments in the case may begin. Selection of these alternates may take as long as a week.

Prosecution sources report.

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

# RFK Worker Sues Sirhan For Million

Sirhan Bishara Sirhan, now on trial for slaying Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, has been sued for \$1,050,000 by a Kennedy campaign worker.

Irving Stroll, 17, 6098 Horner St., Los Angeles, yesterday filed a suit in Superior Court charging he was shot in the leg, beaten and violently assaulted during Sirhan's alleged attack on Kennedy at the Ambassador Hotel June 5, 1968.

Attorney Barry A. Rose said young Stroll, a student and Kennedy campaign worker, was walking with the Senator when the assassination occurred.

The suit asks \$50,000 for medical and hospital expenses, plus estimated loss of earnings, and \$1 million in punitive damages.

Sirhan, a low-income worker all his life, maintains he is without funds while held in County Jail.

*Sirhan Sued for  
\$1 MILLION*

*Leto Buecker  
2-5-69*

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

A-1 Herald-Examiner  
Los Angeles, Calif.

Date: 2/4/69  
Edition: Night Final  
Author:  
Editor: Donald Goodenow  
Title: Kensalt

Character:

or

Classification: 56-156  
Submitting Office: Los Angeles

☐ Being Investigated

56-156-54-649

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
1 FEB 5 1969	
FBI - LOS ANGELES	



(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

# Sirhan Testifies for First Time, Tells of Poverty

His Mother Also Takes  
Stand, Expresses Thanks  
to U.S. for Food, Home

BY DAVE SMITH  
Times Staff Writer

Sirhan Bishara Sirhan, on trial for the murder of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, eagerly took the witness stand for the first time Tuesday to testify that he was an impoverished youth in this country.

After his brief appearance, his mother, Mary, testifying with head bowed and voice subdued, captured the interest of courtroom spectators.

Just after she had testified to her own poverty and after she was excused from the witness stand, the 55-year old woman stood—she isn't quite 5 feet tall—and told the courtroom in a clear voice:

"I thank God that He gave me the strength, and I also thank the United States, that I never got hungry and I have a roof over my head."

## 'It Just Came Out'

Mrs. Sirhan told reporters later that her outburst was unplanned and that "it just came out. I was so glad to have a home to raise my children."

The testimony of mother and son was to support the defense contention that Sirhan was indicted by grand jurors who came from a much wealthier, older and better-educated class than he.

Chief defense attorney Grant B. Cooper sought to quash the indictment against the admitted slayer of Sen. Kennedy on grounds that the grand jury selection system is unconstitutional because it doesn't represent a broad cross section of the population.

Superior Judge Herbert V. Walker denied the motion on two grounds: 1, that it was irrelevant to the proceedings, and 2, on its merits.

The trial was adjourned until this morning, when the 12 accepted jurors are to be sworn in and when selection of six alternate jurors is to begin.

Opening statements in the trial proper are expected next Monday or Tuesday.

The short, slim defendant strode quickly to the stand about 11 a.m. and said "I do," when asked to tell "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God."

## Confirms Net Earnings

Under Cooper's questioning, Sirhan was called upon merely to confirm that income tax withholding forms were indeed his and that his net earnings from 1964 through 1968 totaled only \$5,817.70 or an average of \$1,163.54 for each of five years.

Chief Dep. Dist. Atty. Lynn D. Compton questioned Sirhan only briefly, asking his age—to which Sirhan smiled, hunched forward and said eagerly, "I'll be 25 next month"—and whether he gave some of his earnings to his mother.

Sirhan said he gave money to her when he could and admitted that he got most of his withholding taxes back from the government because of his low earnings.

In his eight minutes on the stand, Sirhan spoke more than he has publicly since he was indicted last June for killing the New York senator.

Mrs. Sirhan followed her son to the stand, blinking rapidly as Cooper gave a rundown of her earnings since the family immigrated to Pasadena from Jerusalem in 1957.

Cooper revealed that her net earnings as a housekeeper at West-

*Grand Jury selection law*

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

II-1 Los Angeles Times  
Los Angeles, Calif.

*Motion to Quash  
Indictment Denied*

Date: 2/5/69

Edition: Home

Author: Dave Smith

Editor: Nick B. Williams

Title: Kensalt

Character:

or

Classification: 56-156

Submitting Office: Los Angeles

☐ Being Investigated

156-156-645

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
1 FEB 5 1969	
FBI - LOS ANGELES	

minster Presbyterian Church nursery school in Pasadena ranged from a minimum of \$1,471.40 in 1958 to a maximum of \$1,772.56 in 1966.

Mrs. Sirhan was employed throughout 1968, even after the assassination, but was terminated last month when attendance at her son's trial interfered with her work.

Mrs. Sirhan also testified that two other sons who lived at home, Adel, 30, and Munir, 21, sometimes gave her money "if I needed it" but that, she said, was "very little."

Munir earned an average annual net of \$1,510.05 from 1966 through 1968, and Adel earned an average net of \$3,890.70 from 1957 through 1967.

Mrs. Sirhan said she bought the family home at 696 E. Howard St. in Pasadena in 1963 for \$12,000. She and her daughter,

Ayda, who died in 1963, each contributed \$1,000 toward the down payment and the mortgage cost \$70 a month, she said.

Then Cooper asked, "Well, how do you keep up the payments? I mean, do you have a car of your own? How do you get to work?"

"Walking," said Mrs. Sirhan.

"Do you economize in other ways?" Cooper went on. "Do you bake your own bread, for example?"

"Yes, I do."

Cooper had no more questions and Judge Walker had excused Mrs. Sirhan when she suddenly paused and startled the courtroom with her impromptu statement.

Judge Walker smiled as she spoke, and Cooper, at the noon recess, gave Mrs. Sirhan a big hug and told her. "You did fine, mother."

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

# Sirhan Testimony Text

## FAMILY'S FINANCES RECOUNTED AT TRIAL

Following is the testimony of Sirhan Bishara Sirhan and his mother, Mrs. Mary Sirhan, at yesterday's session of the trial in which Sirhan is accused of the murder of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

The Sirhans testified as to their economic status as part of an unsuccessful defense move to overturn the indictment against the young Jordanian immigrant on grounds the 1968 Los Angeles County Grand Jury included no poor persons.

Chief defense counsel Grant B. Cooper directed the questioning as Sirhan preceded his mother to the stand.

Q—What is your name?

A—Sirhan Sirhan.

Q—Are you the defendant in this action?

A—Yes, sir, I am.

Q—Your mother furnished me with copies of your withholding tax statements for the years 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967 and 1968. Do you recognize them?

A—(Very loudly) Yes, I do.

Q—Did you work at Peak's Drive-in Number Two . . . in Pasadena in 1964?

A—Yes, sir, I did.

Q—Did you work for Clarence Cooping, who is also known as John H. Weidner's Organic the Elite Motor service . . . in Pasadena in 1964?

A—Yes, sir, I did.

Cooper then read into the record the withholding statements which showed that Sirhan had earned net wages of \$103.34 working for Peak's, and \$1330.69 working for Elite Motor for a total 1964 net income of \$1437.03.

Cooper then asked:

Q—In 1965, did you work for Ivan Millicec, 233 N. Altadena, Pasadena?

A—Yes, sir.

Q—Did you work for Jack E. Davis, Pasadena?

A—Yes, sir, I did.

Cooper then said that his client's net income for 1965 was \$349.90.

Q—In 1966, did you work for the Yellow King Ranch in Chino?

A—Yes, sir, I did.

Q—And did you work for the Altfillisch Construction Co.?

A—Yes.

Q—And that is in Corona, California?

A—Yes, sir.

Cooper said that Sirhan's net income for 1966 was \$2212.45.

Sirhan was injured when thrown from a horse while working on the Corona ranch and subsequently received a compensation settlement of \$2000.

Q—Did you work in 1967 for John H. Weidner . . . that is John H. Weidner's Organic Foods, 1590 N. Lake, Pasadena?

A?

Q—(By court reporter) How do you spell Weidner?

A—(By Sirhan) W-e-i-d-n-e-r.

A—(By Cooper) W-e-i-d-n-e-r.

Q—You did work for John H. Weidner — that is the Organic Food Place?

A—Yes, sir, I did.

Cooper said that Sirhan's net income in 1968 up through June 4, the day before he admittedly shot Kennedy, was \$752.35.

In cross-examination, Prosecutor Compton, after asking Sirhan his age, turned his attention to Sirhan's home life.

Q—During this time did you live with your mother?

A—For the most part.

Q—Were you attending school?

A—Yes, sir.

Q—What years were you in school?

A—1964, 1965, 1966 . . . No, it was 1964 and 1965.

Q—That was Pasadena City College?

A—Yes, sir.

Q—Did you turn over the money from these parttime jobs to your mother?

A—Part of it, yes.

Q—Did you ever give her any money back?

A—Yes, sir, I did.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

A-10 Herald-Examiner  
Los Angeles, Calif.

*Sirhan Testifies*

Date: 2/5/69  
Edition: Night Final  
Author:  
Editor: Donald Goodenow  
Title: Kensalt

Character:

or

Classification: 56-156  
Submitting Office: Los Angeles

☐ Being Investigated

56-156-646

SEARCHED	INDEXED <i>AC</i>
SERIALIZED <i>1</i>	FILED <i>C</i>
1 FEB 6 1969	
FBI — LOS ANGELES	

Mrs. Sirhan barely whispered when she took the oath following her son to the stand.

Q—Did he have an automobile?

A—Second hand.

Q—Did he pay to operate that automobile?

A—Very much.

Q—Did he give you money?

A—If I needed it and he had it . . . very little.

Cooper reviewed her tax returns from 1953 through the end of last year.

Mrs. Sirhan testified her youngest son, Munir, 21, also lived at home and paid no board and room.

Q—Did Munir give you money when you asked for it?

A—Yes, sir (pause) . . . very little.

Q—Are you working there now?

Adel Sirhan, 30, also lived at home and paid no board, Mrs. Sirhan testified.

A—No.

Q—When did you last work?

His income was the highest in the family and, according to tax records put in evidence by Cooper, had an average annual income of \$3399.70 for the last 10 years. Of Adel, Cooper asked:

A—Jan. 15.

Q—Did he help . . . did he give you money if you needed it?

During the noon recess, Mrs. Sirhan explained to newsmen she had left her job because of the trial which she attends nearly every day.

Q—If he had it.

"My heart is here," she said.

A—Mrs. Sirhan testified Adel is a musician. He plays in an Arab night club in Pasadena.

She said that the school had told her she could have her job back when the trial is over.

Compton, in cross-examination, showed great interest in the home the Sirhan's are purchasing.

Obviously proud of her work, she opened her wallet and showed photographs of the classes at the school. As she riffled through the photo case, there were photographs of several of her children. There was none of Sirhan Sirhan.

Q—Are you making payments on this house?

Cooper asked Mrs. Sirhan about the family's life in Pasadena.

A—Yes.

Q—How much are the payments?

Q—Did you get paid every month?

A—\$70 a month.

A—Every two weeks.

Q—And you pay your utilities — your lights, your water, your gas and your telephone?

Q—How much?

A—Yes.

A—\$92.21 I took home.

Q—And you have a television set?

Q—During all this time did Sirhan Sirhan live at home?

A—A second-hand one.

A—Yes, sir.

Cooper, on re-direct examination, asked Mrs. Sirhan:

Q—Did he contribute money to the support of the home?

Q—Do you have an automobile?

A—No.

A—Not any regular amount.

Q—How do you get to work?

Q—Did he buy his own clothes?

A—I walk.

A—Yes, sir.

Q—Do you bake your own bread?

A—Yes.

Q—And you save in other ways, too, don't you?

A—Yes.

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

# Sirhan's Trial Moves Into Crucial New Phase

By JOHN DOUGLAS

Herald-Examiner Staff Writer

Last legal roadblocks cleared, the trial of Sirhan Bishara Sirhan on charges he murdered Sen. Robert F. Kennedy moved into a new and crucial phase today.

The eight men and four women who will decide the young Jordanian's fate are scheduled to be sworn in later in the day. Once sworn, they will be sequestered (locked up) in a downtown motel for the duration of the trial.

The way was cleared for swearing the jury yesterday when Judge Herbert V. Walker, who presides over the trial, rejected a defense motion to quash the indictment charging Sirhan with Kennedy's murder. Chief Defense Attorney Grant B. Cooper argued that the indictment should be dismissed because the 1933 Grand Jury was improperly chosen in that it included no poor persons and no one under 30.

Sirhan is 24 and his family is in a low income group, it was brought out in testimony yesterday.

Both Sirhan and his mother, Mrs. Mary Sirhan, 33, testified yesterday about the family finances.

When she had completed her testimony Mrs. Sirhan electrified the court by standing in the witness box and declaring:

"I thank God who gives me

strength . . . I thank the United States also that I never go hungry and that I have a roof over my head."

She explained to newsmen later that she made her little speech because:

"They were making me look like a poor woman.

"I have God's blessing. That is what I had to tell them.

"They say I make little money," Mrs. Sirhan continued in her thick Arabic accent. "That's not what is poor."

Asked if she was relieved that her testimony was over, she replied:

"Well, it didn't hurt me."

Will she testify again later in the trial?

"If I am needed."

Mrs. Sirhan is scheduled to pay another visit to her son in the isolated jail visiting room atop the Hall of Justice today when court adjourns. She last visited him last Thursday.

How is he bearing up under his long seclusion?

"He is the same . . . always the same," she answered, tears welling in her eyes.

Next order of business in the Sirhan trial is the selection of six alternate jurors. This cannot be done until the trial jury takes its oath. The alternates, too, once they are selected, will be sequestered.

Prosecution attorneys expect it will take from three days to a week to choose the six alternates.

If they are correct, this means that opening arguments in the often-delayed trial will begin next week.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

A-2 Herald-Examiner  
Los Angeles, Calif.

*Motion to Quash  
Indictment Denied*

Date: 2/5/69  
Edition: Night Final  
Author: John Douglas  
Editor: Donald Goodenow  
Title: Kensalt

Character:

or

Classification: 56-156  
Submitting Office: Los Angeles

☐ Being Investigated

SEARCHED	INDEXED <i>AC</i>
SERIALIZED <i>12</i>	FILED <i>12</i>
1 FEB 6 1969	
FBI - LOS ANGELES	

*Oct 5 Bureau  
2-6-69*

*56-156-24-647*



Herald-Examiner Photo by Michael Haering

# MARY SIRHAN LEAVES HALL OF JUSTICE

— She testified at her son's trial —



(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Jury Sworn In for Sirhan Trial

An eight-man, four-woman jury was sworn in to try Sirhan Bishara Sirhan, admitted slayer of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, and attorneys for the defense and the prosecution then began selecting six alternate jurors. Although three were tentatively seated in the first day, each side has 12 peremptory challenges by which they may excuse jurors, and it was estimated that this last pretrial phase could last a week or more. The original 12 jurors were accepted Jan. 24, but swearing-in was delayed by argument on a defense motion to quash the indictment. Superior Judge Herbert V. Walker denied that motion Tuesday, thus clearing the way to the last legal roadblock before the prosecution begins presenting its case, probably late next week.

MOTION TO QUASH  
INDICTMENT DENIED

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

I-2 Los Angeles Times  
Los Angeles, Calif.

Date: 2/6/69  
Edition: Home  
Author:  
Editor: Nick B. Williams  
Title: Kensalt

Character:

or

Classification: 56-156  
Submitting Office: Los Angeles

☐ Being Investigated

cc to Bureau  
2-6-69

SEARCHED	INDEXED <i>ll</i>
SERIALIZED <i>ll</i>	FILED <i>ll</i>
1 FEB 6 1969	
FBI - LOS ANGELES	

*56-156-N-648*



(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

# 'Not A Soul Smiles Back'

By AL STUMP

Herald-Examiner Staff Writer

Chief Dept. Dist. Atty. Lynn Compton's beefy shoulders opened space through the crowd-jammed corridors at the Sirhan-Bishara Sirhan trial and the ex-UCLA football lineman said with satisfaction:

"Judge Walker's ruling was a foregone conclusion. Our investigation shows Sirhan was a fairly typical hard-up kid going to college before he dropped out—but no poverty case."

The prosecution leader referred to Judge Herbert V. Walker's droned-out denial of a defense motion to dismiss the grand jury indictment against Sirhan on ground the jury did not include members of minority groups. For 90 minutes yesterday, the team defending the man charged with slaying Sen. Robert Kennedy attempted to show that the jury which indicted Sirhan was unfairly constituted.

Then jaunty Chief Defense Counsel Grant B. Cooper went to work to establish the Sirhan family as poor and struggling.

When Walker made his decision, the freshly-barbered, neat-as-a-pin defendant sat stiffly for a moment, his face blank. For the first time during a morning of Sirhan half-smiles, grins and soulful glances toward his mother and the audience, he seemed dejected.

Until this setback, he had been alternately bored and pleased with what he heard. Three times he laughed, lightly.

The little Jordanian's smiles come unexplainably—at times when the dullest of testimony is being heard. Often, he swivels his gaze around the audience,

as if seeking to share his mysterious mirth.

Not a soul smiles back. He's looking into the largest collection of dead pans in Los Angeles.

Pipe-smoking Compton said: "At one point today, I showed Mary Sirhan (mother of the accused) photos of her home on East Howard Street in Pasadena and placed them in evidence. For good reason. They show a reasonably nice home.

"The Sirhans are far from at the bottom of the economic barrel. They've lived decently."

Prior to Judge Walker's ruling, Grant Cooper snapped at a reporter. "I don't know how the prosecution measures poorness. Why, Sirhan and his mother together earned only \$2,503.04 last year!"

Cooper emphasized that 56-year-old Mary Sirhan's 10-year job at a nursery brought her only an average of \$1035 per year, while her "\$12,000 home" cost \$70 a month in payments.

"They have full utilities, a TV set, a car, don't they?" countered Compton, outside court.

"Now we can get on with this trial."

★★★

Although delicately built, Sirhan has good-size hands.

When he raised his right hand upon being sworn in yesterday, it was clenched into a fist.

He moved swiftly from his seat, when called to testify for the first time and took the stand as if eager to enter some words of his own into this elocutionary contest. What the clenched hand meant was a mystery to viewers.

His voice was a bit hoarse, but firm. He was cool and seemed suddenly to gain in years as he crisply shot back answers concerning his jobs and income. Asked his age, he was precise—"I'll be 25 next month." (March 19).

At the trial's outset, the Jordanian was shy and clung to his attorney, Russell Parsons. Two weeks ago he shook off Parson's arm when the lawyer attempted to hook arms with him, then did it a second time. With that, Parsons gave up the effort. Further signs of independence have been seen, as with his departure from the courtroom during recesses.

No longer does he wait to be escorted out by plainclothes sheriff's deputies and a door opened for him. He lopes from his seat to a corner door, shoves it open himself and disappears with a flick of coattails.

Munir Sirhan, his 20-year-old brother, sat yesterday with one toe constantly tapping the floor. He left glumly, after Judge Walker's upholding of the indictment, with a muttered:

"We didn't do good today. Not good at all."

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

A-2 Herald-Examiner  
Los Angeles, Calif.

Date: 2/5/69  
Edition: Night Final  
Author: Al Stump  
Editor: Donald Goodenow  
Title: Kensalt

Character:

or

Classification: 56-156  
Submitting Office: Los Angeles

☐ Being Investigated

56-156-24-649

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
FEB 6 1969	
FBI - LOS ANGELES	

cc to Bureau  
2-6-69





—Herald-Examiner Photo

# **SIRHAN ON HIS WAY TO TESTIFY**

The suspect has shown signs of independence

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Two prospective alternate jurors in the murder trial of Sirhan Bishara Sirhan were unseated by peremptory challenges by both the prosecution and defense. Mrs. Zena F. Lewis also was challenged on legal grounds by the prosecution after she told Superior Judge Herbert V. Walker that she could decide on the matter of innocence or guilt, but that under no circumstances could she ever vote a death penalty. She was only the third person in nearly 80 prospective jurors to oppose the death penalty. Five alternate jurors have been chosen and one seat remains to be filled, but both sides have 11 peremptory challenges remaining, which could forestall the start of testimony until late next week.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

I-2 Los Angeles Times  
Los Angeles, Calif.

Date: 2/7/69  
Edition: Home  
Author:  
Editor: Nick B. Williams  
Title: Kensalt

Character:

or

Classification: 56-156  
Submitting Office: Los Angeles

☐ Being Investigated

56-156-21-650

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
1 FEB 7 1969	
FBI - LOS ANGELES	

*cc to Bureau  
2-7-69*

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

# Sirhan Alternate Jurors Hunt Fails

By JOHN DOUGLAS

Herald-Examiner Staff Writer

Lawyers in the Sirhan murder trial labored without success today to complete selection of six alternate jurors to hear the case of the man accused of the murder of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

Five prospective alternates were examined during this morning's session. None were chosen.

A Los Angeles woman, Mrs. Linda S. Katrenich, was excused because she said she was so opposed to the death penalty that she would never vote for it in a murder case, no matter what the facts.

Secret questioning in the chambers of Judge Herbert V. Walker, presiding at the trial, led to the disqualification of Mrs. Bernadine Holmgren.

She is a clerk for the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power and lives in La Crescenta.

It was learned that she told Judge Walker that her opinions of Sirhan were so strong that his defense lawyers would have to prove to her he should not be sent to the gas chamber for first-degree murder.

At day's end yesterday there were only five tentatively accepted alternates seated in the jury box. When the session opened there had been six.

Defense and prosecution each exercised one peremptory challenge during yesterday's session. Peremptory challenges are those for which lawyers need give no reason.

Marshall Wolfe, a Los Angeles Department of Water and Power technician, was challenged by the prosecution, and Mrs. Georgia Liddle, wife of an El Monte postman, was excused by the defense.

Each prospect is questioned in the judge's chambers about religion, political beliefs and the effect publicity in the case may have had on the prospective juror's judgment.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

A-3 Herald-Examiner  
Los Angeles, Calif.

Date: 2/7/69  
Edition: Night Final  
Author: John Douglas  
Editor: Donald Goodenow  
Title: Kensalt

Character:

or

Classification: 56-156

Submitting Office: Los Angeles

☐ Being Investigated

56-156-2-651

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
/ FEB 10 1969	
FBI - LOS ANGELES	

cc to Bureau  
2-10-69

(Mount Clipping In Space Below)

# SIRHAN'S HOPE: AVOIDING DEATH

Defense attorneys in the Sirhan Bishara Sirhan murder trial expect the admitted slayer of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy to go to prison for the killing, but they hope to save him from San Quentin's gas chamber.

This startling admission came from Sirhan's chief defense counsel, Grant B. Cooper, yesterday as defense and prosecution continued their so far unsuccessful search for six alternates for the jury which will try the 24-year-old Jordanian immigrant.

Cooper told prospective juror Clarence Yaw that not only would the defense concede Sirhan shot Kennedy, but also it would not attempt to win an acquittal for him.

During a recess, the defense lawyer said that this "has been our plan all along, but we haven't said it publicly before. "I thought it was time we did," he concluded.

Defense sources said Sirhan was aware of his lawyers' strategy and accepted it. However,

Cooper's courtroom announcement appeared to upset the defendant in the Kennedy assassination case.

Yaw was tentatively seated as an alternate juror yesterday, but despite this, the case moved no further toward final selection of the six alternates. They must be chosen to supplement the 12 trial jurors before the case may proceed.

Joe Morson, investigator for the State Insurance Department, who had been tentatively seated as an alternate Thursday, was removed by peremptory challenge late yesterday.

When court reconvenes Monday, questioning of another prospective alternate, Gordon Wilson, a plumber, will resume.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

A-1 Herald-Examiner  
Los Angeles, Calif.

Date: 2/8/69  
Edition: 8 Star  
Author:  
Editor: Donald Goodenow  
Title:

Character:  
or  
Classification:  
Submitting Office: Los Angeles  
☐ Being Investigated

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
FEB 10 1969	
FBI - LOS ANGELES	

*cc to Bureau  
2-10-69*

*56-156-H-652*

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

## ARGUMENTS OVERSHADOW REAL ISSUE

## Sirhan Trial--Sidelights Get the Spotlight

BY DAVE SMITH

Times Staff Writer

In five tedious weeks of legal preliminaries and jury selection in the murder trial of Sirhan Bishara Sirhan, it is the sidelights that occupy the spotlight.

The accused slayer of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy has moved to stage center only once—in eight minutes of routine testimony that was ruled irrelevant more than a week ago.

The grim cause of this cumbersome and expensive trial—the killing of Sen. Kennedy—still remains a reality, whose point is blunted by abstractions and arguments. It will take the blunt impact of testimony—descriptions of the shooting last June 5—to drive home to a dulled courtroom what the trial is all about.

But until that day, there are other pictures, little ones:

Sirhan, who announced last week in an almost eager tone that he will be 25 next month, seems to have a mercurial temperament as jury selection drones on. At times he sits in a brooding silence, then breaks into amiable whispers with defense counsel, complete with broad smiles and pats on the back.

On Friday, he was in an unusually animated mood, even giggling at several whispered comments. He almost seemed not to appreciate the seriousness of his situation.

But perhaps, in a way, he does.

A pretty blonde reporter has attended almost every session of the trial, and Sirhan always notes her entrances and exits with an appreciative eye.

Sirhan, a Palestinian immigrant, has been in jail since June 5 and his mother, Mary, 55, is the only woman he has spoken to since then.

On Friday, the blonde reporter was wearing a fire-engine red dress, and Sirhan followed her with his eyes to her seat, then stared fixedly at her for much of the afternoon.

She usually tries to avoid his gaze, but at one point their eyes met briefly; he nodded slightly and gave her a faint, wistful smile.

She looked away, and his face went stony, eyes blank, and looked away also. A moment later, his eyes wandered back to her.

Sirhan never dated girls much before last June. Now, perhaps, he never will.

The slender, pale defendant is interested in the number of reporters who have come all this way just to cover his trial, and Friday was something of a landmark to him: Boris Orekhov, New York correspondent for the Soviet newspaper Pravda, was among the spectators.

It was for one day only—Orekhov is in California on another assignment—but still, it shows what wide interest Sirhan has created.

In the second row of spectators and journalists, a shabbily dressed older man was telling another enviously of what he'd heard about the handling

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

II-1 Los Angeles Times  
Los Angeles, Calif.

Date: 2/8/69  
Edition: Daily  
Author: Dave Smith  
Editor: Nick B. Williams  
Title: Kensalt

Character:  
or  
Classification: 56-156  
Submitting Office: Los Angeles  
☐ Being Investigated

56-156-N-653

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
FEB 10 1969	
FBI - LOS ANGELES	

cc to Bureau  
2-10-69

of jurors, who will be confined day and night through the two or three months the trial lasts.

"Those jurors," he said, "they got a real nice deal. They get \$5 a day and the best of eats. I'd like to get a deal like that."

Jurors actually draw \$10 a day for jury duty, and they'll be allowed \$3.50 a day for "eats"—\$1.50 for breakfast, \$2.50 for lunch and \$4.50 for dinner. They'll be kept at the Biltmore and will be out of contact with their families and friends, except for weekend visits from a spouse, at his or her expense.

As the trial preliminaries drag on, prospective jurors are excused, questioned, challenged, seated, dismissed—it is a process

that could end in the next five minutes if both sides would accept the six alternate jurors — or could stretch over another week.

Neither defense nor prosecution attorneys are telling precisely what they're looking for in an ideal juror, so the courtroom waits.

In one row, a correspondent for an Arab-language news agency follows the wearying proceedings.

Immediately behind him, writing in Hebrew, sits Roni Eschel, correspondent for the newspaper Maariv of Tel Aviv.

And immediately behind Eschel, sits a tiny, gray-haired woman who from time to time writes down her own thoughts, in Arabic, in a small blue notebook. She is Mary Sirhan.

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

# Sirhan Jurors Ready to Undertake A Life of 'Splendid Isolation'

By John Douglas

Herald-Examiner Staff Writer

Sometime this week, 16 men "good and true" will begin an experiment in communal living which may last a quarter of a year and end with their deciding whether a young man will live or die.

And some of these 16 "good men and true" are women.

They are the jurors and alternate jurors in the Sirhan-Bichara Sirhan murder trial. The designation "good men and true" applies equally in the lingo of the law to male and female jurors.

The 16 will live in splendid isolation in downtown Los Angeles' Biltmore Hotel.

Their material needs will be ministered to by the bailiffs of the Superior Court of the State of California and for the County of Los Angeles.

And their spiritual needs will not be neglected.

Superior Judge Herbert V. Walker, a key layman of the Episcopal Church, has seen to that.

At his request, His Excellency the Right Rev. Francis Eric Blom, Bishop of the Los Angeles Episcopal Diocese, has agreed to appoint a chaplain to the jury. The selection of this priest, who will be an Anglican ministering to the jurors no matter what their faith, will be announced this week.

This weekend the jurors are at home, and the alternates have not yet been chosen. But they will be this week.

Once they are, they will be sequestered (locked up) in the Biltmore.

Court attaches forecast that this sequestering may come Thursday, following the Lincoln's Birthday holiday on which there will be no Sirhan trial.

For the jurors, the Biltmore experience will in many ways be like living in a prep-school dormitory. But the prefects will carry guns and wear uniforms of Los Angeles deputy sheriffs.

There will be half a dozen stationed on the Biltmore's sixth floor, where the county has taken over a full wing of 25 rooms for the jury.

Each juror will have his own room for which the county will pay \$9 a day. The deputy sheriffs will be housed in rooms costing \$8 daily.

When the jurors want privacy they can stay in their own rooms. If they seek the society of their colleagues, they will be able to do so in two recre-

ation rooms. Television will be available—but censored by a deputy who will make sure that no television news of the trial is available to the jurors and alternates.

Jurors will also be able to read newspapers and magazines, but all reference to the Sirhan case will have been cut from these before the jurors see them.

On weekends, and—should the trial last that long—on holidays—they will be taken on trips. Disneyland is one destination . . . Knotts Berry Farm another.

Deputy Sheriff Willard Polhemus, Judge Walker's bailiff for the last nine years, will be "social director" for the jurors. He has done this job before.

If a juror wants a drink, he can have one, provided he doesn't want too many. But, he will have to pay for them himself. The County of Los Angeles does not buy liquor.

Weekends the jurors can be visited by their wives and husbands, if they have them. The visits can extend overnight, if the spouse is willing to pay the Biltmore \$3 for a bed.

Meals will be paid for by the county at the rate of \$8.50 a day. If a juror wants more food, or more expensive food, he has to pay for it himself.

When the trial is concluded, the jurors will know each other better than nearly any group in the world.

Among them will develop friendships and perhaps even love . . .

And perhaps hate.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

A-3 Herald-Examiner  
Los Angeles, Calif.

Date: 2/9/69

Edition: Final

Author: John Douglas

Editor: Donald Goodenow

Title: Kensalt

Character:

or

Classification: 56-156

Submitting Office: Los Angeles

☐ Being Investigated

cc to Bureau  
2-11-69

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
1 - EB 11 1969	
FBI - LOS ANGELES	



(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Sirhan

Juror

Search

Drags On

BY JOHN DOUGLAS

Herald-Examiner Staff Writer

Search for six alternate jurors to hear the case of Sirhan Bishara Sirhan, admitted slayer of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, resumes today.

Defense and prosecution attorneys spent three days on the tedious task last week and ended Friday no nearer completion of the jury than they were when they began.

A number of factors complicate the search for the alternates.

Perhaps the most important one is that for the first time since Sirhan's trial began Jan. 7 the court of Superior Judge Herbert V. Walker has been faced with outright admitted hostility and prejudice toward the defendant, on the part of the prospective alternate jurors.

While none of the 59 panelists examined in the search for the basic trial jury of eight men and four women admitted he could not give the 24-year-old Jordanian immigrant a fair trial, in one day last week three prospective alternates were excused because they testified publicly that they could not and would not give Sirhan a fair trial.

At week's end a total of five prospects had been excused because of self-admitted bias toward Sirhan.

This new factor is of major concern to the defense counsel team-headed by Grant B. Cooper. It is something that Emile Zola Berman, New York City attorney who has joined the defense staff, has feared for a long time.

One of its results is that the defense is being, if anything, more cautious in the selection of alternates than it was in choosing the jury itself.

Cooper, discussing the state of mind of the jurors toward the mental capacity of his client, tends to repeat his questions again and again — until he is absolutely sure he is understood and he understands the juror.

While this repetition is at first hard to fathom, its purpose became clear last week in the questioning of Los Angeles postman Robert W. Perry.

Perry had gone through basic questioning by Judge Walker in which he had said that he believed in the "American concept of justice that says every defendant is presumed innocent until proven otherwise."

In a secret in-chambers hearing before the judge, he had been questioned about his political views and his pre-conceptions, if any, about the case, and had passed.

But finally, near the end of his questioning Cooper asked Perry if he, considering everything he knew and had heard in the courtroom, felt prejudiced against Sirhan.

Perry answered:

"Very possibly."

That was the end of his tenure as a prospective alternate juror.

Another prospect, in the in-chambers secret hearing, told Judge Walker that, as far as she was concerned, it would be up to the defense to prove to her that Sirhan should not be convicted of first degree murder and sent to the gas chamber.

The prosecution, too, has had its problems.

Two prospective alternates this week testified that they could not in conscience vote the death penalty in any case of murder, no matter what the circumstances. They, too, were excused.

The upshot of these difficulties is that selection of alternate jurors is bogged down, and consequently so is the start of presentation of evidence against Sirhan.

This deadlock will be broken sometime this week, the attorneys believe.

But neither side is in a hurry.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

A-2 Herald-Examiner  
Los Angeles, Calif.

Date: 2/10/69  
Edition: Late News  
Author: John Douglas  
Editor: Donald Goodenow  
Title: Kensalt

Character:

or

Classification: 56-156

Submitting Office: Los Angeles

☐ Being Investigated

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
1 FEB 11 1969	
FBI — LOS ANGELES	

cc to Bureau

2-11-69

56-156-N-655



(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

# 'Mystery' at Sirhan Trial

By JOHN DOUGLAS

Herald-Examiner Staff Writer

New mystery surrounded the Sirhan Bishara Sirhan murder trial today as District Attorney Evell J. Younger spent more than half an hour in a secret conference with lawyers for both sides in the chambers of Superior Court Judge Herbert V. Walker.

Neither Younger nor defense attorney Grant B. Cooper would discuss the conference.

The district attorney parried newsmen's questions by saying: "Afraid I can't tell you anything, sorry."

Cooper said: "I have nothing to say."

Except to seek modification of a court order limiting publicity in the case of the admitted slayer of Senator Robert F. Kennedy, Younger has taken little part in the Sirhan trial.

His chief deputy, Lynn D. Compton, has led the prosecution. Compton was not present for the conference and has not been in court for the past three trial days.

Since the trial began Jan. 7, he has frequently been absent, attending to other business.

After getting off to a delayed start, the Sirhan trial this morning again bogged down in the selection of alternate jurors.

Night prospective alternates were excused because they convinced the court service during the lengthy trial would be a hardship to them.

Finally, Mrs. Eleanor Landgreen was tentatively served as an alternate.

Mrs. Landgreen, mother of three, and downtown Los Angeles resident, is the wife of an insurance company pension administrator.

She testified she is not absolutely opposed to the death penalty, but would only vote to impose it in "most extreme cases."

Again today Sirhan took little interest in the court proceedings around him.

Entering court, his eyes sought out his family. Spotting them he gave his usual wave and then proceeded to ignore them and the rest of the spectators. Michael McFowan, chief investigator for the defense, gave the 24-year-old Jordanian immigrant a copy of a political leaflet which Kennedy's admitted slayer spent a great deal of time studying.

The leaflet was captioned.

"Sirhan knew the truth. We Americans do not know."

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

A-2 Herald-Examiner  
Los Angeles, Calif.

Date: 2/10/69  
Edition: Night Final  
Author: John Douglas  
Editor: Donald Goodenow  
Title: Kensalt

Character:

or

Classification: 56-156

Submitting Office: Los Angeles

☐ Being Investigated

cc to Bureau  
2-11-69

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
1 FEB 11 1969	
FBI - LOS ANGELES	

56-156-34-656

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

# Younger Pays Surprise Visit to Sirhan Trial

Confers With Attorneys for Both Sides,  
Stirs Speculation of New Development

BY DAVE SMITH

Times Staff Writer

Dist. Atty. Evelle J. Younger paid his first visit to the murder trial of Sirhan Bishara Sirhan Monday, causing speculation that a new development may be forthcoming in the case against the admitted killer of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

Younger met with prosecution and defense counsel in the chambers of Superior Judge Herbert V. Walker.

Both sides said later they had discussed scale models of parts of the Ambassador, where Sen. Kennedy was shot last June 5. They declined to comment further.

Also on Monday, the defense and prosecution

ground through examination of 22 prospective alternate jurors, winding up at the same place they have occupied for a week: five alternates tentatively seated, one seat to be filled, with nine peremptory challenges still available to each side.

Two men were excused on legal grounds when they said they were opposed to the death penalty and could not vote a death verdict under any circumstances. They were the first men among more than 100 prospective jurors to voice this position. Five women also have expressed opposition to capital punishment and also have been excused on legal grounds.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

I-24 Los Angeles Times  
Los Angeles, Calif.

Date: 2/11/69  
Edition: Home  
Author: Dave Smith  
Editor: Nick B. Williams  
Title: Kensalt

Character:

or

Classification: 56-156  
Submitting Office: Los Angeles

☐ Being Investigated

56-156-24-1057

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
FEB 11 1969	
FBI - LOS ANGELES	

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

# Full Sirhan Jury Expected by Today

By JOHN DOUGLAS

Herald-Examiner Staff Writer

Only the selection of one alternate juror delays the start of presentation of the prosecution case in the Sirhan Bishara Sirhan murder trial.

Grant B. Cooper, chief defense counsel for the 24-year-old admitted slayer of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, predicted at the close of yesterday's court session that this additional alternate would be chosen by today.

The Sirhan jury will have six alternates and Cooper said that the five so far seated in the jury box are probably acceptable to both sides.

According to Cooper, if selection of the alternates is completed by noon today, Chief Deputy District Attorney Lynn D. Compton, who heads the prosecution, can make his opening statement Thursday. Wednesday is a holiday—Lincoln's birthday.

Prosecution and defense attorneys conferred with Judge Herbert V. Walker presiding over the trial, yesterday on some major carpentry that will be needed in the armor-plated, eighth-floor, Hall of Justice courtroom where Sirhan is being tried before the prosecution can open its case.

The Los Angeles Police Department's special Sirhan task force has constructed two scale models—one of the ground floor of the Ambassador Hotel, the other of the kitchen off the hotel's Embassy Room where Kennedy was shot.

The larger mockup will give the jury a view of the scene of the crime. It will be used instead of letting the jurors visit the hotel. Security considerations for Sirhan rule out a visit to the scene.

The second model—that of the kitchen—will probably be introduced in evidence, Cooper said.

Both models are very large and will require considerable rearrangement of the small courtroom.

Dist. Atty. Evelle J. Younger personally took part in yesterday's conference, his first visit to the courtroom since the Sirhan trial began. Compton was absent.

Cooper said other matters besides the models were discussed, but neither he, nor Younger, would discuss the conference.

A total of 23 prospective alternate jurors were examined yesterday. Two alternates, tentatively seated, were removed by prosecution and defense challenge. Two replacements were selected for them.

Most of the jurors excused yesterday were let go after they testified it would be an economic or family hardship for them to serve during the trial, which may take as long as three months.

Three prospective alternates were challenged by Dep. Dist. Atty. John Howard after they said they had strong convictions against the death penalty. In two cases, Cooper opposed the prosecution challenge. The third, that of Mrs. Chester Hart, was not contested.

All five alternates tentatively seated in the jury box could be removed by defense and prosecution peremptory challenge—those for which the lawyers need give no reason. However, Cooper believes that the five now seated will be mutually satisfactory.

They are:

Clarence Xaw, Los Angeles businessman.

Mrs. Eleanor Landgreen, wife of an insurance company pension administrator.

Miss Ruth Stillman, Los Angeles fire insurance adjuster.

John H. Johnson, a computer systems designer.

Mrs. Bertha Feersira, wife of an electrician.

Unless challenged, these five, and one other, will join the trial jury of eight men and four women in hearing the case against the Jordanian immigrant. Should a regular juror

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

A-3 Herald-Examiner  
Los Angeles, Calif.

Date: 2/11/69  
Edition: Night Final  
Author: John Douglas  
Editor: Donald Goodenow  
Title: Kensalt

Character:

or

Classification: 56-156  
Submitting Office: Los Angeles

☐ Being Investigated

56-156-N-658

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
FEB 11 1969	
FBI - LOS ANGELES	

fall ill, or for some other reason be disqualified, one of the alternates, chosen by lot, will take his place.

The alternates, as well as the jurors, will be locked up in the Biltmore Hotel when not in the courtroom. They will be housed in private rooms in a wing of the hotel's sixth floor. They will take their meals in a reserved section of the Biltmore's main dining room.

Husbands and wives of jurors and alternates will be permitted to visit them overnight on weekends.

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

# Sirhan Change of Plea Seen Likely

## Admission of Guilt May Shorten Trial and Bring Life Sentence

BY DAVE SMITH

Times Staff Writer

Sirhan Bishara Sirhan probably will plead guilty to first-degree murder in the slaying of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, it was learned Tuesday.

The switch from an earlier plea of innocence could come when the trial reconvenes Thursday morning, and would result from either an understanding or a firm belief that a life term would be the maximum penalty.

Such a change of plea would make it unnecessary to try Sirhan on the question of guilt or innocence and would reduce the trial—once expected to consume two or three months—to a penalty hearing, possibly only a few days' duration.

The only likely obstacle would be Sirhan's own refusal to change his plea.

Defense attorneys huddled Tuesday afternoon with Sirhan, his mother, Mary, and brother, Munir, to discuss the possible advantages of a guilty plea.

Sirhan has been described as fearful that a change of plea could rob him of the chance to publicly air his reasons for the assassination.

### Reason for Switch Told

The willingness of the three defense lawyers to change the plea is said to be based on their conviction that, while psychiatric evidence would not warrant a death penalty, they could not hope for a jury verdict of less than first-degree murder.

They are confident that the psychiatric evidence by both sides would block any effort to secure a death penalty. Instead, they feel, it tends to support the defense contention that Sirhan's diminished mental or emotional capacity mitigated the degree of premeditation that must be proved to warrant a death penalty.

They are so confident that they consented about two weeks ago to allow the prosecution's psychiatric consultant, Dr. Seymour Pollack, to examine Sirhan.

It was believed that the prosecution, after considering Pollack's findings, substantially agreed with the defense assessment.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

I-1 Los Angeles Times  
Los Angeles, Calif.

Date: 2/12/69  
Edition: Home  
Author: Dave Smith  
Editor: Nick B. Williams  
Title: Kensalt

Character:  
or  
Classification: 56-156  
Submitting Office: Los Angeles  
☐ Being Investigated

56-156-N-659

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
7 FEB 12 1969	
FBI - LOS ANGELES	

It was also believed that Superior Judge Herbert V. Walker is inclined to accept the change of plea, with the understanding that the matter would proceed immediately to some form of penalty trial before a jury.

Under California law, whether a person pleads guilty to first-degree murder or is convicted of it, the only two possible sentences are death or life imprisonment.

#### Younger Makes First Visit

Speculation on a possible guilty plea has been rife since the plea of innocence was first entered last year. Matters came to a head Monday morning, however, when Dist. Atty. Evelle J. Younger made his first visit to the trial.

After a half-hour session between prosecution and defense counsel in Judge Walker's chambers, both sides were uncommunicative about the reason for the meeting.

It was learned, however, that a possible change of plea was discussed.

Then Younger himself, in a television interview Monday night, gave added impetus to the speculation when he commented cryptically that the Sirhan trial could take "three months or three days."

A change of plea is one of the few things that could reduce the trial so drastically after forecasts of months of testimony and nearly six weeks already consumed with preliminary motions and selection of 12 regular and six alternate jurors.

#### Younger and Chief Dep.

Dist. Atty. Lynn D. Compton enlivened the speculation still further Tuesday when they said the prosecution would not be willing to accept a guilty plea to either manslaughter or second-degree murder. They did specify that they would have to consider a plea of guilty to first-degree murder.

The defense has indicated for some time; it was learned, that it might consider a change of plea.

#### Younger's Stand

Younger is believed to have taken the position, however, that before accepting a plea of guilty he should have the full benefit of the results of the police investigation and of Dr. Pollack's evaluation of Sirhan.

Soon after Dr. Pollack first interviewed the defendant, Younger informed persons close to the Kennedy family that the acceptance of a change in plea was being discussed, and the information was received noncommittally.

Younger himself revealed Tuesday that he had offered the Nixon Administration an opportunity "to make any comments concerning the disposition of the case" in so far as it may have international implications.

#### Got No Comment

"I made it convenient," he said, "for appropriate officials in government to express an opinion to me—they declined and made no comment or recommendation."

The regular jury was sworn in two weeks ago, and six alternates were sworn in Tuesday morning, after questioning that was remarkably cursory in contrast to earlier, methodical testing by both sides of each prospective juror's religious, political and social views.

It was noteworthy, also, that the prosecution made no mention this week to prospective jurors of the possibility they might be asked to vote a death penalty.

The last alternate accepted before the alternate panel was sworn, Miss Gloria J. Halfey, was questioned briefly in chambers and not at all in open court. She was the only juror, among more than 100 prospects, to be accepted in such a manner.

#### Adds Speculation

"This remarkably rapid and uncritical acceptance further deepened speculation that both defense and prosecution were eager to dispense finally with the time-consuming jury selection process and proceed."

Judge Walker, meanwhile, after swearing in the alternate panel, released all 18 jurors until 8 p.m. today, when they are to report to the Biltmore to be sequestered for however long the Sirhan trial will now last.

Dep. Dist. Atty. David N. Fitts accepted Miss Haffey on behalf of the prosecution and announced that the prosecution would accept the alternate panel.

Defense attorney Grant B. Cooper, asked whether the defense wanted to exercise another peremptory challenge, said "Your Honor, I'm happy to announce we have a jury."

"In addition to Miss Haffey, the alternate panel included George Stitzel, a Los Angeles Times press-room foreman; Miss Ruth A. Stillman, an insurance adjuster for Firemen's Insurance; John H. Johnson, a computer designer for Scientific Data Systems; Clarence Yaw, a purchaser for Standard Oil of California, and Mrs. Eleanor B. Landgreen, a Temple City housewife, mother of three sons.

Johnson is the only Negro among the alternates and the 12 regular jurors sworn in earlier.

Mrs. Landgreen is the only sworn juror to come close to opposing capital punishment. She admitted under questioning that she could impose the

death penalty "only in the most extreme cases."

The defendant's mother, Mary, 55, told reporters afterward, "They seem like nice people. I must pray for them and may God give them the light."

Defense attorney Emile Zola Berman said of his planned opening statement for the defense: "We're going to work in all the problems that make up Sirhan Sirhan and explain how he ticks or doesn't tick."

Noting that the trial would be recessed for Lincoln's birthday, Judge Walker adjourned proceedings until 9:30 a.m. Thursday and told the jurors "enjoy the holiday and take care of yourselves."

The judge told the jurors that facilities for confession and Mass would be provided for Catholic jurors and that an Episcopal priest will provide liturgical services for Protestants.

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

# Sirhan Trial Focus Back To Grim Facts

By JOHN DOUGLAS  
Herald-Examiner Staff Writer

Murder is the name of the crime—first-degree murder.

Robert F. Kennedy, junior senator from New York and presidential aspirant, was the victim.

Sirhan Bishara Sirhan, 24, stands accused of this murder, and, if convicted, could lose his own life in San Quentin Prison's gas chamber.

These grim facts—the reasons for the Sirhan murder trial—have been obscured in the past few weeks as defense and prosecution lawyers have stepped through the delicate minutiae of jury selection and preliminary motions.

They will be back in perspective tomorrow when Chief Deputy District Attorney Lynn D. Compton opens the case for the People of the State of California.

Compton will detail the facts of the crime, and announce how he and his associates, Deputy District Attorneys David N. Pitts and John Howard, intend to establish them.

Near the jury box as Compton speaks will be a scale model of the ground floor of the Ambassador Hotel. The burly chief prosecutor will refer to it again and again as he traces the slain senator's movements early the morning of June 5, 1963.

He will trace Kennedy to a spot near an ice machine in the Embassy Room kitchen. There, he will say, Sirhan, with a .22 calibre revolver in his hand and malice in his heart gunned down the senator.

Sirhan admits the slaying, and denies the malice.

While there is little argument about the basic facts of Kennedy's murder, Compton says, "there are things people don't know." The chief prosecutor will reveal these in his opening speech.

Compton's remarks will be to the jury and its alternates. But they will ring loudest in the ears of the man whose fate they are designed to seal—Sirhan.

Seated at the table with the diminutive Jordanian will be the one of his attorneys who has yet to say 10 words in the trial—Emile Zola Berman.

Soon after Compton finishes, Berman will break his silence.

He has been selected to make the opening speech for the defense. Berman, and his co-counsel Grant B. Cooper and Russell E. Parsons, had two options as to the opening. They could immediately follow Compton, or defer until the conclusion of presentation of the state's evidence.

The defense strategy is to move as rapidly as possible to take the edge off Compton's presentation—which it admits will be very damaging.

Compton is going for the jugular. Sirhan admits slaying Kennedy, and his lawyers concede he cannot escape punishment. But they want that penalty to be paid in prison, not in the death house. The prosecution wants the jury to find the youthful Jordanian immigrant guilty of first degree murder, and then, in the subsequent penalty trial, to condemn him.

Berman will listen carefully to Compton, checking the prosecutor's statements against the manuscript of his own opening... seeking where to counterpunch.

Listening, too, but not at the defense table, will be another lawyer—Abdeen Jabara of Detroit, an Arab, and mystery man of the Sirhan team.

Jabara is a source of friction in the Sirhan defense battery.

To Parsons, he is a valued consultant. To Berman and Cooper he is often a thorn in the side.

He appeared almost unnoticed shortly after the trial began last month. At first he spoke to no one and declined even to give his name to newsmen.

After a few days he was assigned a seat next to the defendant's mother—Mrs. Mary Sirhan. He chatted with her in her native Arabic, and appeared to comfort her when trial developments disturbed her.

Pressed for an explanation, Defense Chief Investigator Michael McCowan identified Jabara as a lawyer who was helping the defense, at his own expense, in the translation of certain Arabic documents. McCowan mentioned entries in Arabic in the diaries Sirhan kept.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

A-3 Herald-Examiner  
Los Angeles, Calif.

Date: 2/12/69  
Edition: Night Final  
Author: John Douglas  
Editor: Donald Goodenow  
Title:

Character:  
or  
Classification: 56-156  
Submitting Office: Los Angeles  
☐ Being Investigated

56-156-24-660

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
1 FEB 13 1969	
FBI — LOS ANGELES	



Then Jabara left Los Angeles and some of the defense lawyers publicly expressed their relief.

Yesterday he returned, and in response to questions, Parsons identified him as a "consultant to the defense."

He said he had selected Jabara at the recommendation of an Arab lawyer practicing in this city, whom he declined to identify.

Parsons said Jabara was advising on aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict which affect the defense. Jabara also prescribed a reading list of pro-Arab literature for defense counsel to read.

"He is most valuable to me," Parsons said.

But from other members of the defense battery came grumbling that the Arab attorney was attempting to turn the Sirhan murder trial into a forum for arguing the Arab-Israeli embroglio.

"I won't do it," said one.

Jabara himself denied this. He said he was interested in the Arab-Israeli question only as it was "relevant" to Sirhan's defense.

But he added that he expected the Sirhan trial "may bring better American understanding of Arab-Israeli problems."

Newsmen learned this of his background:

He is a member of a small firm of young lawyers in Detroit. His firm has a civil rights-type practice and has frequently represented hippies and tenants' councils.

He is active in Arab affairs in Detroit and Wayne County, Mich., and has several times spoken on behalf of the Arab cause at Wayne State University.

He says he was invited there jointly by the Young Socialist League and the Arab Students Association.

Jabara said he has represented Arab groups, but does not have as a client any Arab nation, or Arab nationalistic organization.

The defense views the Kennedy murder, in part, as a political assassination. As it seeks to prove that Sirhan acted under "diminished capacity"—that his killing of Sen. Kennedy was without the element of malice—Parsons believes that it may be necessary to show that obsession with the Arab-Israeli struggle, and Kennedy's avowed espousal of the Israeli cause preyed on Sirhan's mind. Witnesses will be produced to testify to this.

But not, perhaps, for a month. First, the prosecutors will have their innings and, through the use of 60 to 80 witnesses they will seek to convince the jury that the killing of Kennedy was "willful, deliberate, premeditated murder."

(These witnesses will be policemen, technicians, perhaps newsmen and above all friends of Sen. Kennedy who saw the slaying.)

Nucleus of the defense case will be the Sirhan family, compatriots of the young Arab, and a team of forensic psychiatrists headed by UCLA's Dr. Bernard Diamond.

They forecast Deputy Dist. Atty. Fitts:

"The true arena of this conflict will become the mind of Sirhan Sirhan."

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

# Sirhan Trial Arguments Open Today

By JOHN DOUGLAS

/Herald-Examiner Staff Writer

Legal counsel today set the stage for the life-or-death trial of Sirhan Bishara Sirhan, admitted slayer of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

Opening arguments by both sides will be heard by a jury of eight men and four women in the court of Superior Judge Herbert V. Walker.

Court was not in session yesterday because of the Lincoln's Birthday holiday, and Sirhan's lawyers used the respite for a conference with their client and his family. They spent about 1½ hours in Sirhan's cell, but declined to discuss the meeting.

Present at the conference with Sirhan were his three lawyers, Grant B. Cooper, Russell E. Parsons, and Emile Zola Berman; Abdeen Jabara, Arab attorney from Detroit, who is consultant to the defense; Robert Kaiser, Sirhan's biographer and a defense investigator, and two of the defendant's brothers — Munir and Adel Sirhan. The brothers arrived late and were admitted to the jail only after a long delay.

The admitted slayer's mother, Mrs. Mary Sirhan, who has been in the courtroom nearly each day of the trial, remained at her Pasadena home. The brothers explained that she was "very tired and had to rest."

Parsons said the conference was called to "discuss all aspects of the case." He said it was the second such meeting in two days. The first, Tuesday, lasted two hours, he said.

Chief Dep. Dist. Att. Lynn D. Compton will open for the prosecution and Berman is scheduled to follow him. The New York defense attorney said yesterday he expected his speech to last 35 minutes. Berman said he was not sure any witnesses would be heard today.

Prosecutors made it clear they were ready to proceed with their case and expect no more delays in the trial. Asked if there was a possibility that Sirhan might change his plea to guilty and throw himself on the mercy of the court, Dist. Att. Evelle J. Younger replied through a spokesman, "We have made no deals."

Jurors and alternate jurors in the case reported last night to the Billmore Hotel's sixth floor where they will be locked up for the duration of the trial. They will be brought to the Hall of Justice each day by Sheriff's bus and remain under constant guard until they return their verdict.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

A-1 Herald-Examiner  
Los Angeles, Calif.

Date: 2/13/69  
Edition: Late News  
Author: John Douglas  
Editor: Donald Goodenow  
Title: Kensalt

Character:

or

Classification: 56-156

Submitting Office: Los Angeles

☐ Being Investigated

56-156-N-661

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
FEB 13 1969	
FBI — LOS ANGELES	

cc to Bureau  
2-13-69

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

## Sirhan Offered New Defense Team

Reports that Sirhan B. Sirhan, on trial for the assassination of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, might change his plea to guilty brought an offer from the Action Committee on Arab-American Relations to hire a new team of defense lawyers in Sirhan's behalf. Dr. M. T. Mehdie, chairman of the committee, said the present defense lawyers have "failed to understand that the Sirhan case is a historic political event and not an ordinary legal problem."

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

I-2 Los Angeles Times  
Los Angeles, Calif.

Date: 2/13/69  
Edition: Home  
Author:  
Editor: Nick B. Willaim  
Title: Kensalt

Character:

or

Classification: 56-156  
Submitting Office: Los Angeles

☐ Being Investigated

SEARCHED _____	INDEXED <i>AC</i>
SERIALIZED <i>1</i>	FILED <i>h</i>
/ FEB 13 1969	
FBI - LOS ANGELES	

*Cato Bureau*  
*2-13-69*

*56-156-21-662*

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

# Sirhan's Motion for Mistrial Denied as Prosecution Opens

## Jury Hears Statement That Defendant Attended Party for Sen. Kennedy at Ambassador Two Days Before Slaying

BY DAVE SMITH

Times Staff Writer

Sirhan Bishara Sirhan attended a preelection party for Sen. Robert F. Kennedy at the Ambassador two days before the senator was shot to death there, it was disclosed in the prosecution's opening statement Thursday.

The disclosure came shortly after Superior Judge Herbert V. Walker denied a motion for mistrial by Sirhan's defense attorneys.

The motion was based on grounds that a story in The Times Wednesday prejudiced Sirhan's right to a fair trial by saying the 24-year-old defendant probably would change his plea from innocent to guilty of first-degree murder.

### Jurors Interviewed

Judge Walker, after interviewing jurors privately in chambers, denied the motion. Though several jurors admitted hearing of the story, Judge Walker said, all agreed they could disregard it and decide the case solely on the basis of evidence produced in court.

Dep. Dist. Atty. David N. Fitts, in the opening statement of the prosecutions' case, told jurors of Sirhan's activities, including target practice for four months before the slaying on June 5.

The previously undisclosed highlight concerned a preelection party for the New York senator last June 2 in the Ambassador's Palm Court—a few yards away from the site of the fatal encounter in a pantry corridor.

Sen. Kennedy, destined to be the victor in the June 4 Democratic primary, addressed several hundred boosters at the party. Among the crowd, said Fitts, was the defendant, recognized by an acquaintance who had worked next door to Sirhan in Pasadena.

### 'It Could Kill a Dog'

Two days later, Fitts said, Sirhan was target practicing at the San Gabriel Valley Gun Club in Duarte with an eight-shot .22-caliber revolver. Asked by an observer what he planned to do with a pistol of such small size, Sirhan was quoted as answering:

"It could kill a dog."

Fitts was painstaking in his reconstruction of the slaying of Sen. Kennedy, the wounding of five others and the "complete pandemonium" that followed.

After Sirhan had been taken into custody, he said, the then Assembly Speaker Jess Unruh asked the

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

I-1 Los Angeles Times  
Los Angeles, Calif.

Date: 2/14/69  
Edition: Home  
Author: Dave Smith  
Editor: Nick B. Williams  
Title: Kensalt

Character:

or

Classification: 56-156  
Submitting Office: Los Angeles

☐ Being Investigated

56-156-14-663

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
FEB 14 1969	
FBI - LOS ANGELES	

Jordanian: "Why did you do it?"

"I did it for my country," Sirhan was quoted as saying.

"Why him?" said Unruh. "He was trying to help."

"It's too late. It's too late," the defendant was said to have answered.

Sirhan, 21, was born in Palestinian Jerusalem, in a sector later held by Jordan and now held by Israel. He is said to be violently anti-Zionist and pro-Arab, and was described as embittered by Sen. Kennedy's campaign statements on U.S. aid to Israel after the 1967 Israeli-Arab war.

Fitts said Sirhan also asked police as he was being taken away, "You think I'm crazy, so you can use it in evidence against me?"

Fitts' smoothly delivered, hour-long statement was interrupted at one point by a defense objection when Fitts referred to six notebooks taken from Sirhan's Pasadena home.

These notebooks—from which Mayor Sam Yorty quoted Sirhan as having written that "Kennedy must be assassinated before June 5"—are the subject of a defense motion to suppress, on grounds they were illegally seized.

Judge Walker sustained the objection, and Fitts promptly concluded his statement by telling the jurors that evidence would show that Sirhan "alone was responsible for the tragedy at the Ambassador Hotel."

#### Facial Expressions

Earlier, during argument over the mistrial motion, Sirhan displayed a wide variety of facial expressions — from broad smiles of amusement to a hand at his forehead in apparent surprise—as defense attorney Grant B. Cooper detailed the content of The Times story.

It was known, however, that Sirhan had read the story previously.

Cooper asked the mistrial ruling "on grounds that publicity emanating from the Los Angeles Times, followed by resumes on every television and radio station," had publicized the story "to the saturation point before the sequestering of the jury" Wednesday night.

Cooper offered into evidence—not to be shown to the jury — copies of Wednesday's home delivered editions of The Times and transcripts of broadcasts Wednesday on most metropolitan radio and television stations.

The Times' front page story said Sirhan "probably" would switch from a plea of innocent to a plea of guilty of first-degree murder, based on his defense counsel's understanding or firm belief that life imprisonment would be the most drastic penalty he would face.

The story also said that the only likely obstacle to such a change of plea would be Sirhan's refusal to agree to the change.

After consultation later Wednesday between Sirhan and his defense team, it was not known whether he had refused or approved such a change.

Cooper said of the story Thursday in court:

"For obvious reasons, and I'm not pointing an accusing finger at anyone, I can only say that this did not emanate from the defense."

He said news of the defense plan to agree to a guilty plea, with the understanding that a life sentence would ensue, would deny Sirhan the right to be later found guilty of any lesser degree of murder, such as second-degree murder or manslaughter.

Chief Dep. Dist. Atty. Lynn D. Compton answered Cooper's motion by saying there was "no showing at this time that jurors have read the article or heard of it on radio or television."

Compton said The Times' article was "simply a surmise on the part of a reporter" and that it was "beyond my comprehension that anyone could be so influenced by such an article."

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

# Sirhan Steps Traced by Prosecution

By JOHN DOUGLAS  
Herald-Examiner Staff Writer

Sirhan Bishara Sirhan makes his first big effort today to refute prosecution claims that he carefully plotted his admitted killing of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

Emile Zola Berman, in an opening speech for the defense, will attempt to convince the jury of eight men and four women that Sirhan shot Kennedy in an act of political assassination while under obsession, rather than premeditated murder. The defense strategy will be an attempt to save the 24-year-old Jordanian immigrant from death in the gas chamber.

The Berman statement, on tap as this morning's first order of business, will follow yesterday's prosecution statement by Dep. Dist. Atty. David N. Fitts in which the silver-haired prosecutor drew this word picture of Kennedy's murder for the jury:

• Sirhan skulked through the kitchens of the Ambassador Hotel 47 hours before the Kennedy slaying and was seen staking them out by two witnesses. The occasion was a reception for Kennedy in the hotel's Palm Court.

• Returning to the kitchens June 5, 1968, Sirhan shot the New York Senator at almost point-blank range, firing several shots which fatally wounded Kennedy and injured five other persons.

• The day of the shooting, the young Arab spent most of the day target shooting at the San Gabriel Valley Gun Club, and told another club patron he was going to use his gun for hunting. "It could kill a dog," Fitts said

Sirhan told a witness who will testify later in the trial.

• Sirhan told former California State Assembly Speaker Jesse Unruh he shot Kennedy "for my country," when Unruh accompanied him and two police officers to the Rampart Police Station following the Jordanian's arrest. Unruh, said Fitts, will testify to this.

Detailing the prosecution case for the jury, Fitts, who spoke as a last-minute substitute for Chief Dep. Dist. Atty. Lynn D. Compton, hung his presentation on a series of key dates, which he listed in chronological order.

The first, he said, was August 10, 1965, "while smoke still belched from the Watts riots. On this day, Albert Leslie Herz purchased a .22 calibre "Coet" Iver-Johnson, eight-shot revolver. The pistol eventually found its way into the possession of George Erhart, a co-worker of Munir Sirhan, the defendant's brother.

On the next key date, "on or about Feb. 2, 1968," said Fitts, Erhart drove to the Sirhan home at 655 East Howard St., Pasadena, with a companion and "in the daylight hours waited jointly for Munir Sirhan and the defendant Sirhan Sirhan." The purpose of visit was to sell Munir the gun.

"Erhart displayed the gun,"

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

A-1 Herald-Examiner  
Los Angeles, Calif.

Date: 2/14/69  
Edition: Night Final  
Author: John Douglas  
Editor: Donald Goodenow  
Title: Kensalt

Character:

or

Classification: 56-156  
Submitting Office: Los Angeles

☐ Being Investigated

56-156-24-664

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
FEB 17 1969	
FBI - LOS ANGELES	

continued Pitts, "and haggling with respect to the purchase price ensued."

"A bargain was struck for \$25 cash."

"Munir Sirhan produced \$19 and the balance was produced by Sirhan Sirhan."

Pitts went on:

"The next day of consequence was June 1, 1968."

Sirhan, according to Pitts, visited the Lock, Stock and Barrel Gun Shop in Pasadena where he purchased "several boxes of .22 calibre ammunition called 'mini-magnum' from a clerk, Larry Arns."

"Getting ahead of my story," Pitts said, "Sen. Kennedy was killed with mini-magnum ammunition."

"On Sunday, June 2, 1968, there was a reception in the Ambassador Hotel's Palm Court for Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, who was then actively campaigning for the Democratic nomination for the presidency."

"... Among those who attended was Sirhan Sirhan. He was observed in the lobby area."

"He was observed by William Bloch... who recognized him as a person he had known casually earlier" when both were stock boys in Pasadena shops.

"Mrs. Miriam Davis went into the Ambassador's kitchens in search of a drink of water. She observed Sirhan in one of the kitchens leaning on a bar, dressed casually. She mistook him for a hotel employee."

"She will testify at this trial."

Pitts pressed on:

"On June 4, 1968, most people in California went to the polls to cast their ballot in the primaries. Sirhan Sirhan went to the San Gabriel Valley Gun Club."

"The defendant spent hours on the pistol range, engaged in rapid fire practice at which he excelled."

"Sirhan Sirhan told a witness... he was going to use his small side arm for hunting."

"He remarked, 'It could kill a...'"

Turning to the events of the shooting itself, Pitts said that following his victory speech in the Embassy room of the Ambassador, Kennedy and his party went into a pantry where Sirhan lay in wait.

"The defendant, Sirhan Sirhan, stood on a tray rack in a recess area immediately alongside the ice machine."

"Sirhan stepped quickly from the rack..."

"The Senator stood all unaware."

"Sirhan reached into the waistband of his trousers."

"He walked to the side of Karl Eucker (hotel maitre de standing with Kennedy)..."

"He extended his right arm across in front of Eucker. His left hand was in the vicinity of the Senator's head... and at point blank range he fired eight shots."

"It is probably the first shot that resulted in the Senator's death some 25 hours later."

"The muzzle range (of this...

shot) was one inch," Fitts said. Kennedy's right hand went to his right ear."

The force of the shots knocked Kennedy to the ground. He fell backward and came to rest diagonally to the ice machine."

Fitts said that Bill Barry, bodyguard to Kennedy, wrestled the gun away from Sirhan, but the wiry Jordanian regained it.

"... The scene was complete pandemonium..."

"Roosevelt Grier (former football star and member of the Kennedy team) was accompanying Mrs. Ethel Kennedy... They were still outside the kitchen."

"Grier is a large man..."

"He pushed his way through the crowd... and wrestled the gun from the defendant..."

"He gave it to Rafer Johnson (former Olympic decathlon star and another Kennedy partisan) for safekeeping..."

Fitts continued, "Johnson asked, 'Why did you do it?'"

"Sirhan answered, 'I will explain.'"

Sirhan listened with great concentration as Fitts spoke, but at this statement he smiled and shook his head vigorously.

Moving quickly toward his summation, Fitts told of Sirhan's arrest and his refusal to divulge his name to police.

He said that when Travis White, one of the police officers who arrested Sirhan, asked him about the crime, the youthful Jordanian replied:

"You think I am crazy... so you can use it in evidence against me..."

Sirhan carried no documents when arrested, Fitts said. He did have a car key and \$450.10 in cash, \$400 of it in \$100 bills.

The key led to tracing the defendant's car to the place where it was parked on New Hampshire Street, three blocks from the Ambassador.

The car, a pink and white DeSoto, contained Sirhan's wallet and a receipt for the ammunition bearing his fingerprints. Sirhan, said Fitts, was not

identified until his brother, Munir, went to the Pasadena Police Station to identify him.

Kennedy, Fitts told the jury, was taken to Central Receiving Hospital and transferred to Good Samaritan Hospital where a team of physicians, led by Dr. Henry Cuneo, performed brain surgery.

A bullet was recovered which ballistics tests will show was fired from Sirhan's gun, Fitts alleged.

"At roughly 1:45 a.m., June 6, 1968, the Senator expired," said Fitts. "He was pronounced dead by Dr. Cuneo."

There were, said Fitts, "five bullet holes in the coat the Senator was wearing—three entry holes and two exit."

"Tests showed that the muzzle range for all the shots fired ranged from one to six inches."

Concluded Fitts:

"The evidence in this case will show that the defendant Sirhan Sirhan alone was responsible for this tragic incident..."

"He acted alone and not in concert with others..."

The defense scored one point during the prosecution opening.

Fitts tried to make reference to diaries Sirhan kept which were seized in a search of his Pasadena home the morning of the shooting. The defense, which claims they were seized illegally, objected, and Judge Herbert V. Walker, presiding over the trial, sustained their objection.

Fitts then quickly concluded.

Earlier in the day, Judge Walker denied a defense plea for a mistrial in the case.

Cooper based his mistrial demand on the basis of a story in the Los Angeles Times Wednesday which stated that Sirhan contemplated changing his plea from innocent to guilty.

Defense counsel maintained the story was prejudicial to their client because the jury had not yet been locked up and had access to the Times' story, which they said was completely in error.



(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

# Judge Denies Mistrial Plea in Sirhan Case

BY DAVE SMITH

Times Staff Writer

Sirhan Bishara Sirhan's defense Thursday lost a motion for a mistrial based on a Los Angeles Times story that he probably would plead guilty to first-degree murder in the slaying of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

Superior Judge Herbert V. Walker, after interviewing each of the trial jurors privately in his chambers, ruled against a defense contention that the story published Wednesday made it impossible for Sirhan to get a fair trial.

Several of the jurors admitted they had heard of the story, or had heard that a switch of Sirhan's plea to guilty was possible.

But Judge Walker said all jurors made it clear they could put all that aside and decide the case only on the evidence produced in court.

Defense attorney Grant B. Cooper asked the ruling "on grounds that publicity emanating from the Los Angeles Times, followed by resumes on every television and radio station," had publicized the story "to the saturation point before the sequestering of the jury" Wednesday night.

Cooper offered into evidence—not to be shown to the jury—copies of Wednesday's home delivered editions of The Times and transcripts of broadcasts Wednesday on most metropolitan radio and television stations.

## Most Drastic Penalty

The Times' Page-1 story said Sirhan "probably would switch from a plea of innocent to a plea of guilty of first-degree murder, based on his defense counsel's understanding or confidence that life imprisonment would be the most drastic penalty he would face.

The story also said that the only likely obstacle to such a change of plea would be Sirhan's refusal to agree to the change.

After consultation later Wednesday between Sirhan and his defense team, it was not known whether he had refused or approved such a change.

Cooper said of the story Thursday in court:

"For obvious reasons, and I'm not pointing an accusing finger at anyone, I can only say that this did not emanate from the defense."

He said news of the defense plan to agree to a guilty plea with the understanding that a light sentence would ensue would deny Sirhan the right to be later found guilty of any lesser degree of murder, such as second-degree murder or manslaughter.

## Stand by Prosecution

Chief Dep. Dist. Atty. Lynn D. Compton answered Cooper's motion by saying there was "no showing at this time that jurors have read the article or heard of it on radio or television."

Compton said The Times' article was "simply a surmise on the part of a reporter" and that it was "beyond my comprehension that anyone could be so influenced by such an article."

Superior Judge Herbert V. Walker said that all prospective jurors had been closely questioned on the effect of pretrial publicity on their opinions and whether they could disregard previous publicity and judge the case fairly and impartially.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

I-1 Los Angeles Times  
Los Angeles, Calif.

Date: 2/14/69  
Edition: Home  
Author: Dave Smith  
Editor: Nick B. Williams  
Title: Kensalt

Character:  
or  
Classification: 56-156  
Submitting Office: Los Angeles  
☐ Being Investigated

57-157-7-6165

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
FEB 17 1969	
FBI - LOS ANGELES	