



MAXIMUM SECURITY: Arrow points to second-floor area of the infirmary in Los Angeles County jail where Sirhan's cell is located. Deputies and squad cars patrol the outside jail area and parking lot.

Los Angeles Sheriff Tells of Threats on Accused Assassin's Life

By **PETER THOMPSON**

Sirhan Bishara Sirhan must be kept alive to face trial as the accused assassin of Senator Robert F. Kennedy. These are the orders received from Washington by Sheriff Peter John Pitchess of Los Angeles County.

As a result, the 24-year-old suspect is living under the tightest, most elaborate security measures in California prison history — under 24-hour guard inside and outside of his isolated cell.

Sirhan's life has been threatened, as well as the lives of the men assign-

ed to protect him so that the world will not be haunted with the suspicions and unanswered questions that were left with the killing of Lee Harvey Oswald.

In an exclusive interview with *The ENQUIRER*, Sheriff Pitchess said:

"About 12 people have threatened to kill Sirhan at the first opportunity. The threats have come by mail and by telephone.

"Besides threats against his life, we have received some against our own — for protecting him — as well as a couple against me, personally.

"We are conducting a complete examination of these threats.

"We are aware of rumors of a conspiracy (in the assassination) and we are providing the stringent security

we feel is necessary."

The "stringent security" described by the sheriff also is the heaviest, most carefully organized security in California prison history.

The sheriff told this ENQUIRER reporter that Sirhan is held in absolute isolation, under 24-hour guard both inside and outside a 12-foot square cell.

This cell is on the second floor of the infirmary in Los Angeles County Men's General Jail, in downtown Los Angeles. The elevator has been sealed off at the second floor.

All other infirmary inmates have been removed and only Sirhan's cell is occupied on a 40-foot corridor.

Inside with Sirhan is a guard. Another guard watches Sirhan from outside, through a peephole, which is the only window in the cell.

This outside guard keeps a minutely detailed record of every physical activity of the prisoner.

Both guards are unarmed.

Sheriff Pitchess said: "This is to eliminate the possibility of a seizure of their weapons."

"Only four other deputies, also unarmed, are permitted in the corridor. Sirhan is reserved and totally non-committal to our personnel. He has not presented any kind of a problem."

"He complained of aches and pains when he was admitted, but he said he was satisfied with the medical treatment he has received."

Every visitor to the prisoner, including the doctors, is searched.

Sirhan is in the infirmary for treatment of a sprained left ankle and a



GUARDED: Sirhan Sirhan, accused killer of Bobby Kennedy, is kept under 24-hour guard — both inside and outside his cell.

fractured left index finger suffered during his capture after the shooting of Senator Kennedy June 5.

Two daily newspapers, the Los Angeles Times and the strike-bound Los Angeles Herald-Examiner, are available to Sirhan, as they are to all other inmates of the jail, which can accommodate 3,300 prisoners. Sirhan also asked for, and was given, two books.

One is "The Secret Doctrine" by Mrs. H.P. Blavatsky. The other is "Talks on At the Feet of the Master" by C.W. Leadbetter.

Both books discuss the Theosophical Church. Theosophy is a religion which believes in mystical insight and reincarnation.

Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, Russian-born, founded the Theosophical Church in the U.S. in 1875. She died in 1891 at the age of 60.

Leadbetter's book was published in 1923 and is a discussion of a previous Theosophical work, "At the Feet of the Master," written in 1895 by Jiddu Krishnamurti.

There is one Theosophical Church in Hollywood, where Sirhan may have learned about the religion during his 12 years in Southern California.

Sheriff Pitchess, 56, a former FBI man, said: "Sirhan has not spent an unusual amount of time reading."

"Because of his ankle, he spends most of his time on his bunk. He is permitted to walk up and down the corridor for exercise."

"We do not plan to transfer him from the infirmary cell, even after he has recovered from his injuries."

Asked if Sirhan had been told about the threats on his life, the sheriff said:

"Only in a general way, when I told him what the responsibility was, and requested his cooperation in protecting his life."

"Since then he has not complained of our over-protectiveness."

This protection extends even to the outside of the 5-year-old jail building. Uniformed deputies and extra



THREATENED: Besides threats against Sirhan's life, Sheriff Peter Pitchess has received threats against his own life for protecting the accused assassin.

squad cars have been assigned to patrol the outside jail area.

This around-the-clock patrol includes

inspection of all lanes on the asphalt parking lot.

Immediately after the shooting, 10 deputies in five squad cars maintained this patrol.

The number was increased after Senator Kennedy died.

Security also has been extended to the Pasadena, Calif., home of Sirhan's mother and two of his brothers. They are under 24-hour patrol guard.

Unusual protective measures were ordered by Sheriff Pitchess when Sirhan was arraigned June 7 before Superior Court Judge Arthur Alarcon.

The arraignment was held, with Sirhan's consent, in the jail chapel, instead of in the regular court building, which a telephone caller had threatened to blow up.

The protection devised for the arraignment was described by the Los Angeles Times as "probably the greatest security precautions ever taken for a court proceeding in this country."

Even Judge Alarcon was searched before he was allowed to enter the chapel, as were all others who were present at the hearing.

Four deputies took Sirhan to the arraignment in a wheelchair and stood directly behind him.

A dozen other deputies stood in front of the chapel, their backs to the judge, to watch the audience.

After the 38-minute arraignment, as Sirhan was being returned to his cell, he said two words to an attorney from the American Civil Liberties Union who was representing him at the request of the judge.

These words were heard by The ENQUIRER reporter, who was sitting directly behind the attorney, A.L. Wirin. Sirhan said: "Money — money!"

"All right," Wirin replied. He explained that he had promised to supply the prisoner with pocket money to buy newspapers and so forth.

Then Sirhan returned to his cell to wait the next legal step in the case listed as: "Case No. A-233421 — People versus Sirhan Bishara Sirhan."