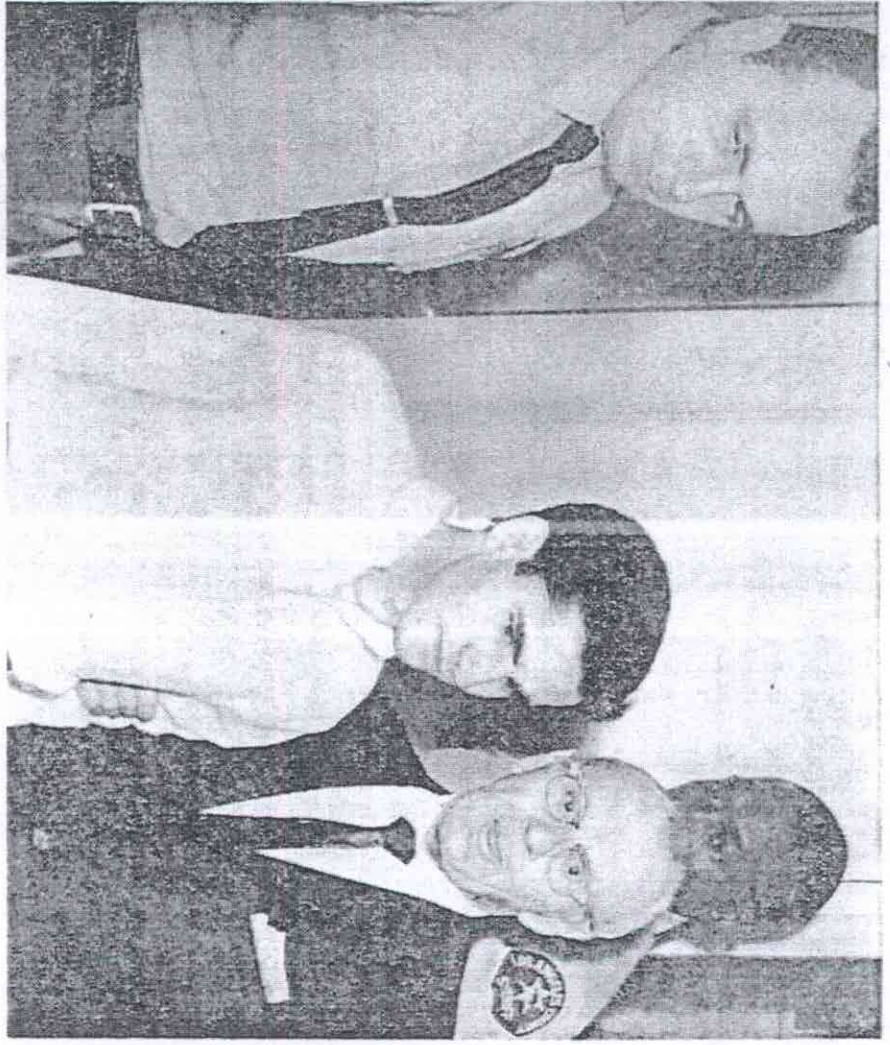


National Enquirer Dec 1975



LIKE A FATHER: Accused killer Sirhan Sirhan has great affection for his chief counsel, Russell Parsons, shown with him in huddle (above) and in jail corridor (right).

50% of Sirhan's Mail Praises Him



"You ought to get a gold medal for what you did," said a letter to Sirhan Sirhan, the accused killer of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

Sirhan has received about 600 letters from all over the world, about half of them full of praise, according to his lawyer.

"A surprising number of people hated Bobby Kennedy and write to Sirhan as if he was their hero," the lawyer, Russell Edward Parsons, 73, told *The ENQUIRER* in an exclusive interview. "About half of the writers want to stick needles into Sirhan. After his arrest he was getting about 10 letters a day, but now it's down to about three per day. Some contain small cash donations. He has received about \$100."

Sirhan, 24, reads all of his mail in his heavily guarded, special cell in the Los Angeles County Hall of Justice building.

His special security arrangements will cost about \$1 mil-

lion. The estimated cost to keep Sirhan locked up is \$4,337 per day. By December 9, the scheduled date for the start of his trial, Sirhan's imprisonment costs will have reached an estimated \$861,142. This figure includes \$45,789 spent to make alterations and install special equipment to protect and serve Sirhan in jail.

The last official estimate of the cost was made by Kenneth Hahn, chairman of the Courts Committee of the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors, who said on July 12 that the first 35 days of Sirhan's custody had cost the county \$210,629.

Sirhan is the only prisoner on the 13th floor of the Hall of Justice. His trial is scheduled to be held on the eighth floor of the same building, where a Superior Court chamber has been specially prepared.

The defendant's dock, where Sirhan will sit, is modeled after the bulletproof glass and steel structure used in 1961 in Israel for the trial of Adolf Eichmann, the man in charge of the mass extermination of millions of Jews during World War II. Bulletproof shielding is being installed along the corridors leading from Sirhan's cell to the courtroom.

Extraordinary security precautions are being planned. The 50 reporters who have covered Sirhan's eight public and pre-trial court appearances have been put through a tight security procedure. Two hours

reporter had to show his blue tag to a plainclothesman and the number was written down on a pad.

After the elevator took them to the 12th floor the reporters were told to leave, five at a time. They passed down a corridor lined with uniformed deputies and were taken to rooms normally used for jail visits. Men and women reporters were separated and searched by guards and matrons. Even the soles of their shoes were inspected.

Cameras and tape recorders were taken away. A court order forbids the use of cameras and recorders in the courtroom but they were permitted later at the press conferences.

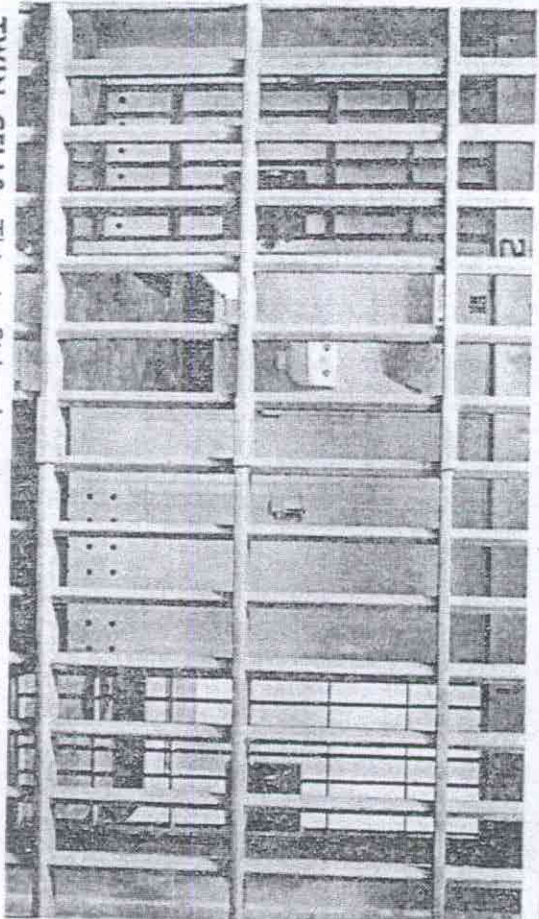
After each group of five had been searched, the reporters were taken on a freight elevator to the 13th floor where a temporary courtroom has been set up, 50 feet from Sirhan's two-cell suite.

Eight uniformed deputies, four on each side of the room, watched the reporters.

The courtroom is 50 x 46 feet and has a low ceiling. The 13th floor was formerly a women's prison and the temporary courtroom was the visiting room.

The courtroom has three outside windows and each is protected by

Some Letter Writers Even Hail RFK's Accused Killer as a Hero



TWIN CELLS: This is Sirhan's private two-cell suite and exercise corridor on the 13th floor of the Hall of Justice.

before the 9 a.m. court appearances, reporters had to line up at two windows in the Los Angeles County Jail visitor's room in the Hall of Justice. Each reporter had to show a press card, issued by Sheriff Peter J. Pitchess, to a plainclothes deputy assigned to the Sheriff's Information Bureau, who manned the two windows. Each reporter's name was checked against a list approved in advance by a Superior Court judge.

If his name was on the list, the reporter was handed two numbered plastic tags, one red and one blue. The blue card was clipped to the coat lapel and was used to gain entry into the jail elevator. The red card was for admission to a press conference, usually scheduled after the court session.

Before getting on the elevator, the

(Continued on next page)



CAPTURE: Sirhan claims he suffered injuries when he was apprehended and subdued after Robert Kennedy was shot.



NEW HOME: Passerby in front of Los Angeles County Hall of Justice reads headline announcing Sirhan's arrival.

Sirhan Praised

(Continued from preceding page)
quarter-inch armor plate mounted on rollers which are fitted into tracks on the floor.

Sirhan has twin cells, each measuring 6 x 8 feet. He has a wash basin, toilet, bunk, shower and a metal mirror. No radio or TV is permitted in his cell but he is given a copy of the Los Angeles Herald-Examiner and the Los Angeles Times each day.

He has been under double guard since Sen. Kennedy's death on June 5. A deputy remains in the cell with Sirhan and one just outside of his cell door, 24 hours a day. The guards are changed every half hour to keep them alert, Sheriff Pitchess said.

"The guards answer any reasonable question Sirhan asks but they do not engage him in conversation," the sheriff said.

"Sirhan is served the same food other prisoners receive but from a special kitchen which was installed on the 13th floor specifically to cook Sirhan's food."

Outside of his cell is a corridor about 6 feet wide and 30 feet long where Sirhan is permitted to exercise for two 20-minute periods each day.

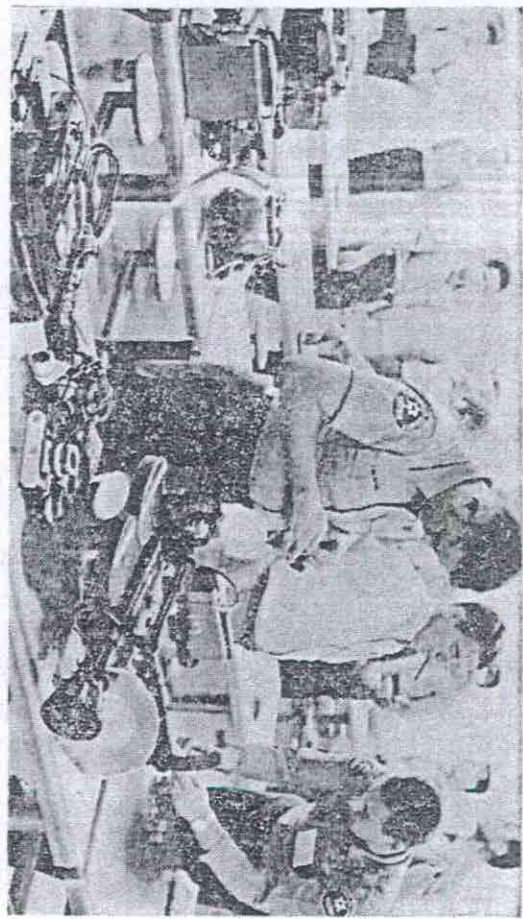
He jogs up and down the corridor, does pushups and chins himself on the steel crossbars of his cell.

"It's just like a gymnasium," said Parsons, Sirhan's lawyer.

Sirhan has been in his Hall of Justice cell since Sunday, July 7, when he was quietly moved from the new Men's Central Jail, located about one mile away. Seven deputies in three ordinary black and white county patrol cars moved Sirhan early in the morning before reporters were on the job. Sheriff Pitchess announced the transfer after Sirhan was safely locked up in his new cell.

Sirhan's first visitors, other than his lawyer, were his mother, Mrs. Mary Sirhan, 60, and his brother, Adel Bishara Sirhan, 30, who were allowed to see him on July 11.

Parsons, who is required by the special regulations to be present when



TIGHT SECURITY: Cops check cameras and tape recorders taken from reporters before they were permitted to enter courtroom.

anyone visits Sirhan, related to The ENQUIRER: "It was an emotional reunion. He had not seen his mother since June 4. She asked him to pray for the good of his soul, so he got down on his knees with her and they prayed."

Since then his mother has been a regular visitor. Two of his four brothers, Adel and Munir (Joe), 21, have also visited him.

Other regular visitors are: Michael McGowan, a former Los Angeles police officer and now a private detective, hired by Parsons to investigate the case on Sirhan's behalf, and Robert Blair Kaiser, a former Time magazine reporter, now officially accredited to Parsons' staff as an investigator.

Kaiser bought exclusive story rights for a book on Sirhan from the accused and his family and the money is helping to pay for his defense.

On June 18, Jordan's Consul General George Zrakat visited the prisoner at Sirhan's request.

Parsons related, "When Sirhan is in his cell alone, he reads constantly. He is a deep student of religion, politics and history. He is studying the life of Mahatma Gandhi.

"He avidly read books on theosophy, metaphysics and psychic powers his first few weeks of confinement. Then he became interested in the political

campaigns, particularly the Senate bid of Dr. Max Rafferty, the conservative Republican superintendent of public education in California.

"Sirhan asked me if I thought the politicians who were elected would keep their promises. I told him I didn't think so and that was why I got out of politics myself."

Sirhan requested sleeping pills on July 19 and was given them for a time. On October 23, Parsons reported: "Sirhan is no longer taking any medication."

In October, at a press conference, Parsons said: "Four or five doctors were attending Sirhan from time to time." The lawyer refused to discuss what his client was being treated for.

At the time of his arrest, Sirhan suffered ankle and finger injuries when former pro football star Roosevelt Grier and Olympic Decathlon champion Rater Johnson helped overpower him in the kitchen corridor of the Ambassador Hotel shortly after Sen. Kennedy was shot.

"This boy was beaten up a little when he was arrested," Parsons said at a press conference on October 14.

"He was quite disturbed, no doubt about it. For some reason the police kept forcing coffee on him while they were interrogating him at Ramparts

Police Station. One officer kept offering him a cup of coffee so insistently that Sirhan finally kicked the paper cup out of his hand. We want to find out if all that coffee was accidental or on purpose."

This is the only piece of information concerning what happened to Sirhan immediately after his arrest which has been made available. A court order issued June 7 by Superior Judge Arthur L. Alarcon prohibits anyone connected with the case from discussing it with reporters.

Parsons is Sirhan's chief counsel. Assisting him are Emile Zola Berman of New York, who gained national fame in 1956 when he defended Marine Staff Sgt. Matthew C. McKeon for manslaughter in the mistreatment of Marine recruits at Parris Island, N.C.; and Grant B. Cooper of Los Angeles, who is currently defending one of the five men accused in a Friar's Club gin rummy cheating scandal. Parsons also has two investigators.

Parsons began his legal career nearly 50 years ago as a country attorney in Beaver County, Utah, shortly after graduating from the University of Utah Law School. Sirhan shows great affection for Parsons. In court it is not unusual for him to sit in his swivel chair beside his lawyer and hold Parsons' hand tightly during the proceedings. He lets go of his hand when Parsons stands to speak.

Parsons said: "When he sees me he takes my hand, puts his arm around my shoulder and wants to know how I am. Sometimes in his cell he gets down on his knees and sits back on his heels and looks up at me like a little child as I sit on the bunk and discuss the case."

Parsons took on Sirhan as a client about a week after the assassination. The lawyer said his involvement in the case has caused some reaction from his wife and son.

"They think I'm a damn fool for getting into it, but I have no intention of dropping the case," Parsons said.

"This young man is in deep trouble and he knows it. I want to provide him the best defense possible."

— ROBERT DOMAY