

Sirhan's Thoughts Told by Writer on His Defense Staff

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Sirhan Bishara Sirhan's thoughts on America, on himself and on his lawyers were revealed here Sunday by a journalist on the staff of the Jordanian's defense counsel.

Robert Blair Kaiser, formerly a Time magazine correspondent, has written an article for Life magazine based on long interviews with the man accused of assassinating Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

Sirhan, Kaiser said, smokes 100 cigars a day and then switches to six packs of cigarettes a day, has a normal 24-year-old's interest in women and can talk at length about subjects ranging from literature to theology.

Kaiser said Sirhan told him, "It's all violence, chaos, unrest. Whatever happened to the old saying, 'peace and quiet?'"

Kaiser was appointed to the staff of Russell B. Parsons, one of the defense lawyers, and was granted permission to interview Sirhan exclusively. Kaiser said the privilege was given him because he was a friend of attorney Grant Cooper and used his influence to persuade Cooper to join in Sirhan's defense.

Talks With Sirhan Many Times

Kaiser said in an interview he had talked with Sirhan at least a dozen times since Aug. 14.

"We talked about different subjects—his background, family, acculturation in America, his friends, his foes," Kaiser said. "He is intellectually inclined, expansive, articulate, well-read but untrained."

Kaiser said Sirhan knows that Cooper has been defense attorney in many famous trials and can command a large fee. "And he's defending a punk like me," Sirhan was quoted as saying.

Kaiser said his article would not include matters having a bearing on the issues in the trial for the murder of Sen. Kennedy. "I won't try the case in the public prints," he said.

Dep. Dist. Atty. Lynn D. Compton, head of the prosecution team in the case, said Kaiser, as an agent of the defense counsel, was included in the coverage of a court order banning comment by parties in the case on the issues in the trial.

However, Compton said the significance of the Kaiser material could not be known until the article

is actually seen. It is to be published Jan. 17.

Kaiser said he had also talked with Sirhan's mother, Mary, about a dozen times. She keeps a buffet table covered with magazines that tell the story of the Kennedy assassination, Kaiser said.

The article says, "She picks up the magazines now and then and talks to the face of Robert Kennedy as drawn by Time artist Louis Glanzman, telling him how sorry she is.

"Kennedy, moreover, talks to her. 'It's okay, Mary,' she says he says. 'I forgive you. It's okay.'"

Kaiser said of Mary Sirhan:

"Obviously, this is a very traumatic experience for a woman who has gone through a lot of traumatic episodes.

"She is a woman who prays. I believe that in the Arab Orthodox religion ikons are used and prayed to. It's not unusual to talk to a picture, or for that matter for a person in a picture to talk to her."

Sirhan recounted the scene in the Ambassador Hotel after the shooting, Kaiser said.

"I felt a choking in my throat, and people were holding me, and beating me, twisting my left knee, and pounding my head on the table. They hurt my left eye . . ." Sirhan said.

The author said Sirhan feels that even his name sets him apart and prevents him from feeling fully an American. The Jordanian is quoted as saying:

"My name! My name! Sear-hann Sear-hann. As soon as anyone heard it, everything else stopped. They wanted to know, 'What kind of a name is that?' I began to associate more and more with my name. Sirhan meant 'wolf' and I became more and more of a lone wolf."

A. L. Wirin of the American Civil Liberties Union had first asked Kaiser to talk to Cooper about joining the defense, the writer said. And in return Kaiser would get the interview rights.

"If I'd help him (Wirin) do his thing, he'd help me do my thing," Kaiser told The Times.

Kaiser declined to say how much he would be paid for the article, but said he was working on Sirhan's defense for nothing. Asked if any of the attorneys would share in his writing fee, he said, "That's private. It goes to me. What I do is my own business."

Kaiser noted that Sirhan's interest in females was "normal," and that he had taken a fancy to a striking blonde reporter present at his trial.