

# Report on Sirhan 'Deal' Inaccurate, DA Says

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A report that the State Department "specifically approved" an agreement by which Sirhan Bishara Sirhan would change his plea to guilty in exchange for a sentence of life in prison was described Wednesday as "inaccurate" by Dist. Atty. Evelle J. Younger.

In a syndicated column appearing in many newspapers, Frank Mankiewicz and Tom Braden said Younger, after advising Secretary of State William Rogers that he was considering such an arrangement, was informed that the "proposed deal" was acceptable.

According to the column-

nists, the State Department—"as a matter of U.S. foreign policy"—felt that if a trial were avoided "it could only have a beneficial effect as far as the fierce and violent Middle East passions were concerned."

Mankiewicz and Braden reported that Younger even went to Washington "for some foreign policy advice and got it" after the offer by Sirhan to plead guilty with a guarantee of life imprisonment.

It was only after he was "armed with Rogers' approval" that Younger "approved the bargain" and with Sirhan's attorneys submitted the matter to Superior Judge Herbert V.

Walker for his consent, they wrote.

Contacted in Lima, Peru, where he is on temporary assignment, Mankiewicz said that he and Braden stand by their column.

Said Mankiewicz, "We obtained the facts that went into the column from an unimpeachable source in Los Angeles. Moreover, we double-checked them

with a high official in Secretary Rogers' office in the State Department."

In a statement issued Wednesday, Younger said Rogers never discussed the case with him and that "he (Rogers) did not approve, disapprove or otherwise comment upon any phase of the Sirhan case."

Younger noted that on Feb. 11 he disclosed that

he had offered "appropriate (government) officials" the opportunity to make any comments concerning the disposition of the case and that they "declined and made no comment or recommendation."

"This statement was true at the time. It is still true. Mr. Rogers has not discussed the Sirhan case

with me to this date. He has made no recommendations. I don't anticipate that he will," Younger said.

The Times first revealed on Feb. 12 the existence of an agreement whereby Sirhan had offered to plead guilty if he could be guaranteed life in prison.

A week later The Times

reported that the deal fell through only because Judge Walker had refused

to give his required consent to the penalty stipulation.