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Love for Kennedy Became Hate, Sirhan Says

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When Sirhan Bishara Sirhan first learned last May of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy's support for Israel, he hated him so much that "if he were in front of me, the way I felt then, so help me God, he would have died. Right then and there."

"He was doing a lot of things behind my back that I didn't know about," Sirhan testified angrily Tuesday. "It just burned me up."

"Up to that time," he continued, "I loved Robert Kennedy. I cared for him very much. I hoped he'd win the Presidency."

But a television documentary on

Sen. Kennedy's career at the height of the campaign last May informed Sirhan—for the first time, he said Tuesday—of the senator's support for Israel. Sen. Kennedy was shown in Israel in 1948, celebrating the creation of the Jewish state. Sirhan, who was 4 at that time and living in Jerusalem, said he had never known of this.

His love of Sen. Kennedy turned to hate, he testified, and a few days later, on May 18, wrote: "Robert F. Kennedy must be assassinated before 5 June '68"—the first anniversary of the Arab-Israeli six-day war.

Sirhan was only 17 minutes off his target date. It was 12:17 a.m. June 5 when he fired a .22-caliber bullet

into Sen. Kennedy's brain at an election victory party at the Ambassador. Sen. Kennedy died 25 hours later.

Sirhan's anger at his victim's pro-Israel views cropped up repeatedly Tuesday as Sirhan unveiled a lifetime of loathing for Zionism and the state of Israel. Sen. Kennedy's views, said Sirhan, showed him to be "not all the good guy he claimed himself to be."

The defendant said he heard a local radio broadcast on Sen. Kennedy at "some Jewish club in Beverly Hills," where Sen. Kennedy had repeated his support of military aid to Israel.

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At that, Sirhan added, he became so angry that he glared into his bedroom mirror, practicing a mental exercise taught by a mystical cult, until he saw Sen. Kennedy's face in the mirror rather than his own.

"I can't prove it, sir," he told defense attorney Grant B. Cooper, "but I saw his face in the mirror. I was that burned up about him."

But Sen. Kennedy was not Sirhan's only intended victim, testimony revealed Tuesday. In a page-by-page reading of Sirhan's controversial notebooks—with Sirhan eagerly reading along and laughing sheepishly at the frequent incoherence of them—Cooper found President Johnson and former UN Ambassador Arthur Goldberg marked for possible death.

As with the Kennedy reference, Sirhan said he couldn't remember writing of an intent to kill Mr. Johnson or Goldberg, but admitted he must have, since the notes were in his hand. Once he said, "It is not me, sir. It is not Sirhan, sitting right here, that wrote that... I couldn't write that without provocation."

Cooper asked: "Did you

ever have in mind killing President Johnson?"

"No," he said, "but I hated his guts at one point. He said the United States supports the territorial integrity of all nations, and he stressed all nations," he added sarcastically, tapping an index finger for emphasis.

Phrase Repeated

Goldberg, Sirhan said, had repeated Mr. Johnson's phrase—"and he said A-L-L-L nations. He made that a hell of a long A-L-L-L."

"Should he have died for that?" asked Cooper.

"Why not?" Sirhan rejoined tartly. "He didn't stick to his word."

At one point he told Cooper: "Anything involving Zionism invokes this response in me. Zionism is more inimical to me than communism is to you."

In morning testimony, Sirhan astonished spectators at his murder trial with an impassioned—and accurate—discourse on the growth of Zionism, Palestinian history and England's behind-the-scenes agreements on Palestine's future.

He also calmly described a mystical experiment in which he plunged his

hand into boiling water, "thought cool," and didn't get burned. He also turned candle flames different colors just by thinking about it, he said, adding, "I can't prove it, but God damn it, I did."

Sirhan revealed a deep study and intense hatred of Zionism in his pell-mell delivery. He faltered only

once in the virtuoso performance.

Sagging forward in the witness stand, he paused, said "I'm too nervous," and sat quietly while a glass of water was brought. After a couple minutes rest, he resumed his staccato recitation of the spread of Zionism throughout his homeland.

His delivery was punctuated with occasional profanities—"These God damned Zionists!" he snapped at one point—and he told forcefully how he felt Zionism had affected his own life as a refugee.

The late President John F. Kennedy figured in a poignant moment in Sirhan's testimony, when Cooper asked:

"How did you feel about John F. Kennedy?"

Tells Love for JFK

"I loved him, sir," said

Sirhan, "I loved him more than any American would have."

Sirhan explained that before Mr. Kennedy's assassination Nov. 22, 1963, in Dallas, he (Kennedy) was working with the Arab nations to secure a just settlement of the Palestinian refugee problem.

Sirhan's hatred of Zionists—which he took pains to differentiate from non-Zionist Jews—cropped up over and over as he testified that "prior to 1948, before the Zionists," the Jews and Arabs of Palestine "were living very amicably, in great harmony."

But the long-term aims of Zionism, culminating in the 1948 partition of Palestine and the creation of Israel as a Jewish state, destroyed the old Jewish-Arab relationship, he said.

Since 1948, he testified, the situation has worsened as Zionism in Israel has strengthened.

Sirhan also differentiated, in testimony on the six-day Israeli-Arab war in June, 1967, between "the Arab bloc" and "Palestinian Arabs."

He said the Arab cause in that war—though he felt the Arabs were in the right and were the victims of Israeli aggression—could not be equated with the cause of Palestinian Arabs. "Nasser has nothing to do with the struggle of the Palestinian people," Sirhan said.

Sirhan spoke of modern Zionism's aims in a quiet, scholarly way at first, then with rising voice.

Theodore Herzl convened the first international Zionist conference in 1897, he said, and propounded the movement's aim to create a Jewish state.

They chose Palestine, he said, and began to buy land there and to influence Jews in the bigger nations to exert pressure on their governments in support of the creation of Israel.

At Herzl's death in 1904, Chaim Weizmann inherited leadership of the Zionist movement and sought British support in turning over Palestine to the Zionists, he said.

With England's Balfour declaration of 1917, he said, England made "a deal" with the Zionists in which, in exchange for the pressure of U.S. Jews on the United States to aid the Allies in World War I, England would later make Palestine a Jewish state.

But, Sirhan said, England also "made a deal with the Arabs," whereby Palestine would be made independent in exchange for Arab nations' support of England against the Turks and the Germans.

Finally, Sirhan said, England also made a "deal" with France, in which the two countries secretly planned to divide the Arab nations between themselves.

Blames England

After the war, he said, England stood by her agreement with the Zionists and scrapped the deal with the Arabs.

Meanwhile, Sirhan went on—and he reeled off an amazing string of statistics—the Zionists had increased Palestine's Jewish population from 56,000 in 1917 to about 650,000 by 1948. During this time, he said, the Arab population grew from about 700,000 to 1.3 million.

He said the Arabs knew they would be taken over by the Zionists, regarded the trend as "imperialism on the part of the West," but were ignored when they tried to plead their cause.

In all, Sirhan created a lecture atmosphere that gave rise to grave doubts in the minds of his hearers as to the accuracy of his IQ test, reported last week

as 89, slightly below the 90-110 range considered average.

The chaotic scribbles in Sirhan's notebook revealed the names of three girls Sirhan had known. There was one reference to "Janice" and dozens to: "Gwendolyn Gum, Gwen Gum, Gwen, Gwen, Gwen . . . Peggy, Peggy, Peggy . . . Sol & Peggy, Sol & Ostercamp . . . I love you Peggy . . ." Sol was Sirhan's nickname.

Denies 'Crush'

Janice was believed to be Janice Elaine Ducey, an exercise girl, at the race horse ranch in Corona where Sirhan worked. Miss Ostercamp also was an exercise girl there. Sirhan denied any crush on Miss Ostercamp, but admitted she was "tall and beautiful." He once bought a soft drink for her in Newport Beach, but said they never dated.

Miss Gum was a coed at Pasadena City College and once, when she was in a beauty contest, Sirhan bought \$10 worth of votes for her at a nickel or dime a vote. Although he tried to date her, she never went out with him.

At other disjointed parts of the notebook, Sirhan wrote:

"I always seem to be on the losing (sic) end, always exploited to the fullest." ("I must have been a maniac at the time," Sirhan interrupted as that was read.)

"Long live Nasser." ("I'm a great admirer of President Nasser," he said.)

"Long live communism." ("It's a very long jump between Nasser and communism," he interjected.)

"Nasser is the greatest man that ever lived in this world."

"I have often wondered how it feels to be rich, rich, rich, rich, rich."

After more than an hour of confirming his fragmented writing, Sirhan told Cooper, "All this sounds like a crazy man writing."

"Do you feel you're crazy?" asked Cooper. "Do you think you're completely normal?"

"No, sir, I'm not crazy," Sirhan said.