

Profanity and Fatal Shot Told at Sirhan Trial

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Witness Says He Heard Voice Swear at Kennedy but Gives No Identification

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In the early moments of June 4, Richard Lubic heard a voice swear at Sen. Robert F. Kennedy and then heard the gunshot that took Kennedy's life.

Lubic, testifying Friday at the murder trial of Sirhan Bishara Sirhan, said he jumped for cover. Defense attorney Grant B. Cooper, who called Lubic as a witness, didn't even ask if he could identify Sirhan as the man who said, "Kennedy, you son of a bitch," and fired the shot.

Lubic was the last, and briefest, of a puzzling string of defense witnesses whose testimony appeared to strengthen the prosecution case.

One, electrician Hans Peter Bidstrub, testified that Sirhan, drink in hand, asked him as early as 10 p.m. if Kennedy was staying at the Ambassador, on what floor and in what room, if Kennedy was in the hotel then and whether Kennedy had bodyguards.

Bidstrub said he talked for about 15 minutes with Sirhan at one political party the night of June 4, and that his first impression was that Sirhan was "half drunk and very talkative." Bidstrub said he himself is a nondrinker.

Changing Plans

Earlier this week, Sirhan testified that he arrived at the Ambassador June 4 through a series of haphazard changed plans, without knowing Kennedy would be there, after a day of target practice with his pistol. He said he got drunk on at least three gin highballs, talked with Bidstrub and others and later blacked out—still without knowing, apparently, that Kennedy would definitely be there that night.

Bidstrub's testimony tended to

corroborate the defense claim that Sirhan had been drinking that night, and three other witnesses said they also saw Sirhan with a glass in his hand.

Bidstrub's recollection of the assassination night and of his later interviews with law enforcement officials and defense counsel appeared hazy, so much so that he could not definitely recall his former statements when confronted with them Friday.

At one point Cooper asked Bidstrub if he remembered telling Cooper that Sirhan "showed no more interest in Kennedy than in any other Democrat." Bidstrub said he didn't remember.

Enrique Rabago and Humphrey Cordero, friends from Buena Park, testified that they talked with Sirhan around 10 p.m. also. They each said he had a drink in his hand, but did not appear particularly intoxicated to them.

Rabago asked Sirhan, he said, if he thought Kennedy would win the California Democratic presidential primary, and Sirhan said yes.

But then, Rabago said, Sirhan added: "Don't worry if Sen. Kennedy doesn't win. That son of a bitch is a millionaire. Even if he wins, he's not going to do anything for you, for me or for the poor people."

Rabago said he had regarded Sirhan as "educated and arrogant."