

TRIAL

June 5 Drama

Scene: Interrogation Room B at the Ramparts Division Police Station in Los Angeles.

Time: 12:45 a.m. June 5, 1968.

Action: Shuffling feet, slamming doors, screaming sirens, a ringing telephone or two—altogether, something like a fictional radio show during the climactic scenes when the murderer is finally trapped and brought to justice.

But this was no fiction: In rapt silence, a jury was listening to a tape recording of the initial questioning of Sirhan B. Sirhan when, shortly after he shot Sen. Robert F. Kennedy during a victory celebration at the Ambassador, he was being questioned by his captors.

Called Silent Sam

Investigators had no idea of the 24-year-old Jordanian immigrant's identity and, for lack of something better, called him Silent Sam. But Silent Sam knew his rights. Repeated he voiced the same answer.

"I want to abide by the First Admonishment, sir, to the right of keeping silent."

So it went, even to the point of Sirhan refusing to comment as detectives counted his money and other personal items found in his pockets, including a copy of Kennedy's campaign song with the words, "This man is your man, this man is my man . . ."

At one point on the tape, Sirhan apparently became violent and kicked a cup of hot chocolate from the hands of one of his interrogators. Over the crash of the cup came the flat voice of a policeman.

"That's enough, pal," it said in the best Dragnet style. "Yeah," said another "Yeah" ominously echoed a

another "Yeah," ominously echoed a third.

Effort by Prosecution

The scene was being played back in a prosecution effort to refute defense contentions that Sirhan was still in the grip of an alcoholic blackout he claims enveloped him just before he fired the fatal shots into Kennedy. The state contends Sirhan knew exactly what he was doing.

At one point in the recorded conversation, Sirhan politely inquired what the man questioning him thought of the case of Jack Kirschke, a deputy district attorney convicted of murdering his wife and her lover. He was asked why he wanted to know.

"Interested," replied Sirhan. "Being with the D.A.'s office, I just thought it might be interesting to you, too."

And when he was told a stenographer was coming in to take down a statement, he replied:

"Hell, I'm no movie star that wants all that much."

Sees Oedipus Complex

Earlier, the defense introduced testimony from a psychologist who said that Sirhan suffered from an Oedipus complex and unconsciously substituted Kennedy for the father he would have preferred to kill because of childhood beatings and final abandonment.

"He hated his father and feared him," said Martin M. Schorr of Sirhan. He said the defendant, rather than kill his sire, instead chose a "symbolic replica" in Kennedy.

Schorr also reiterated his belief that Sirhan shifted back and forth between reality and a dream world for several hours before and for many hours after slaying Kennedy.

Sirhan, he said, was totally unaware of such drifting. And he added his belief that Sirhan, while he may have wanted to kill Kennedy, was and still is genuinely unaware that he did so.