

Psychologist Admits Copying From Book to Describe Sirhan

BY CHARLES POWERS

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Clinical psychologist Martin M. Schorr admitted Tuesday that he copied language from a New York psychiatrist's book to describe the mental condition of Sirhan Bishara Sirhan.

It was from "Casebook of a Crime Psychiatrist," by Dr. James A. Brussel, that he found the description he wanted for the 25-year old Jordanian on trial for the slaying of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, Dr. Schorr testified.

Under lengthy cross examination by Dep. Dist. Atty. John E. Howard, Dr. Schorr said that he used certain passages of the book describing "the paranoid mechanism" which he said fit his conclusions after examining Sirhan.

Liked Language Better

Dr. Schorr described Dr. Brussel's writing as "exciting."

He said that he believed it was "important to use language that was alive and vivid to describe what I already had bumblingly stated in my previous reports. . . . I wanted a coda, I wanted to cap it off."

Dr. Schorr, associated with the San Diego County Hospital, maintained, however, that the language he used from the book accurately described Sirhan and that the book in no way influenced his diagnosis.

"Doctor, do you often go to a book like this?" Howard asked.

"If it illustrates what I'm trying to say in a facile manner," Dr. Schorr replied, "I am not the best writer in the world."

Howard pointed out that the passages of the book described other crimes committed by other men, then asked:

"Doctor, how much of (your report) came from Sirhan?"

"All of this is Sirhan," Dr. Schorr insisted. "All of this is Sirhan."

In the morning session of the trial, Howard picked out six passages from the first chapter of Dr. Brussel's book that bore a striking similarity to passages in Dr. Schorr's

report.

Howard quoted three more passages—with the same result—from the book's second chapter.

One excerpt from the book and the report was cited.

From Dr. Brussel's book:

"The paranoiac is the world's champion grudge holder."

From Dr. Schorr's report:

Please Turn to Back Page, Col. 6

SIRHAN

Continued from First Page

"Paranoiacs are champion grudge holders."

Under redirect examination by defense attorney Emil Zola Berman, Dr. Schorr testified he believed that Sirhan, at the time of the shooting of Kennedy, "was functioning within the framework of diminished capacity" and that it was "impossible" for him to have premediated the crime.

"The inference from the tests," Richardson continued, "is that in this psychotic ego state, he could not 'know' the difference between right and wrong, as nondisturbed individuals in our culture would judge this difference.

"Mr. Sirhan would see himself at these times as acting from the basis of a high-minded, very idealistic, even sternly ethical

moral position. It is particularly in the area of the ability to judge the difference between right and wrong as normal individuals in this culture understand it that his illness is most manifest.

"His illness causes his judgment and perception of the rightness or wrongness of any particular other person or event to be markedly at odds with the judgments and understanding of right and wrong which normal, emotionally healthy (persons) in our culture would accept."

In later testimony, Sirhan was described by Dr. O. Roderick Richardson as suffering from paranoid schizophrenia.

Dr. Richardson, a private clinical psychologist in Los Angeles, examined Sirhan in July at the request of Dr. Eric H. Marcus, a court-appointed psychiatrist.

"The overall diagnostic impression," Dr. Richardson testified, "is of a schizophrenic process, paranoid type, acute and chronic." He added that depressive elements in Sirhan's personality show signs of "suicidal potential."

Sirhan's personality structure, Dr. Richardson said, is fragile and subject to "acute and rapid deterioration."

"At such times," Dr. Richardson testified, "his behavior and thinking become psychotic and are characterized by paranoid, projective distortion of the characteristics and motives of others, loss of judgment, loss of discrimination, loss of control over impulses, particularly hostile, aggressive impulses."

"He doesn't see things the way people usually do," the psychologist said.