

# Premeditation of Sirhan Termed Not Meaningful

Psychologist, Psychiatrist  
Agree He Planned Slaying  
but Not in Mature Sense

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A clinical psychologist and a psychiatrist both testified Thursday that Sirhan Bishara Sirhan premeditated the killing of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, but not in the "mature and meaningful" way that must be proved to justify a death sentence for first-degree murder.

Psychologist O. Roderick Richardson said Sirhan's plan to kill Kennedy "would be premeditation of the sort when a mental patient in a locked ward plans to steal the keys from the night nurse and escape through the kitchen window."

Psychiatrist Eric H. Marcus conceded that Sirhan was capable of planning the slaying, forming an intent to commit murder and harboring malice aforethought. But, Marcus added, such plans arose from Sirhan's paranoid view of himself as "a savior of society," and in this context could not constitute mature and meaningful premeditation.

## Trial Moves Along Fast

Sirhan's murder trial, now in its 11th week, moved forward rapidly Thursday as Richardson, testifying for the third day, was excused and followed on the stand by two more clinical psychologists, both of whom were excused with little or no cross-examination.

Dr. Stephen J. Howard and Dr. William Crain testified that they examined the raw data from five psychological tests Richardson administered to Sirhan and, evaluating the tests independently, reached the same diagnosis as Richardson: that Sirhan is a paranoid schizophrenic and was in a state of diminished mental capacity when he shot Kennedy.

It was with the testimony of Marcus that it was revealed for the

first time in open court that the prosecution's psychiatric consultant, Dr. Seymour Pollack, also considers Sirhan a paranoid schizophrenic.

## Mental Illness and Crime

But, Marcus testified, Pollack also maintains that there is no relationship between Sirhan's mental illness and the crime.

Marcus said he found Sirhan suffering from delusions of persecution, particularly political persecution, and said "I fail to see the logic" of contending there is no relationship between Sirhan's delusions and his "committing a crime directly related" to his political views.

Marcus also admitted, under questioning by defense attorney Grant B. Cooper, that he and all other psychological and psychiatric experts in the case, including Pollack, had met on Feb. 2 in Cooper's office to compare their findings.

It was after that meeting, when all reports for both sides turned out to be in substantial agreement, that

the prosecution and defense agreed to submit a change of plea, from innocent to guilty, with the understanding that Sirhan would receive a life sentence.

Superior Judge Herbert V. Walker was willing to accept the plea change, but insisted that the jury determine the penalty. Sirhan was unwilling to risk the death penalty at that time, so the agreement fell through.

The defense went on with its original plea and the prosecution was committed to try the case and attempt to dilute the effect of psychiatric testimony that is corroborated by its own experts.

In cross-examination of Richardson, Dep. Dist. Atty. David N. Fitts asked if Sirhan might have slain Kennedy because he wanted to be regarded as a hero to the Palestinian Arab cause.

## 'Not Grandstanding'

Richardson said Sirhan "was not grandstanding."

He conceded that some people could have seen themselves in a hero's role in the Arab-Israeli conflict and decided to kill on a rational basis, but not Sirhan. Richardson said Sirhan's tests showed that his decisions are not made on a rational basis but a psychotic one.

Marcus testified that Sirhan's mental illness apparently became noticeable only after he was thrown from a horse in September, 1966. Sirhan, who had ambitions to become a jockey, quit his job as an exercise boy at a Corona race horse ranch soon after the fall.

Marcus said Sirhan did not suffer any brain damage from the fall, but said the fall "was the last straw. His career aspirations were finished and from then on he started going visibly downhill."