

Sirhan's Volatile Moods Blamed on 'Tantrums'

Tired of 'Being Bugged,'
Wanted to Plead Guilty,
Psychiatrist Tells Court

BY DAVE SMITH
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Prosecution psychiatrist Seymour Pollack said Friday that Sirhan Bishara Sirhan told him several times that "he was through with the whole damned thing. He was through with psychiatrists bugging him and he wanted out. He wanted to plead guilty."

Pollack said these incidents, like similar outbursts after his murder trial began, were "temper tantrums in a paranoid individual." Pollack said he did not believe Sirhan was faking the tantrums.

In final cross-examination, defense attorney Grant B. Cooper asked Pollack if he felt Sirhan had shown inappropriate responses for a man in his circumstances — overreacting, smiling at serious moments and paying little attention as the possibility of a death penalty was discussed.

Pollack said he had not seen "the degree of inappropriate response we see in a psychotic person," but said Sirhan's responses were more "impulsive and volatile" than those of a normal person on trial for his life. "I suspect he wishes he could control himself better," Pollack said.

'Gotten . . . to Like Sirhan'

Pollack said he had seen quite a lot of Sirhan since the killing of Robert F. Kennedy last June and confided, "I have actually gotten somewhat to like Sirhan. He may still think I'm an s.o.b."

Cooper asked if Pollack still believed that although Sirhan is mentally ill, his illness was not so severe as to diminish his mental capacity to maturely and meaningfully premeditate Kennedy's death.

Pollack replied that he did believe it "with reasonable medical certain-

ly. Cooper asked if he believed "beyond reasonable doubt"—a condition on which a first degree murder conviction must be based.

Pollack said he regarded "beyond reasonable doubt" as a moral judgment which he, as a doctor, did not feel qualified to make. "Reasonable medical certainty," he said, is a medical judgment which does not equate with the moral concept.

Under redirect examination by Dep. Dist. Atty. John E. Howard, Pollack read at length from the transcript of a Feb. 2 meeting between psychiatrists and psychologists for both the defense and prosecution.

Agreed to Change Plea

It was after this meeting, at which there was general agreement that Sirhan was mentally ill to some degree, that the defense and prosecution agreed to change Sirhan's plea to guilty, with an understanding that he would be sentenced to life in prison.

However, the agreement fell through and the plea remained not guilty.

The transcript of the meeting revealed a sharp dispute between Pollack and defense psychiatrist Bernard L. Diamond, who expressed irritation at Pollack for not revealing his conclusions about Sirhan's mental state.

On Thursday, Pollack had contended that Diamond had given him to understand he could have no further interviews with Sirhan after his last interview on Feb. 1.

But the transcript showed that it was Pollack who first suggested that it would be of little further value for him to see Sirhan again. On Thursday, Pollack had testified that if he had had more than 25 hours with Sirhan, he might have seen clearer evidence of Sirhan's alleged psychotic symptoms.

Diamond, on Feb. 2, told Pollack, "I do not feel, Seymour, that you have played fair." Diamond said Pollack had "evaded" and "quibbled" while defense psychiatrists and psychologists had made full disclosures, and said Pollack had "misused the conference" by holding back his opinions.

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Pollack insisted, at that meeting and in his testimony this week, that at that time he had not come to any conclusions.

But he confirmed that two days after the meeting, on Feb. 4, he dictated an 18-page diagnosis in a confidential report to the district attorney's office.

At that time, Pollack confirmed Thursday, he had not thought the case would come to trial. But after Superior Judge Herbert V. Walker ordered the trial to proceed before a jury, Pollack wrote another report on March 21.

Judge Walker adjourned the trial at noon Friday until Monday morning. It appeared the case would go to the jury late next week, probably on Friday.