

# Final Argument in Sirhan Trial Begun by State

Prosecutor Jolts Jurors  
With Question Concerning  
Cause of Kennedy Slaying

BY DAVE SMITH

Times Staff Writer

The final word in defense of Sirhan Bishara Sirhan was spoken Friday and his lengthy murder trial entered its final hours as Chief Dep. Dist. Atty. Lynn Compton began the prosecution's final summation.

In a brief prelude to his argument Monday, Compton termed the case "highly overcomplicated" by psychiatric expertise and jolted the seven-man, five-woman jury with a question that brought them to the heart of the matter:

"Did Robert F. Kennedy, a young, highly successful man at the peak of his career—a former U.S. attorney general, a senator from New York and a candidate for the Presidency of the country—did he breathe his last breath on the dirty floor of the Ambassador Hotel, there with the mops and the dirty dishes, did he leave a widow with 11 children, because he favored U.S. support of the state of Israel or because he was a substitute father image in some Oedipus complex in Sirhan's mind?"

## Prosecutor's Voice Disdainful

The defense has offered both theories as partial explanation of the Palestinian Arab's motive in killing Kennedy last June 5, just after he won the California Democratic presidential primary.

Compton, his voice disdainful as he waved toward a blackboard bearing the names of 10 "so-called experts"—psychologists and psychiatrists called to testify for both sides—said he had thought of erasing their names as he rose to speak, but then changed his mind.

"I hope," he added, "that I can erase them all from your consideration."

Compton said the psychiatric testimony had been so confusing and conflicting that "I can be frank to admit right now as I stand here

that I can't answer the question of what Sirhan's real motive was."

Referring to Dr. Bernard L. Diamond's testimony that Sirhan was in a dissociative state induced by the combination of intoxication, rage and a self-induced hypnotic trance from staring into hotel mirrors, Compton said, with thinly veiled contempt:

"If you believe Dr. Diamond with his mirror act and believe Sirhan was in some kind of trance, so that he didn't know if he was on foot or horseback, then it would be inhuman to punish him for anything at all."

Then he added:

"But if you don't buy it—like I don't buy it, and like (deputy district attorneys) John Howard and Dave Fitts don't buy it—then there's nothing left but plain old cold-blooded first-degree murder."

## Says None Reflect Wisdom

Compton implied that the precise definition of "mature and meaningful" premeditation that has been so much a part of the defense case is not a legitimate concern to the jurors because, he said, his office deals with about 35,000 felons each year, and in the premeditation behind all the 35,000 crimes, "none of it reflects mature and meaningful, wise judgment."

Compton followed a detailed four-hour summation of the fine points of law by chief defense attorney Grant B. Cooper, who urged the jury to find Sirhan guilty of second-degree murder and sentence him to life imprisonment.

As he had on Thursday, Cooper stressed that the defense did not feel Sirhan "should be given a medal for what he did"—or indeed, that he should "ever be turned loose on society."

But, Cooper argued, the facts in the case and the applicable law make a first-degree verdict inappropriate.

Cooper said the defense also would not ask the jury to return a manslaughter verdict—even

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though, he contended, the evidence could warrant it—because he felt that such a request would simply not be discreet in this case.

Cooper said the jury could accept the facts as stated by the prosecution, ignore the claims of hypnotic or dissociative trances, and accept the evidence of "premedita-

tion that goes back to at least May 18—three weeks before the killing—and still would have to consider whether Sirhan's plans were mature or meaningful.

Citing Sirhan's claimed amnesia about his writings in his notebooks, where he wrote of his intent to kill Kennedy, Cooper asked, "Why, why in God's name did Sirhan deny these writings? Frankly, I don't know." The denials, Cooper said, were paradoxical but insignificant, in view of the fact that Sirhan admitted on the stand several times that he hated Kennedy and on one occasion was so enraged that he said: "So help me God, I would have killed him on the spot, right then and there."

Citing Sirhan's half-dozen outbursts of temper in the court or in Superior

Judge Herbert V. Walker's chambers, Cooper said the significance of such outbursts was that Sirhan couldn't restrain himself, even after the judge warned Sirhan he would be gagged and bound if he persisted.

Cooper said he "could have crawled under the table" when clinical psychologist Martin M. Schorr—whom Cooper three times dubbed "the little man in the green suit"—admitted that he had copied dramatic portions of a psychiatrist's recently published casebook while looking for a punchy way to spice up his testimony.

Cooper said Schorr "made a terrible faux pas" and "could have spoiled the work he had done by doing such a stupid thing . . . But whatever it was he copied, it wasn't his protocol," said Cooper, adding that the clinical test protocol developed by Schorr was substantially upheld by seven other defense experts.

Concluding his lengthy summation, Cooper told the jury, "I'm the last one to speak on behalf of this defendant. When I sit down, no voice will be raised again in his defense . . . We pass from our shoulders to yours the responsibility and the proper fate of Sirhan Sirhan."