

# Belli Sirhan Family Discuss His Appeal

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Attorney Melvin Belli met with the family of Sirhan B. Sirhan here Saturday and then said he probably will handle the appeal of Sirhan's conviction for the assassination of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

He said he would meet with Sirhan early this week.

The announcement set off speculation that Belli was about to take over the defense of Sirhan, sentenced to die in the gas chamber.

"I think the death penalty is completely uncalled for," said Belli, who defended Jack Ruby in his trial for the murder of Lee Harvey Oswald, assassin of President John F. Kennedy. Ruby received a death sentence but was awaiting retrial when he died of cancer in January, 1967.

Although Belli said his interest in Sirhan was limited to writing an appeal brief, an associate indicated Belli's role could develop into much more than that.

"There's no question the family would like him to do that (write an appeal brief)," said Sydney Irmas, a Beverly Hills attorney associated with Belli.

"Then, the question is whether he's going to go any further. And I think nobody but Sirhan can decide that."

Russell E. Parsons, one of Sirhan's three defense lawyers, informed of Belli's comments, said he was in the case "until the bitter end."

"I told him (Sirhan) when he hired me that I would go to the Supreme Court of the United States if necessary, and he shook hands with me and said, 'That's what I want.'"

Grant B. Cooper, Sirhan's chief defense counsel, said he knew nothing about Belli entering the case.

Belli said Sirhan's mother and two brothers first approached him about three weeks ago when he was in Los Angeles for a trial.

## Two-Hour Meeting

In a two-hour meeting during a court recess, they asked him to enter the case, he said.

Saturday morning, Sirhan's mother and brother, Adel, met with Belli in the lawyer's Los Angeles apartment. Adel then agreed to arrange for the meeting this week between Sirhan and Belli.

Belli said his main interest was in writing the appeal should the motion for a new trial for Sirhan be denied. That motion, submitted last month by Cooper, is scheduled for argument May 21 before Superior Judge Herbert V. Walker.