

REFUSED TO RETURN FOOD TRAY

Tear Gas Routs Sirhan From Prison Cell

9-11-70 L.A. Times

SAN QUENTIN (UPI)—Sirhan B. Sirhan, convicted assassin of Robert F. Kennedy, was routed from his Death Row cell with tear gas after refusing to return a food tray, San Quentin Prison officials said Thursday.

The incident Wednesday followed several days of increasing tension on Sirhan's part because of the Middle East situation, Associate Warden James Park said.

He said Sirhan asked to send a telegram to his lawyers. Park refused to divulge the contents except to say it was on "the general subject" of the Middle East.

"The staff made the judgment that the contents of the telegram were not legally urgent and told him if he wanted to write it in a letter he

could send it but that he could not send the telegram," Park said.

"This made him very angry and apparently added to a certain amount of tension he has been under in the last few days," Park said that "yesterday afternoon, Sirhan refused to give up his food tray when it was to be picked up after the afternoon meal.

"Persuasion did not work. He would not come out of the cell. A fairly small amount of gas was used and he came out without any violent incident and is now locked up in an isolation cell awaiting a disciplinary hearing."

Park said it was "standard practice" to use tear gas on prisoners who refuse to come out of a cell.

Park said Sirhan had been particularly tense in the last few days,

following reports from Palestinian guerrillas — later disavowed — that his release was one of their demands for the safe release of hijacked airliners and their passengers in Jordan.

Sirhan's mother, Mrs. Mary Sirhan, tried to fly from Los Angeles to Jordan to talk to the guerrillas but she and two of his attorneys were barred by the State Department from making the trip.

Asked what Sirhan, a Jordanian refugee before the June 5, 1968, assassination of Kennedy in Los Angeles, thought about the hijackings and the current Middle East situation, Park said:

"Even if he said something I wouldn't pass it along. He gets upset about the prison releasing the details of his daily life and what he's doing and what he's saying."

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