

# Picayune

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## PARTLY CLOUDY

with scattered mainly afternoon thunder-showers, variable winds 5-15 miles an hour is the Weather Bureau forecast. High expected Saturday, 88-92; low, 72-75. High Friday, 92; low, 74. Weather map, details, Sec. 3, Page 4.

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## ACCUSED RFK ASSASSIN ENTERS INNOCENT PLEA



—AP WIREPHOTO.  
SIRHAN BISHARA SIRHAN (left) listens to his attorney, Russell Parsons, as they left Friday's court appearance in Los Angeles at which Sirhan pleaded "not guilty" to a charge he murdered Sen. Robert F. Kennedy. Sirhan's trial has been set for Nov. 1.

### Judge Sets Nov. 1 for Sirhan Murder Trial

By BOB THOMAS

LOS ANGELES (AP) — To the charge that he murdered Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, Sirhan Bishara Sirhan responded Friday in a firm, clear voice: "Not guilty."

A judge set his trial for Nov. 1, just four days before the presidential election in which Kennedy had hoped to be the Democratic nominee, and close to the Nov. 12 Memphis trial date for James Earl Ray, charged with murdering Martin Luther King.

Sirhan's attorney, Russell E. Parsons, indicated that the plea of innocent does not rule out a possible plea of innocent by reason of insanity.

Parsons told newsmen after the hearing that brain tests for Sirhan have not been completed, and he has yet to finish studying reports of psychiatrists.

"If a man's insane at the time of trial, you can't try him," he said. "You know, people sometimes lose their minds very suddenly . . . The door is open for almost anything."

### MAY MAKE MOTIONS

Parsons reserved the right to make "appropriate motions" in the case "at least 35 days before the trial."

Sirhan, 24-year-old Jordanian immigrant, was seized

moments after Kenneay was shot June 5 after claiming victory in the California Democratic presidential primary election. Sirhan has been held since under maximum security.

The hearing for plea took only 22 minutes. It was conducted in a 13th-floor makeshift courtroom in the Hall of Justice. All spectators were frisked for weapons. Present were 50 press representatives and 25 others, including the defendant's mother, Mary Sirhan, and his brothers, Adel, Sharif and Saidallah.

Sirhan walked in breezily, wearing a light blue shirt and dark slacks. He sat close to Parsons—holding his hand much of the time—and intently followed each legal maneuver. He spoke

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10 words during the proceedings, always in a forceful voice.

He was asked if his name was Sirhan Bishara Sirhan.

"Yes, sir," he said.

#### ASKED FOR PLEA

How did he plead to the counts of first-degree murder (of Kennedy) and assault with a deadly weapon with intent to commit murder (of five bystanders)?

"Not guilty."

Because another unidentified defense attorney was involved in a court trial, Parsons requested setting Sirhan's trial Nov. 1. Superior Court Judge Richard Schauer pointed out to the defendant that under the constitution he was entitled to a speedy trial, which would ordinarily be no more than 60 days after arraignment.

"Do you now give up rights to a speedy trial?" the judge asked.

Sirhan consulted with Parsons and replied: "We waive that right."

"Do you personally waive that right?" the judge asked.

"Yes, sir."

#### RETURNED TO CELL

With the setting of the trial, Sirhan was returned to his cell. Earlier, Dist. Atty. Evelle Younger had asked Judge Schauer to modify his order placing strict limitations on public comments by principals in the case.

Younger complained that under the ruling he was unable to answer such reporters' questions as:

Are you going to call the

coroner, Mrs. Kennedy, Roosevelt Grier and others to testify at the trial? Was there any evidence that a second gun was fired? Was one of Sirhan's brothers really fired at? Was a brother involved in the Kennedy shooting?

Younger argued that it would be more in the public interest for him to answer "no" rather than "no comment" to some of those questions.

"This case demands an order to restrict publicity," Judge Schauer commented in denying the District Attorney's motion.

#### MINOR MODIFICATION

The judge did, however, make a minor modification, extending the order to police chiefs and sheriffs who have "obtained information related to this action, which information has not previously been released to the public."

At a news conference after the hearing veteran defense lawyer Parsons said he decided on the "not-guilty" plea because it "would allow us to show what and why."

He explained. "Why—if this is the man—did he do it? What is his condition? What are the factors? Was he able to formulate opinions?"

Parsons remarked that he has done research on the Arab-Israeli hostilities, adding that "it might have colored his (Sirhan's) whole life." The attorney added: "He's an Arab, you know; they're so different from us."

Others have described Sirhan

as an ardent Arab supporter. Kennedy had said the United States has a commitment to Israel.

Parsons offered some personal notes about Sirhan: His request for sleeping pills has been granted; he is nervous—I think he's of a nervous mentality anyway extremely so"; his family has suffered a financial loss, he relies on his attorney."

"He gets on his knees...and

looks up in my face and talks to me like a baby," Parsons remarked.

Does Sirhan feel remorse?

Parsons said he thinks Sirhan doesn't completely understand what happened, but "I haven't seen any evidence yet of any malice or premeditation."