

the star witness for Sirhan's defense. His testimony buttressed the diagnoses of five other experts that Sirhan was afflicted with paranoia and schizophrenia. Diamond reconnoitered the darkening recesses of the assassin's mind. One key to the killing, Diamond insisted, must be found in Sirhan's arcane experiments with the mirror. It was during his self-induced trances, Diamond said, that Sirhan scribbled over and over that "Kennedy must die."

Photographers' flashbulbs and the mirrors inside the Ambassador Hotel—and four Tom Collinses—acted with hypnotic power, Diamond testified. Fuzzy with drink, Sirhan wandered in a trance until he encountered Kennedy in a serving pantry. "Only this time it was for real," said Diamond. "This time there was only the loaded gun." It was, he admitted, a "preposterous story, unlikely and incredible." It was also, Diamond insisted, what really happened.

**Gasping for Breath.** Sirhan professes that he has no recollection of shooting Kennedy last June. However, Diamond was able to make the assassin relive the killing in his prison cell six months later by hypnotizing him with a coin held eight inches from his eyes. "Sirhan simply pulled an imaginary gun out of his belt," Diamond recounted to the court, "and fired it convulsively again and again and shouted out: 'You son of a bitch!'"

The psychiatrist jabbed his finger to simulate Sirhan's cheap .22-cal. revolver: "It was very dramatic and very real—the convulsive movement, the grabbing of the gun and the expression on his face of the most violent contorted rage. Then there was a momentary pause and he started to choke. He was actually re-experiencing the choking when they held him down and took away the gun. He was gasping for breath."

Prosecutor David Fitts peppered the diminutive professor with hostile questions, but he could not blunt the thrust of Diamond's testimony about murder in a trance. A far-out tale? Perhaps. A grave problem of determining mental health in criminal trials is that expert witnesses are almost always available to back up either prosecution or defense with their testimony (*see* BEHAVIOR). After two more psychologists declared that Sirhan suffers from grave mental disorders, avuncular Attorney Grant Cooper rested for the defense. And though a handwriting expert called by the prosecution saw no evidence that Sirhan's diary had been written under the mirror's hypnotic influence, even the star rebuttal witness, Psychiatrist Seymour Pollack, told of the assassin's "paranoid personality." Pollack, however, asserted that the assassination of Kennedy was "triggered by political reasons with which he [Sirhan] was highly emotionally charged." Altogether, as the trial enters its final stages this week, the prosecution faces an uphill struggle to refute contentions that Sirhan was either insane or suffering from diminished mental responsibility.

## TRIALS

### Sirhan Through the Looking Glass

A mirror. Two flickering candles. And Sirhan Sirhan. Alone in his cramped room, day after day, hour after silent hour, Sirhan studied Sirhan. Mail-order courses in Rosicrucian mysticism had given him a new creed. They told the disturbed Christian Arab that he could unlock from the mirror image of Sirhan Sirhan the inner knowledge, happiness and power he craved.

Focusing his mind power on the looking glass, Sirhan soon convinced himself that he could order an inanimate object to move. He rigged a pendulum from a fisherman's weight, and on command, he said, it began to sway. Yet telekinesis—the ability to cause objects at a distance to move through the exercise of will—was a frightening power, and Sirhan feared that he might lose his mind. Once, instead of his own image in the mirror, Sirhan saw a vision of Robert Kennedy, the man he was soon afterward to kill.

**Arcane Experiments.** The candles swayed and changed color. Really? Sirhan insisted that it was no trick of imagination, reported Dr. Bernard L. Diamond. The noted psychoanalyst, who combines professorships in law, psychiatry and criminology at the University of California at Berkeley, was