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Mother Mary Sirhan

Youngest Sirhan—Munir

Sirhans' Lives Aimless Since Assassination

By Lyle W. Price

PASADENA, Calif. (AP) —Neighbors say the frail and gray-haired woman rarely goes out of the house and sometimes refuses to come to the door or answer the telephone.

Occasionally, struggling with a garden hose, she waters her yellow-green lawn on one of Southern California's hot summer days. Once in a while she beats out a rug on the porch. But mostly she sits alone inside the old white-frame, two-story house, her only fellowship the company of two of her five bachelor sons.

One of her sons is Sirhan B. Sirhan, 28, under life sentence at San Quentin Prison for assassinating Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

Life has been a series of troubles for the Sirhan fam-

ily since Kennedy was assassinated in Los Angeles Ambassador Hotel in June 1968 just after he won the California Democratic presidential primary.

The 61-year-old Mary Sirhan and every son except Munir, the youngest have long been out of work. They have few friends. The five sons range in age from 24 to 40.

Skinny and ailing with an ulcer and nervous condition, Shariff Sirhan, 39, says the memory of the four-year-old shooting is "always there in front of my eyes." His life, he says, has become "worse than hell."

Said, 40, and Shariff speak of going days and even weeks at a time without eating. Said limps slightly and

complains of leg pains from a 1969 car accident in which his skull was fractured. Shariff says Said is starving to death. The family says it refuses any charity or welfare.

The sole family support is Munir, 24, who works in gas stations and is good at mechanics. He and Adel, 33, an unemployed lute player, reside at the family home.

Divorced for years from her husband who lives in Jordan, Mrs. Sirhan mourns that sons Said and Shariff "are in bad shape—very bad shape. They don't have work, no gas or electricity, and are way back on their bills. It is really a hard life."

Shariff and Said say they both have worked as machinists in years past but fear they may be in too poor health to resume working in this field. Shariff says he's been turned down for other jobs, including accounting, a field he was in some years ago.

The brothers complain that when they are interviewed for a job employers ask them about their relationship to Sirhan, sometimes look at them strangely, question them at great length, then say "we'll let you know" and don't.

Munir and Adel are the only two brothers who haven't had numerous scrapes with the police. But even Munir, two years before the shooting, almost got deported after a marijuana possession conviction.

Said currently faces a municipal court trial on a disturbing the peace charge. Police say he broke a window and ripped a hole in his mother's house in July and threatened to burn the

home down in the belief that Mrs. Sirhan had been withholding family funds.

Mrs. Sirhan says flatly "I have no funds and no income other than from Munir, who is supporting me at the present time." Said also has been convicted of LSD and marijuana possession, and of public drunkenness, the latter in connection with an incident when his car went over a cliff. Shortly after the Kennedy assassination Said told police somebody fired two shots at him on the Pasadena Freeway.

Shariff, convicted in 1963 of sawing through the brake lines of his ex-girlfriend's car in a romantic dispute, has had two post-shooting allegations against him dropped: one of supposedly threatening the lives of Sirhan's defense attorneys, the other of causing a hospital disturbance the night Said was in the car accident.

Refugees from Palestine, the Sirhan family, whose name in Arabic means "wanderer," has been unable to gain American citizenship through one problem or another. They say they had come to Pasadena, hometown of a missionary friend, hoping to escape troubles such as they had faced in the Middle East.

Despite their troubles, the Sirhans say they don't want to leave Pasadena and start a new life. They hope to find a way here to help Sirhan.

The family, though Christian, has quit even its one social link with local churches. Mrs. Sirhan lost her \$195 a month housekeeper job at one of the churches after a quarrel and Shariff says ever since the shooting when they went to services "people looked at us differently."

The neighbors say they feel sorry for them.

"They are good neighbors

to us," says Gabriel Arandia, 25, one of a family of six living on one side of the Sirhan home. "We are very happy to know them, especially the mother. She is a nice person."

Arandia, a student from Bolivia, says people shouldn't hold anything against the family because "you know his brothers didn't have the guilt."

Shariff said he expects the family's lives will go on being troubled until "the truth comes out in the Sirhan case" and that then "everything will be all right."

He himself cannot reveal the "truth" because of threats against his life, Shariff says, but he maintains officials could find it if they wanted to. He has written a number of letters to officials about the case, including the President, and has received polite but non-committal replies.

"Sirhan is innocent. He did not do it," Shariff insists. Shariff acknowledges that Sirhan was captured at the scene and identified by bystanders as the assassin, but he says Sirhan "was used." He refuses to elaborate.

To date, Sirhan has lost all his appeals. But his life was spared from the jury's sentence to the gas chamber when state and federal courts declared the death penalty unconstitutional.