

### Contradiction ... the father of the accused speaks twice

**B**ISHARA SIRHAN, 52, the father of the man detained as Senator Robert Kennedy's assassin, surprised another wave of TV and press reporters with an abrupt switch from his former stand and statements. The elder Sirhan declared that he was "sure the shooting was carried out entirely on his son's initiative and alone." (Three days earlier, in a statement to *The Jerusalem Post*, he said Sirhan Sirhan must have been put up to the job by somebody else.)

"Reports that other men or women were involved are baseless," he said. His son must have been motivated by his own feelings alone, he added. "It is Senator Kennedy who is to blame for what happened. It is his tongue which led to his assassination." The Senator had "insulted the Arabs enough," he went on.

When asked how the Senator had "insulted" the Arabs, Mr. Sirhan paused for a second, and then said: "Well, Mohammed Mehdi said he did." (Mehdi, the Secretary-General of the Action Committee on American-Arab Relations, was reported to have said in New York that Sirhan "may have been inflamed" by Kennedy's TV statement June 1 that the United States should support Israel in the Middle East conflict.)

Reminded of his former rejection of any such motives, Sirhan told *The Post* that he has now changed his mind "following the study of reports on the situation." In reply to a question arising as to whether he had been contacted recently by someone who might have helped him change his mind, Mr. Sirhan said that a resident of the nearby town of el-Biri, "who has

just arrived from the States," put things straight for him. When asked who, he began fumbling through his pockets for his card, which did not seem to be there.

He understood "through the el-Biri emissary" that his son would not be left alone at the trial. He added that he had now decided to go to the States before June 28, the date set by a Los Angeles court for the plea. In an attempt to change the picture given June 6 of his son as "a quiet, gentle and humble type," Mr. Sirhan last week told stories indicating that he had suffered several traumatic experiences during the 1948 war and that these had left permanent scars on his character. (Sirhan Sirhan was less than three years old during the fighting in Jerusalem.)

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