

# Sirhan Notes Birthday As His Trial Continues

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LOS ANGELES, March 19 — Sirhan Beshara Sirhan turned 23 in his custom-plated courtroom today, with psychedelic birthday cards in front of him and a psychologist on the witness stand calling him an odd man out.

The assassin of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy showed much more interest in the cards and telegrams. It was, as defense counsel Emile Zola Berman put it, "a bizarre time and a bizarre place for anyone to have a birthday."

On the witness stand, psychologist O. Roderick Richardson stepped up the defense effort to picture Sirhan as a bizarre young man, mentally incapable of first-degree murder.

"He is," Richardson declared, "paranoid, blaming, suspicious, unreasonable, aggressive, attacking, rebellious, wordy, power-oriented, legalistic, dependent, moralistic, very vulnerable and socially inadequate."

The 42-year-old Richardson, who has called Sirhan a paranoid schizophrenic, said he considered the Jordanian's illness by now "about as severe as you can get without being unchangeable." He said he felt Sirhan had been sick for about a year or two before Kennedy's assassination, but his long months in jail, he implied, have since pushed him close to the point of no return.

Still looking like an undernourished teen-ager, Sirhan seemed not to be listening, even when the smooth-voiced

psychologist began touching on what he suggested were some of Sirhan's sexual problems.

Detailing a test he gave Sirhan last July, Richardson told of handing the 110-pound immigrant a set of ambiguous pictures designed to bring out his innermost thoughts.

One card depicted a man turning away from a bed, his head down. Lying on the bed was a woman naked to the waist.

Of this, Richardson said, Sirhan told him: "I don't know. Did he strangle her or rape her? He doesn't seem to be satisfied."

The card, the psychologist added, also strangely reminded Sirhan of a movie he had once seen where a detective was taking pictures of a similarly situated couple.

The sallow-faced defendant's musings, Richardson said, suggested a remarkable "emphasis on aggression and hostility in association with sex."

Several weeks ago, such disclosures might have prompted an angry outburst from the mercurial Palestinian who his lawyers contend killed Kennedy in a psychotic, unreasoning stupor.

Today, it appeared, he couldn't have cared less what was said. Relaxed and smiling, he walked into the courtroom looking for friendly faces, buoyed by telegrams from his mother and brothers, delighted by a card from his lawyers reading "Happy birthday from us cats."

There were, however, no gifts. One of Sirhan's older brothers, Adel, 30, said they were told regulations wouldn't permit it. Mrs. Sirhan, 56, had wanted to give him some cheese. She had to content herself with a visit to his cell.

The stocky Arab woman turned up in a bright print dress for the occasion. "They don't make them like that any more," Adel Sirhan said during a recess, nodding admiringly at his mother.

On the witness stand, psychologist Richardson — who

says he detected in Sirhan a "long-standing sense of frustration and rejection in his basic needs for maternal affection"—moved on to another picture card he showed the defendant.

Called the "mother-son" card, it depicted an elderly woman with a smiling young man standing beside her.

Of this, Richardson said, Sirhan told him: "Maybe he is asking for money. (But) the mother seems negative toward his request."