

Apartment Constructed For Sirhan

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LOS ANGELES (AP) — A three-cell suite is being built for Sirhan Bishara Sirhan at a state medical facility in case he is convicted of murdering Sen. Robert F. Kennedy and sentenced to life imprisonment, a state official said Sunday.

Sirhan's large quarters, now being walled off, will have a kitchen-dining room, a bedroom, a living room and a lavatory with shower, said Phillip D. Guthrie of the California Adult Authority.

The cell, which Guthrie said would protect the occupant from other prisoners, is at the California Medical Facility at Vacaville, near Sacramento.

Sirhan is on trial, accused of first degree murder in the assassination of Kennedy last June 5. If the jury convicts him of that charge, it will choose between death and life imprisonment as the penalty.

If given a life sentence, Sirhan would be sent to the medical facility for "indefinite confinement—many months or even years," a standard procedure for prisoners with mental problems, Guthrie said.

"We'll need some reading of his frame of mind and we'll also want to assess the reaction of other inmates."

Guthrie added that the California Adult Authority is asking the legislature for special legislation so Sirhan could be held at Vacaville if he receives the death penalty instead of being sent, as state law requires, to Death Row at San Quentin Prison. He attributed the request to "questions brought up about Sirhan's mental condition" and Sirhan's "notoriety."

The cost of imprisoning Sirhan and keeping a 24-hour watch on him, would far outstrip the \$2,800 yearly spent on average prisoners. Guthrie said explaining, "We've spent about \$5,000 to remodel this section."

He added: "With every prisoner of this kind, time makes a lot of difference. In time, maybe we would be able to move him out of security and into the general routine."