Assassin of Robert F. Kennedy Up for His 7th Parole Hearing

After 17 Years, 'Ifs' Still Haunt Sirhan

By BILL FARR, Times Staff Writer

Sirhan says he still cannot remember pulling the trigger that night. SOLEDAD, Calif.—Seventeen years have passed since Robert F. Kennedy was shot to death at the Ambassador Hotel, and Sirhan

denying there was a conspiracy and maintaining that he did not plan to kill the senator before their fateful and fatal crossing of paths in the But he takes full blame for the assassination,

Sirhan attributes his murderous act to "a

pent-up political rage that unfortunately was fueled that evening by four Tom Collins drinks.

And while willing to be held fully accountable for what he did, Sirhan hopes that the state Board of Prison Terms "will be fair enough to give back the parole date"

the seventh hearing on Sirhan's suitability for release from prison. His attorney, Luke McKiswhat their decision should be." board not go in with a preconceived notion about sack, said, "All we are asking is that the parole On Wednesday, the parole board will conduct

most recent being on the 17th anniversary of the

recollection to this day of firing at some things but I honestly have no That whole evening is fuzzy. I remember

Sirhan Sirhan

Board of Prison Terms, saying: "I have deep sorrow for what I did, but to put on an act for the parole board is not the way to show it."

• Complained that "the only reason" his

scheduled 1984 parole date was canceled was "because (then-Los Angeles County Dist. Atty.) John Van de Kamp wanted to whip up a

one but two popular politicians in San Francisco and who came here into this unit where I live at Compared his case with that of Dan White, whom Sirhan described as a "killer of not just

'Evening Fuzzy'

firing at Kennedy or shouting 'You bitch' at him. That part is a total blank." whole evening is fuzzy. I remember some things but I honestly have no recollection to this day of Recalling the assassination, Sirhan said: "That You son of

furor against me to help him become attorney general."

Ambassador is "pretty much a blur." He remembers the dizzying effect of the hotel's mirrored hallways, compounded by the effect of evening. He says he initially went to the hotel to get some coffee to help sober me up." the drinks he had consumed earlier in Sirhan, who is now 41, says his time in the mbassador is "pretty much a blur." He

If he had no memory of the shooting, Sirhan was asked by a reporter, what was the last thing

my confused state, was a typewriter typing without anybody doing the typing. Now I know seemed to be in a trance. That report, by the way, couldn't be found at the time of my trial but that I was in the press room and what I was looking at was a Teletype machine. There was a lady there who saw me and told police that I understand they found it later."

Sirhan said his first recollection after the shooting is of "being choked by someone. I thought I was going to be choked to death. Then I remember someone prying that person's hold off my throat. I think the person who did the prying that saved me was Roosevelt Grier. I thought I was going to die right there."

Sirhan talked about the many "ife" that might

because the track was closed, I ended up having the whole day free. If the horses had been running, I would not have ended up downtown at all." "I had planned to go to the races that day but When he learned the track was closed, went to a private firing range and practic

a private firing range and practiced

Mori Draws HARBOR:

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ment for killing some officeholders changed to increase the punishbooks for murdering a public offi-cial. (Since then the law has been was no such extra penalty on the was a senator running for Presi-dent." He pointed out that there longer Just because the man I shot wrong for him to be held in prison The Times, Sirhan argued it is

statement by saying: "While the life of Kennedy or any senator is Van de Kamp counters Sirhan's ('ueuns par the new law cannot apply to In the re of interviews with pattern of threatening behavior." canceled his parole date on the ground he had demonstrated "a that Strhan reportedly had made to prison at members, the Board of Frison Terms on May 22, 1982, Frison Terms on the party other more recent verbal threats Taking note of those letters and

pe some edingly to the system.

than others in the system.

convicted of manalaughter.

saking for, fairness. There should

gotten shorter sentences. That is not fair to me. That is all I am

tortured them to death who have

who have hacked people up or mitted mutual mutual sun guya

"Lyete ste guys who have com-

to be treated fairly by the parole system—"no better and no worse

but emphasized that he just wants White case was "sort of a fluke"

back, 'I am not a murderer. I was

Mure whirled around and shoured sentence for rape than to White. Sentence for rape than that guy got

here could I get a much longer behind me saying, 'Only in America could a guy like Hinckley be absolved of guilt for trying to assassinate the President, and only

long sentence for several rapes was

verdict in the John Hinckley case. A guy who had been given a long,

we heard on the radio about the

said about him.
But he did relate an anecdote
about himselt, White and a third
innase that occurred while they
were waiting in line to eat.

peen harmed by what others have

inmates because he feels he has

rule about not discussing other

of a truck farming area just inland

in Soledad, which lies in the middle

(PHU-1) at the state men's prison

Sirhan's home for the last 10 years, Protective Housing Unit No. 1

the same tacility that has been White served most of his time in

couquer...
un pounepsuq that affected my

Collins plus the deep feelings about

many Twinkies, I sure had a better one because of too many Tom

defense because he was eating too

ble. He executed those people. If he had a valid diminished capacity

verdict against White was incredi-

han was convicted of first-degree murder, but says: "First of all, the manslaughter

tion between the two cases is that a jury found White guilty only of voluntary manalaughter while Sir-

Sirhan grants the legal distinc-

Mayor George Moscone and Super-visor Harvey Milk.

comperes his situation with that of Dan White, who served only five years for killing San Francisco

killing a public official, Sirhan

Sirhan in prison pose arguments

his party's presidential candidate.

Party Favorite

him in the favorite's role to become fornia Democratic primary, putting

Kennedy had just won the Cali-

very tabric of democracy."

the votes of a million people with

more at stake here. To invalidate than any other citizen, there was

not individually of greater value

When those who want to keep

from Monterey.

Sirhan has an almost absolute

"This happened on the day that

Sirhan says he realizes that the

while in prison. One was sent to his trial attorney, Grant Cooper, in 1971 and the other to San Quentin prison official Vern Smith in 1975. did not have in its file two threat-ening letters Strhan had written 1975 panel that granted the parole Van de Kamp argued that the

and legal argument." Contral was not singularly responsi-lief. I was not singularly responsi-ble for his date being taken away. The members of the parole board itself had to agree with our facts and local argument. Contrary to Sirhan's apparent bewhen they voted to release him. Sirhan's prison conduct and psy-"because, as we proved, the board did not have all of the facts about lease date to Sirhan was an error in attorney general."
"Clearly, the granting of a re-

"long before I decided to run for then and now, said he had planned to petition for blocking the parole However, Van de Kamp, both attorney general."

Van de Kamp wanted to become that happened in those seven years seven years. In fact, the only thing had been a model prisoner for those all of a sudden in 1982, Van de Kamp decides to sak the parole board to rescind my release date. I meant I would get out in 1984. Then of the parole board, they gave me a parole date back in 1975, which

paring to run for state attorney County district attorney and prede Kamp, who initiated the revoca-tion when he was Los Angeles date, which was set in 1975, can-celed in 1982. That man is John Van ing him "the heartbreaking disap-pointment" of having his parole

had to come to terms with it or would be unable to go on." never really leaves me, But I have on me about my possible responsi-bility for those things. That sorrow had as they grew up and it weighs to his wife and the many children he had. I see the troubles they have what I did, not only to Kennedy but

parole board. I don't think that is point of it to the parole board. A lot of inmates would go out there and put on an emotional show for the

"It may appear that I have no remorse. I have not made a great showed little concern about the horrendous ramifications of his

ings, Sirhan has appeared tense and sometimes angry. He seemed pre-occupied with his own pilght and During his last two parole hear-

unlikely and besides, it would not erase what I did." someone else. But it seems quite second gun theory. I would have liked somehow to find out that the fast bullet had been fired by sucontaged those putting forth the who might have fired by mistake. Frankly, for a long time I bed security guard next to Kennedy, ourly one it could have been was a implausible since I was not sculing in concert with anyone class. The gui theory is interesting but it is who else was in on it? The second wouldn't I help myself after all these years, by telling authorities "If anybody else was involved,

SURBING SEVER cates of a "second gun" theory, part of a conspiracy and the advomakes sense."

To those who believe Sirhan was

at a public gun range so everybody could identify me. None of that instead of a more powerful gun?
Nor would I have been practicing SS. s besu eved I bluow bnA floqs would get caught or killed on the to face and make certain that I "Listen, if I had planned it, do you think I would have done it iace

SILUSTI SSIC: assassination was premeditated, Rebutting the theory that the

lust don't remember. But I am not going to lie about it. I After all this time, I could have come up with some explanation. pave just blocked these things out. horse. Or somehow my mind may injury I suffered in falling from a of memory could stem from a head is at least possible that these lapses hypnotizing myself in the bath-room mirror, I don't know. I think it said at the trial that I did that after (an expert witness for the defense) that stuff, Dr. (Bernard) Diamond "I just don't remember writing

that the shooting was a spontanedamning evidence against his claim aiter the assassination, remain investigators searching his room

more of an unshakeable obsession."

He knows that the rambling entries in the notebook, found by of . . Robert Fitzgerald Kennedy must soon die . . My determina-tion to eliminate RFK is becoming he wrote over and over in a notebook: "RFK must be disposed to have no memory-the phrases the case about which Sirhan claims There is one more key aspect of

admit that attack my people. It enraged me, I Israel that I knew would be used to the sending of 50 Phantom jets to justice. But then he did things to support Israel, including backing downtrodden. He seemed to be for "I originally had admired Sen. Kennedy. He was for the poor and

* Admired Kennedy

generate a plan to kill the senator. Kennedy but he insists that did not Sirhan does not deny he had developed a "deep rage" toward pe in prison.

would not be dead and I would not wonld not have crossed. Kennedy denly changed the route, our paths Kennedy to leave through the kitchen. There is another it, it the fact, only a last-minute decision by a Secret Service man prompted what way he was coming out in be at the Ambassador. "They claim I was lying in wait. How could that be? I did not know

He insists that he did not even know that Kennedy was going to

Heights and East Jerusalem. defeat for the Arabs as larsel captured the Sinai, the Golan. which had ended in a devastating parade scheduled to observe the anniversary of the Six Day War, area with some thoughts of dis-rupting or at least heckling at a He then went to the Wilshire

earlier. shooting with the .22-callber piatol shooting with the .22-callber piaton shooting bad sails a sile of the sails of the sa

Continued from Page 3

SIRHAN

Under the rules and regulations

Sirhan blames one man for caus-

But I do have great sorrow for