



**SIRHAN B. SIRHAN**  
A 6x8-Foot World

## Sirhan Security

# EVEN GUARDS ARE SUBJECTED TO 'FRISKING'

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Staff Writer

Security — the tightest in the history of the state and perhaps the nation — continues to isolate everyone even remotely involved in the life and actions of Sirhan Bishara Sirhan, the accused assassin of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

A 24-hour security guard is stationed around the Sirhan family home, protecting his mother and brothers, all threatened with death.

Another protective screen has been thrown around the Riverside home of Sirhan's attorney, Russell Parsons.

Still others guard witnesses, public officials and even investigators.

But the most protected person of all is the 24-year-old would-be jockey who sits in a special jail cell, far removed from other prisoners who could possibly harm him, and even protected against lawmen, who might be antagonistic.

The deputies assigned to guard him are specially selected — the most competent, the most stable on the sheriff's giant staff. Yet they are searched before they take up their protective posts.

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**SIRHAN'S** attorney, a gray-haired grandfather type who admits his client "trusts me . . . sits at my feet like a child . . . listens . . . takes my advice" isn't above suspicion as far as authorities are concerned. He, too, is searched before being allowed to talk with the slightly built Jordanian.

Sirhan himself lives in a 6x8-foot windowless cell on the 13th floor of the Hall of Justice in Los Angeles. The other four cells in the block are kept vacant — intentionally.

Although he wears standard jail garb and his food is standard, the clothing is searched before it's given to him and the food is prepared separately from the rest of the prison food. Everything is considered—even poisoning.

He is allowed to leave his cell twice daily — for 20 minutes in the morning and 20 minutes in the afternoon. He goes to a larger caged area outside his cell and walks — his only exercise.

He buys cigars, candy bars and paperback books from the jail store-cart which comes by periodically, but every action is watched by six guards constantly on duty — one in the jail cell, one in the exercise area and four in the corridor. But they don't talk to him — there's no unnecessary conversation. They are instructed to answer questions if he asks, but to offer no opinions.

His only visitors: his family and his attorney.

But this doesn't bother him, his attorney says.

"He's a man who could spend a lot of his life alone . . . he's a loner . . . and a reader."

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**HIS** reading preference has been with biographies of famous men and some light fiction. But what he apparently enjoys most is the mail he receives from throughout the country — and the world.

The letters are opened by sheriff's department offi-

cial, photo-copied, then passed on to Parsons who gives to his client only the letters he feels the slight Jordanian should read. The letters harshly criticizing Sirhan, he never sees, Parsons admits. The others, including those commending him for his actions, are forwarded to him. And the stacks of mail are high.

"There have been lots of offers of help," Parsons admitted to newsmen, "but so far all we have is \$5, and I understand the sheriff's office is holding another \$30 for us."

But the financial situation as far as the accused assassin's family is concerned is more critical.

"The boys have lost their jobs, and no one will hire them," Parsons admitted.

But two of Sirhan's brothers, Sharif and Saidallah, sitting quietly in a corner of the courtroom awaiting their brother's plea of "not guilty" last week — his last court appearance — claimed the family was "doing fine."

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**THEY HAD** all visited their brother in jail, they admitted, and reported he was "holding up well."

"It's hard for everyone . . . it's hard for the family . . . but it'll work out," Sharif, Sirhan's older brother, said before being whisked away by officers.

Sirhan says nothing.

Newsmen are not permitted near him. At his last court appearance the presiding judge ordered that no photographs or interviews would be permitted before or during the court proceedings. In addition, no cameras, tape recorders and other sound and electronic equipment were allowed in the court. If a reporter thought of talking to the prisoner, that too was overruled by court order. Reporters had to be seated while the court was in session and until they were given permission to stand — after Sirhan was safely back in his cell. Any reporter who stood during the time Sirhan was in the room was to be ejected immediately, the judge ruled.

With two dozen deputies lining the small makeshift courtroom walls during the session, no one attempted to test the ruling. It was too hard for the five-score reporters who covered the hearing to get inside, to risk being tossed out.

Newsmen arriving at the Los Angeles Hall of Justice for last week's hearing had to pass by deputies surrounding the building, in corridors and elevators. A press pass was not sufficient — names of newsmen covering the story had to be submitted to the Sheriff's office beforehand. Each newsman — and woman — was searched thoroughly before being allowed to enter the hearing room — a min-courtroom on the 13th floor of the grey-stone building. No purses, or electronic equipment were permitted in the room. Deputies ringed the courtroom's painted brick walls. Only things on the stark walls was an electric clock, an emergency phone and an electronic door release.

The security and the lockup made some newsmen — and a few spectators — nervous. But Sirhan seemed at ease.

His attorney noticed it too:

"He feels a lot better," Parsons said following the hearing, "because he knows there's someone working for him . . . looking out for him . . . trying to help him."

But lawmen know there are all kinds that make up the world. And some of them aren't trying to help him, or anyone connected with him. That's why the security, they say.

"We don't want another Dallas."