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Sirhan Bjt Lead 280
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LOS ANGELES AP - Sirhan Sirhan, who began his own defense by admitting he assassinated Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, told in smiling and relaxed fashion today of his early years in the United States after his family fled Palestine.

"I didn't want to leave. I wanted to say in my own country," the young Jordanian told the jury in his second day on the witness stand. "I thought that things would subside."

Sirhan, charged with murder and on trial for his life, answered every question with "sir" and seemed eager to reply.

He began his story Monday by telling of scenes of war in his childhood days in Jerusalem, torn by fighting between Arabs and Zionists. He continued today by speaking of an incident in which the French consulate in the old city of Jerusalem was ransacked by Arabs. He said that later one of his teachers in Jerusalem spoke of it.

"He said this is the wrong way of going about it—there should be negotiations," Sirhan said.

"Did you believe that?" asked defense counsel Grant B. Cooper.

"Yes sir, I did. He was very mad about it—angry that Arabs did the same the Zionists did."

The defense contends that the shooting of Kennedy was occasioned by the New York senator's support of Israel and that the trauma of a wartime childhood diminished Sirhan's mental capacity to plan the assassination.

The Sirhan family was brought to this country by a United Nations relief organization and moved to nearby Pasadena.

Sirhan was asked if he found it difficult to adjust to school in America.

A. No sir. I was very anxious to attend.

Q. Did you work hard at school?

A. I tried my best.

He said his father remained in Pasadena only about six or eight months, then returned to the mid-East.

Q. How long did he remain away?

A. Ever since.

Sirhan's tone was almost casual Monday when he admitted he took Kennedy's life.

The 24-year-old; end graf A021

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Sirhan Bjt 450
By HARRY F. ROSENTHAL
Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES AP - In a tone of voice that was almost casual, Sirhan Bishara Sirhan said on the witness stand that he took the life of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

The 24-year-old Jordanian had admitted before that he was the senator's assassin, but that was in stormy sessions out of the hearing of the jury. By contrast he was composed and polite Monday as he faced the eight men and four women who could sentence him to death.

He smiled often and grinned broadly at times.

"It is alleged that on the 5th day of June, 1968, you killed and murdered Sen. Robert Francis Kennedy, a human being," began Grant B. Cooper, the leading member of the defense legal team. "Did you . . . shoot Sen. Kennedy?"

"Yes sir," said Sirhan.

The white haired lawyer then went down the list of five others

wounded in the wild fusillade that felled the senator.

Q. Did you shoot Paul Schrader?

A. That is what the indictment reads. I might have.

Q. You heard the testimony here?

A. Yes.

Q. Were you aware of the fact that you shot Mr. Schrader?

A. I was not aware of anything.

The answer was in line with the defense contention that Sirhan was in a trance and out of contact with reality when he shot Kennedy.

Sirhan, eager to testify, often blurted out his answer before Cooper finished the question. It was almost as if he relished his turn to be heard after sitting through eight weeks of trial.

Cooper asked about the shooting of Irwin Stroll, one of the wounded.

Q. Did you bear him any ill will?

A. No, sir, I did not.

And so the questions went about Elizabeth Evans, Ira Goldstein and William Weisel.

Each time, Sirhan said no, he didn't bear the shooting victim any ill will.

The question was not asked about Kennedy.

After court, Cooper was asked: will that one be put directly?

"No," he said. "But the answer will come out."

The defense claims the scenes of war witnessed by Sirhan as a dispossessed Arab child in the Arab-Zionist struggle over Palestine in the late 40s and early 50s crippled his mind to the point where he could not meaningfully plot Kennedy's murder.

"The Jews kicked us out of our homes," Sirhan said. "The Zionists kicked us out. We were terrorized out of leaving our homes."

Sirhan's mother, Mary and his 30-year-old brother, Adel, testified that Sirhan grew up amid poverty, starvation and repeated bombings.

"I recollect, sir, quite vividly the incident which my mother referred to about the soldier—the dismembered soldier with his body exploded," said Sirhan. "I remember seeing that leg, sir, with the soldier's boot in it."

Q. Do you have any recollection of the death of your brother, Munir, that is your first brother Munir?

A. Yes, sir. I have a slight recollection of that. I used to walk around his casket."

Mrs. Sirhan said the defendant was three when Munir, then 7, was killed by a truck while running from a scene of shooting. Sirhan was so upset, she said, that she also named her next son Munir.

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Sirhan Box

LOS ANGELES AP - Sirhan Bishara Sirhan drew an reprimand in court from his attorney.

Grant B. Cooper was asking Sirhan, assassin of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, about life in Jerusalem.

"How cold does it get there?"

"Pretty damn cold, sir."

"Watch your language, Sirhan, snapped Cooper.

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