

Psychiatrist Clashes With Prosecutor and Stands

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The prosecution in the murder trial of Sirhan B. Sirhan hammered at a key defense witness today in an effort to shake his testimony that the defendant was too mentally ill to have premeditated the shooting of Senator Robert F. Kennedy.

The cross-examination was marked by several angry exchanges between the witness, Dr. Bernard L. Diamond, a psychiatrist who teaches at the University of California at Berkeley, and David N. Fitts, an assistant district attorney.

On at least two occasions, Dr. Diamond accused Mr. Fitts of "putting words into my mouth" when the prosecutor suggested that the psychiatrist had testified that Sirhan's "dissociative state" was the prime reason why the shooting took place.

'Combination of Ingredients'

"I have said over and over again," Dr. Diamond said at one point, "that the shooting was the result of a whole combination of ingredients, beginning with his childhood experiences during the Arab-Israeli war and extending through his adult experiments with the occult and the gradual deterioration of his personality."

For his part, Mr. Fitts appeared irritated by the psychiatrist's long, involved answers in which he attempted to qualify his testimony. Several times the witness was admonished by Superior Court Judge Herbert V. Walker to answer simply yes or no without going into explanations.

During the courtroom sparring, both prosecutor and witness constantly watched the reaction of the jury. Dr. Diamond smirked almost constantly as Mr. Fitts challenged his testimony.

Outside the courtroom during the luncheon break, one of the defense lawyers, Emile Zola Berman, asserted to newsmen that the prosecution was "ignoring" almost everything that Dr. Diamond had said about Sirhan's mental condition "on the basis that psychiatry is not for them."

In questioning the psychiatrist, the prosecution repeatedly stressed that much of the

information about Sirhan's early life and self-induced trances during occult experiments at home came from members of the family and from members of the family and from Sirhan himself.

Although Dr. Diamond agreed, he said that Sirhan's mother, Mrs. Mary Sirhan, was a woman "of great honesty" and he denied the prosecution's suggestion that she "tried to lay it on" to protect her son from execution.

He also said he preferred to believe Sirhan on his occult experiments since "they fit into everything I knew about his mode of behavior." Dr. Diamond stood by his belief that Sirhan was telling the truth

about the self-induced trances after the prosecution emphasized that the defendant had lied to investigators and lawyers on other matters.

During the discussion of lying, Sirhan became agitated and glared several times at the prosecutor. Once, as Mr. Fitts questioned the defendant's veracity, Sirhan violently locked forward in his swivel chair and looked as though he were about to jump to his feet in protest.

Deterred by Inspector

He was deterred by Inspector William Conroy, the chief of Security at the trial, who put his hands on Sirhan's shoulders and whispered in his ear. During most of the morning session

as the defendant showed mounting signs of irritation, Mr. Conroy sat on the edge of his chair directly in back of Sirhan, ready to jump up.

In its cross-examination of Dr. Diamond, the prosecution attempted to discredit the psychiatrist's finding that Sirhan is a "paranoid-schizophrenic psychotic" by stressing that much of the diagnosis was based on hearsay supplied by those friendly to the defendant.

Inquestioning Dr. Diamond's testimony that Sirhan's first experience in self-induced trances occurred when he was a boy in war-torn Jerusalem and was terrified by bombings and shootings, Mr. Fitts asked the witness:

THURSDAY, MARCH 27, 1969

By His Analysis of Sirhan

"You don't know whether or nor he was just a frightened little boy, do you, doctor?"

"War does much more damage than to frighten little boys," the psychiatrist said. "It causes great psychological damage."

He went on to agree with Mr. Fitts that "all little boys are affected by war."

Mr. Fitts sought to compare Sirhan's violent outbursts at watching Senator Kennedy on television offer aid and support to Israel with the anger felt by a football fan when his team loses and he curses the players and the television set.

"These were not temper tantrums," Dr. Diamond answered with a smile. "These were such intense emotional outbursts

that there was a restriction of consciousness."

Later in the day the psychiatrist said that, under the California law that specifies that a person may be committed in his actions are dangerous to himself and others, "I for one would have recommended his being committed to a mental institution" had he examined Sirhan before the assassination.

Dog Hungry for Knowledge

NEWBURN-ON-TYNE, England (AP)—John Matcalfe took out a library book titled "Expert Obedience Training for Dogs" so he could train his 4-month-old Alsatian, Guinness. The dog ate the book.