

Sirhan Defense Pulls Out All Stops

LOS ANGELES — (UPI) — The wise old defense attorney pulled a good part of the rug out from under the prosecution within minutes of opening his final argument to the jury trying Sirhan B. Sirhan.

"If one thing sinks into you let it be this," said 66 year old Grant Cooper.

"We are not trying to free a guilty man. We will tell you — as we always have — that Sirhan is guilty of killing Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

"We are not asking for an acquittal. I want to emphasize, whether Mr. Sirhan likes it or not, that he deserves to spend the rest of his life in the penitentiary.

"I am not going to ask for anything but guilty of murder in the second degree. There is a good Sirhan and a bad Sirhan, and the bad Sirhan is a very nasty Sirhan.

"I wouldn't want Sirhan turned loose on society again because the psychiatrists say he is getting worse and is going to get sicker.

"His motive? Let's put that ghost to rest once and for all. Can there be any question that Sirhan's motive was political? No. This was political murder.

"I am not overlooking — and I am sure you will not let me overlook — that the man killed was Sen. Robert Kennedy and that he left a wife and, I believe, 11 children, one of whom was born after his death.

"But you agreed at the outset not to let sympathy for the Kennedy family or the Sirhan family interfere with your calm judgment in this case."

Cooper, a handsome, affable man is putting all his chips on saving Sirhan's life.

The prosecution has demanded a verdict of first degree murder with the jury then deciding on life or death. Cooper is pleading for second degree with an automatic life sentence.

Near the End

Cooper was to wind up his argument today. The case will probably go to the jury Monday after final prosecution argument.

The chief defense attorney was joined in appeals to the jury yesterday by Russell Parsons, 69, who has been close to the 25 year old Sirhan since Kennedy's death last June, and Emile Zola Berman, a New York lawyer.

But it was Cooper who overshadowed the trial in its last days.

Cooper said the jury has to decide whether there was a reasonable doubt about whether Sirhan had the men-

tal capacity to "meaningfully and maturely and wilfully" deliberate the murder of Kennedy.

"Reasonable doubt is like love," he said. "You can't define it but you know when you've got it."

Circumstances

Cooper turned again to why Sirhan killed Kennedy and although he said that motive was not an essential element in murder it did establish the circumstances under which the crime was committed.

"Let's take the case of a man who decides to run away with a young chick and leave his wife. They plot to kill the wife and take her insurance money and run away to Tahiti. That is the sign of a malignant heart.

"But what was Sirhan's motive? It wasn't gain for him. It was a political act

growing out of the mind of a child. He actually believed it was right to murder Kennedy. How stupid? He actually believed he shouldn't get more than a couple of years in prison. How stupid!

Sirhan showed virtually no expression while Cooper spoke but sat quietly in his seat staring at his lawyer.