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Sirhan Bjt 290

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LOS ANGELES AP Sirhan Bishara Sirhan's murder trial has kept a Los Angeles County sheriff's posse on special duty for three months. Its impending end will evoke a departmental sigh of relief.

With 30 to 40 plainclothes and uniformed deputies on duty at any one time in the courtroom area, the trial has been one of the most closely guarded in the nation's history.

"At no time has Sirhan or any of the other principals in the trial been endangered," Inspector John C. Graham said Sunday.

Sirhan, a 25-year-old Arab, was convicted last Thursday of first-degree murder for last June's assassination of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy. The same jury is scheduled Monday to begin consideration of the penalty—life imprisonment or death in the gas chamber.

Graham said there has been only a single arrest since the trial began Jan. 7. That occurred last week when a man tried to make his way past guards at the entrance to the courtroom security area.

There have been no arrests for possession of weapons or such courtroom contraband as cameras, tape recorders, or electronic equipment.

Some trial spectators have been temporarily relieved of rat-tailed combs, finger nail files or other items which might have been used as weapons. However, Graham said that in no case were the owners suspected of any intent to use them as such.

A few law enforcement officers from other areas have shown up as trial spectators, carrying their regulations weapons. They have been forced to surrender them temporarily.

Newsmen, witnesses and spectators sign in at a table outside the security area, after presenting credentials or identification. Then they are admitted, usually four at a time, through the first of three locked and guarded doors.

After the first door is relocked, a second door is opened to admit visitors to the frisking area. Women are search in a small private anteroom by women deputies.

Men empty their pockets at a long table, and are manually frisked. Afterward, they are exposed to an electronic metal detector, a device also used on the women.

Finally, if cleared, the visitors are allowed through a third guarded door, which never is opened unless the entrance to the frisking room is locked.

More guards are stationed in the corridor outside the courtroom and in the courtroom itself.

Anyone inside may leave at any time. But they must go through the same search procedure to be readmitted.

Officers assigned to the courtroom are drawn from among a sheriff's force of 6,000. With the end of the trial, they will be reassigned to various duties.

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