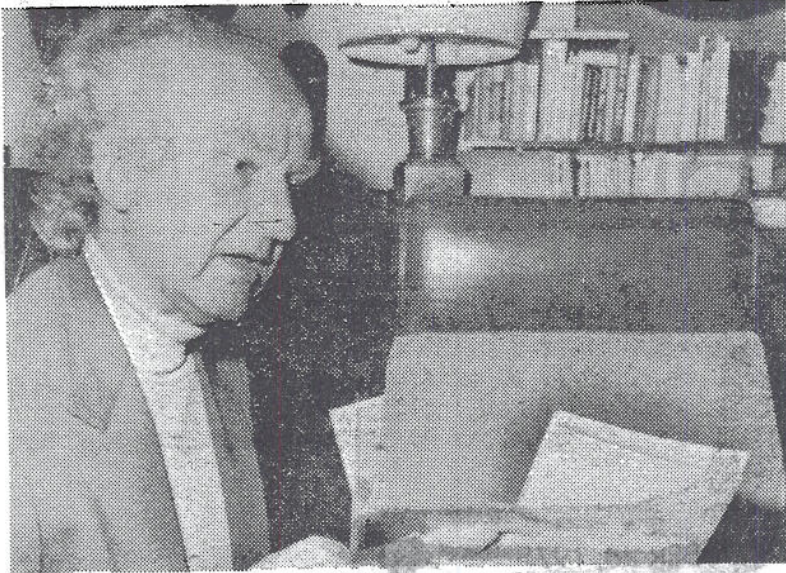


One man's theory: Hypnotist set up Sirhan



EDUARD SIMSON-KALLAS

Special to the Examiner

MONTEREY — Was Sirhan Sirhan some sort of "Manchurian Candidate," hypnotically programmed to participate in the 1968 assassination of Sen. Robert Kennedy and take the blame?

The psychologist who interviewed the young Palestinian refugee 20 times immediately after his arrival on San Quentin's Death Row in 1969 thinks so.

Dr. Eduard Simson-Kallas, now in private practice here, said the Sirhan he knew was neither insane enough nor devious enough to have killed Kennedy on his own.

"He was prepared by someone. He was hypnotized by someone. He was there to draw the attention, to be the obvious simple explanation so people wouldn't ask questions," said the psychologist.

Simson-Kallas believes there was another gun used in the assault in the kitchen of the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles on June 5, 1968.

Los Angeles Presiding Judge Robert Wenke this month ordered tests on Sirhan's pistol to determine whether another gun might have been used.

The tests are the result of pressure by adherents to the "second gun" theory that more bullets were fired in the Kennedy slaying than Sirhan's revolver held and that some of those recovered could not have come from his pistol.

Sirhan could not be trusted to kill Kennedy alone, Simson-Kallas said.

"He's always been a loser. He failed at Pasadena City College. He played the horses and lost. He wanted to become a jockey and he fell off a horse," said Simson-Kallas.

But, said the psychologist who became quite fond of Sirhan, he was the perfect subject for programming as a scapegoat.

"I see him as an excellent follower, willing to risk his life for an idea, not afraid of death.

Basically, he is a very moral person.

Sirhan was ideal for the role, he said because he had not been in this country long enough to establish any self-identification.

"He was willing to accept the identification of an Arab hero," he said.

The first indication that Sirhan was something less than a sick, lone assassin was in the manner in which he discussed the crime, Simson-Kallas said.

Other murderers he had interviewed spoke with great expression and detail of their crimes, he said.

Sirhan, though, spoke as though he were "reciting from a book," said Simson-Kallas.

"He said 'Yes, I killed Kennedy. I did it to help the Arabs. I did it to help the Arab refugees.'

"He seemed to take joy in assuming the role of an Arab hero.

"The curious thing was that he didn't have any details. A psychologist always looks for details. If a person is involved in a real situation, there are details," said Simson-Kallas.

In later interviews, as Sirhan began to trust the psychologist, he changed the way he talked about the crime, he said.

"He seemed very concerned, asking me to hypnotize him to find out what really happened.

"I don't really know what happened,' he said. 'I know I was there. They tell me I killed Kennedy.

"I don't remember what exactly I did but I know I wasn't myself. I remember there was a girl who wanted coffee. She wanted coffee with lots of cream and sugar. So I gave her my cup and poured one for myself. That's the last I can remember until I was choked and manhandled by the crowd.' "