

Jury Gets Assassin Evidence

LOS ANGELES — (AP) — The county Grand Jury heard witnesses today in the Robert Kennedy assassination and then was to be asked to vote a murder indictment against a young Jordanian who sat heavily guarded in a jail a mile away.

The sheriff's office announced that if Sirhan Bishara Sirhan, 24, is indicted, he will be arraigned 45 minutes later — in jail. Twenty-one grand jurors, 13 women and 8 men described by their foreman as "from all walks of life," sat at desks in two tiers in a theaterlike room and, in secret, heard testimony from seventeen witnesses.

One witness, Jesus Perez, a porter employed at the Ambassador Hotel where the senator was fatally shot, told newsmen Sirhan had lain in wait for half-hour for Kennedy.

Asked if the suspect seemed nervous, he said, "he looked worried — not nervous."

He said Sirhan had shuffled papers in his hands dur-

ing Kennedy's 30-minute address claiming victory in the California primary election.

Asked if Sirhan had any companions, the porter replied:

"I didn't see anyone with him."

FIRST WITNESS

The first witness before the jury was Paul Ziffren, former Democratic national committeeman for California. He was called to advise the jury formally that the victim was the New York senator.

Ziffren was followed by Perez and Dr. Henry Cuneo, a neurosurgeon who participated in emergency brain surgery for Kennedy and later assisted the coroner in his postmortem examination.

Irwin Stroll, one of the five other persons wounded in the assassination, was wheeled into the witnesses' waiting room on a chaise longue-like device. He suffered a leg wound.

The jury composed of 14 women and 8 men, normally totals 23, but one member was on vacation. A vote of 14 is needed for an indictment.

The foreman is L. E. McKee, a retired garage chain owner, who said, "We'll have to wait and see all the evidence presented to us" before making a decision.

Deputy District Attorney Sidney Cherniss said all wit-

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nesses were instructed not to discuss the nature of their testimony with anyone.

Another witness who gave newsmen a preview of his testimony was ambulance attendant Richard Walker. He treated television newsmen William Weisel, who was among the wounded in the shooting.

'FUNNY LOOK'

Walker quoted Weisel as saying he "was standing three steps behind the senator and, all of a sudden, felt three sharp stings in his side, and saw the senator fall after he had already been shot. He had a real funny look on his face."

Heading the presentation to jurors was District Attorney Evelle J. Younger, who requested the indictment.

Younger said Sirhan, after the indictment, would be arraigned in person within 48 hours in Superior Court, and make a plea at that time or shortly after, with trial expected to begin within 60 days from that time.

Should the defense seek a change of venue, Younger said he would not oppose it.

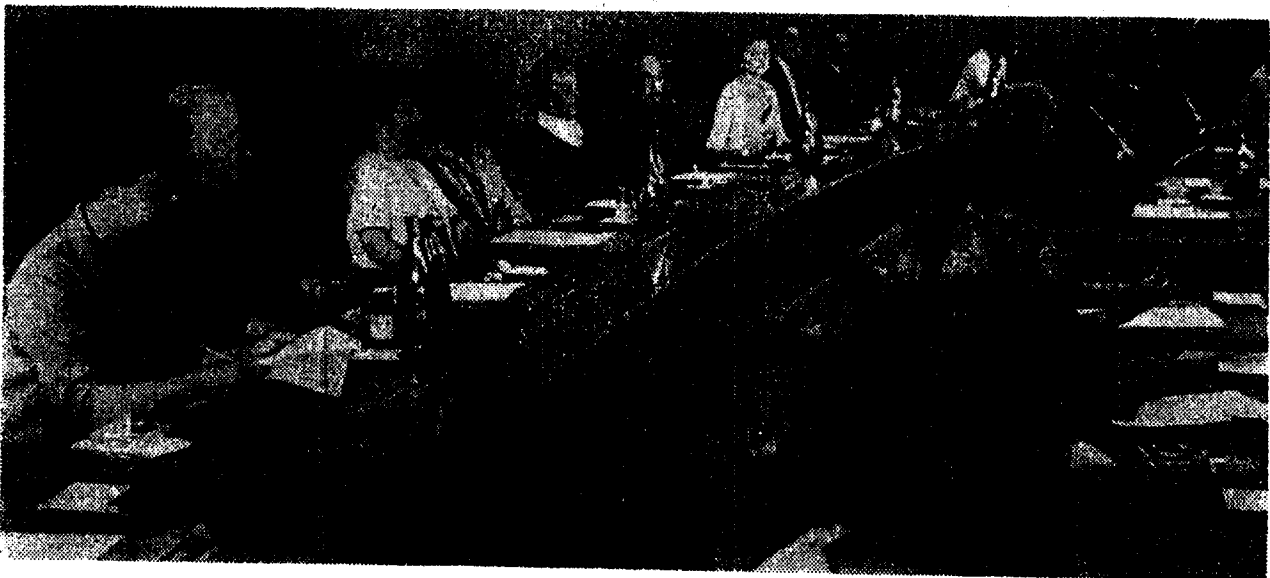
LEGAL AID

The public defender's office is providing Sirhan legal advice.

The prisoner originally was held under \$250,000 bond, but that was revoked by Superior Court Judge Joan Dempsey Klein after Kennedy's death. California law permits no bond in a murder case.

State to Act Quickly

Jury Hears Sirhan Case



Many women are on Grand Jury that will look into the Kennedy assassination

First details of Sirhan's imprisonment were disclosed yesterday by Sheriff Peter Pitchess.

Sirhan's grey-colored cell is on the second floor of the jail in an isolated wing with limited access. An unarmed deputy is constantly in the cell with him.

District Attorney Younger said he has no comment on whether there is evidence of a conspiracy to assassinate Kennedy. He also said that notebooks found among Sirhan's possessions at his home are not vital to the case.

Sirhan can get a fair trial in Los Angeles despite the extraordinary attention given to the case, Younger added.

Sirhan is in the medical section of the jail because he is under treatment for a broken index finger and a sprained ankle — injuries he suffered in his capture at the hotel. Sirhan has facial bruises as well, Pitchess said.

Sirhan is under the care of Dr. Marcus Crahan, jail medical director and psychiatrist. Pitchess said Sirhan underwent psychiatric examination, but he did not divulge the psychiatrist's conclusions.

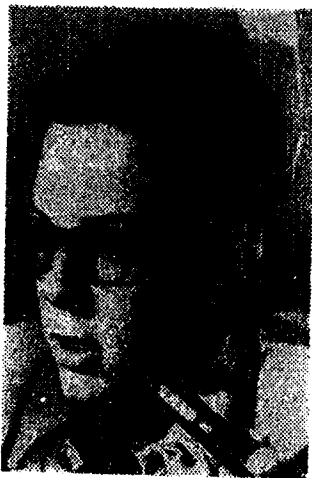
BEHAVES WELL

Sirhan, he said, has behaved well and has not asked for any visits from his family. Pitchess repeated what other officers have repeatedly said, that Sirhan refuses to talk about the shooting.

Sirhan is "totally noncommittal to our personnel," the sheriff said.

"He says he is Christian, not a Moslem," said Pitchess.

Sirhan learned of Kennedy's death and the worldwide reaction to it when, Pitchess revealed, he asked for and received Wednesday and Thursday copies of the morning Los Angeles Times and



IRWIN STROLL
Will testify



JESUS PEREZ
Dishwasher witness

the afternoon Herald Examiner.

REQUESTS BOOKS

Sirhan also received at his request two theosophical books — "The Secret Doctrine" by H. P. Blavatsky and "Talks on 'At the Feet of

the Master'" by C. W. Leadbeater.

But he has read very little of either book, the sheriff said.

Madame Blavatsky, who published "The Secret Doctrine" in 1893, was co-founder in 1875 of the Theosophical Society, headed until his death in 1907 by Col. H. S. Olcott.

Madame Blavatsky and other theosophists claimed that a secret doctrine had been transmitted through the ages by "adepts" or "mahatmas" and they organized the society to make this "divine wisdom" available to all humanity.

Leadbeater's book is a discussion of "At the Feet of the Master," a book published in 1931 by J. Krishnamurti.

BOMB THREATS

All security has been beefed up at the concrete jail, mostly because of Sirhan's

presence, some of it because of mailed and telephoned bomb threats — "at least a dozen" — against the life of Pitchess and department personnel.

"We are ignoring these," Pitchess said, adding that most of the calls came yesterday.

Within a mile or so of the jail, official activity was at fever pitch. Four news conferences were held at different times by the sheriff, district attorney, county coroner and Mayor Samuel Yorty.

Yorty has aroused the ire of state and local legal authorities over his release of portions of Sirhan's notebook taken from his Pasadena apartment.

QUOTES NOTEBOOK

The officials expressed concern that the material might prejudice a fair trial. Yorty said Wednesday that Sirhan's notebook contained one entry about "the necessi-

ty to assassinate Senator Kennedy before June 5, 1968."

That was the date of the first anniversary of the Arab-Israeli War decisively won by Israel.

Younger told reporters the assassination was a great tragedy and would be a "greater tragedy . . . if successful, prosecution of the person responsible for the terrible crime were jeopardized by statements prior to the trial commenting on evidentiary matters."

California Attorney General Thomas Lynch, saying he was concerned "over giving our information that might prejudice a fair trial," said that U. S. Supreme Court and California Supreme Court decisions severely limit what public officials can say.

YORTY'S REPLY

Yorty told newsmen he had "exercised my judgment" in the matter, noted he is a lawyer, and declared the trial would not be affected because the public had seen so much more on television.

Police said yesterday afternoon they had issued an all points bulletin for a white woman between 23 and 27 years old who reportedly was seen with Sirhan prior to the shooting. She was wearing a white dress with black polka dots. She was not named.

Inspector Peter Hagan added later, however, that the bulletin was only an informational one resulting from a report of a young Kennedy campaign worker and was not for the purpose of arrest.

FATE IN DOUBT

"We are merely asking for anyone to come forward with information regarding the girl in the polka dot dress," he said.

Although the gears have been meshed in an attempt to bring the accused man to a death sentence, his fate—in the event of a guilty verdict and death sentence — would be as undecided as that of 75 other death row inmates of San Quentin Prison.

A virtual moratorium on executions has been in effect since the death sentence was challenged as unconstitutional. The California Supreme Court is expected to rule soon on two appeals on this basis which prompted a stay of all executions.

The state's high court is studying last Monday's U.S. Supreme Court ruling to determine the effect on death row prisoners.

The highest U.S. court

ruled that persons with scruples against the death penalty may not be automatically excused from juries in capital cases.

California's last gas chamber execution was April 12, 1967, when Aaron Mitchell was put to death—the first man to die there in four years.