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Kennedy-Sirhan 160

TAIYEBBA, Israeli-held Jordan, June 9 AP - Bishara Sirhan, father of the man accused of killing of Robert F. Kennedy, said Sunday childhood memories of the bitter Arab-Israeli war of 1948 could have caused his son to shoot the senator.

He claimed his son, Sirhan Bishara Sirhan, had seen a Jew kill an Arab in the war, and had also gone through what the father called "a heavy shelling attack" on the Musrara quarter of Jerusalem, where the Sirhan family lived in 1948.

This was a complete about-face by Bishara Sirhan, who last week said he could think of no reason for his son's action.

He had then described the son as "quiet, studious, kind, harmless and religious."

"Kennedy was killed by his own tongue," Sirhan's father told newsmen Sunday, referring to the senator's recent statement supporting Israel.

He said he agreed with Mohammed Mehdi, head of the American-Arab Action Committee in New York, blaming the assassination on the volatile Middle East situation.

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TAIYEBBA-Kennedy Sirhan A045 add: situation.

Sirhan scoffed at reports he had been taken from his home for questioning by Israeli security authorities who were said to have been holding him in protective custody.

He said the rumors began when an Israeli army vehicle came to his home to drive him to nearby Ramallah, where he hoped to telephone the United States.

"The post office was closed, unfortunately, so they drove me home," he said. "That's all it was."

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