

Arraignment of Sirhan in Assassination of Kennedy Is Again Put Off for Three Weeks



Russell E. Parsons, the attorney for Sirhan B. Sirhan, accompanies his client back to jail



Sirhan, the accused assassin of Senator Robert F. Kennedy

Associated Press

By GLADWIN HILL

Special to The New York Times

LOS ANGELES, June 28— Sirhan B. Sirhan, the man accused of killing Senator Robert F. Kennedy, made his second appearance today in an improvised courtroom in the County Jail chapel and obtained a second three-week continuance of a proceeding that will record his plea of not guilty or guilty.

The delay in the arraignment was granted by Superior Judge Richard Schauer on the statement by Sirhan's lawyer, Russell E. Parsons, that more time was needed for study of records in the case and for psychiatric examinations.

Judge Schauer noted that

one of the two psychiatrists originally appointed by the court to counsel the defense on its plea had declined to serve. As a result, he named another.

The 24-year-old Jordanian defendant, clad in dark trousers and a light, open-collared shirt, walked into the third-floor courtroom surrounded by four sheriff's deputies in brown uniforms. Their height and bulk almost concealed Sirhan's wispy, five-foot-two form.

He sat quietly at the counsel's table on the raised altar platform; occasionally thumb-

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ing his chin nervously. He uttered only 14 words during the 10-minute proceeding — mostly terse "yes, sir" responses to questions from the judge.

Sirhan, recovering from a sprained ankle and a broken finger received in a scuffle at the time of the shooting, was brought to the courtroom door from his isolation cell in a wheelchair.

His last courtroom appearance three weeks ago was made from a wheelchair, with bandages on his leg and hand. There were no bandages today. But the County Sheriff's office said the wheelchair had been used to avoid any unnecessary strain on a mending ankle.

About 300 spectators — mostly newsmen but including some private citizens — watched from chapel pews. All observers were thoroughly searched by sheriff's deputies in an adjacent dining hall before being admitted.

In the first row, surrounded by seven plainclothesmen, was Sirhan's 28-old brother, Adel, dressed in a dark suit, white shirt and dark tie.

Adel lives in the Sirhan family ménage in suburban Pasadena and like the defendant has been intermittently employed at a number of occupations.

Mr. Parsons disclosed that Adel Sirhan had visited the defendant several times in jail and that next Monday the suspect would receive his first visit from his mother, Mrs. Mary Sirhan, who works in a church school for small children.

The lawyer, in a post-hearing interview in the courtroom, declined to commit himself about Sirhan's expected dual plea of not guilty and not guilty by reason of insanity.

He said the question of a possible change of venue of Sirhan's trial was still "under study." The identity of a planned co-counsel — reportedly another prominent criminal lawyer — will probably be disclosed before the continued arraignment July 19, he added.

#### Many Visits to Jail

The lawyer said he had been visiting Sirhan every two or three days. He declined to comment specifically on the defendant's behavior and attitudes but indicated that he was calm.

Judge Schauer said the continuance date came "dangerously" near the expiration of the 60-day post-indictment period within which the defendant is legally entitled to a trial. He said that a waiver of this right seemed in order, and this was formally agreed to.

Sirhan was indicted by a county grand jury June 7, two days after Senator Kennedy's shooting at the Ambassador Hotel. He was charged with first-degree murder — entailing a possible death penalty — and five counts of assault with intent to murder, growing out of injuries to five incidental victims of the attack.

For today's hearing, Judge Schauer, presiding judge of the Superior Court criminal calendar, replaced Judge Arthur Alarcon, who had filled in for him at the indictment proceeding and at Sirhan's initial arraignment in the jail chapel two hours later.

The prosecution was represented today by two deputy district attorneys, John E. Howard and David Fitts. They did no more than formally acknowledge their presence and assent to the arrangements made by the court.

In place of Dr. Edward Stainbrook of the University of Southern California Medical School, originally designated to be a defense psychiatrist along with Dr. Eric Marcus, Judge Schauer named Dr. George Y. Abe, superintendent of the Metropolitan State Hospital, a mental institution at Norwalk.

Los Angeles born, of Japanese extraction, Dr. Abe, 52 years old, has examined some 3,500 defendants in the last 10 years.

One of the defense's current preoccupations, Mr. Parsons said, is going through some 40 books from Sirhan's personal library. He declined to specify any of them. Sirhan is known to have been an avid student of religion and mysticism.