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Court Lets Stand A Publicity Curb In the Sirhan Case

WASHINGTON, Dec. 16 (UPI) — The Supreme Court left standing today a Los Angeles court order forbidding persons connected with the Sirhan B. Sirhan case from discussing the evidence outside the courtroom.

In a brief order, the Court refused to hear an appeal.

Sirhan is scheduled to go on trial in Los Angeles Superior Court on Jan. 6 on a charge of assassinating Senator Robert F. Kennedy last June.

The Superior Court issued the publicity-curbing order on June 7, the day Sirhan was indicted. Mr. Kennedy was shot June 5 at a primary election victory celebration.

The order is not directed to

news media, but rather to attorneys, the police, grand jurors subpoenaed witnesses and others officially connected with the case. It directs them — on penalty of "swift action to punish for contempt" — not to release or give opinions about evidence, documents, exhibits or similar aspects of the case.

The order exempts basic facts and information that have already been made public in legal proceedings.

The order was challenged by District Attorney Evelle J. Younger of Los Angeles, who is prosecuting Sirhan. Mr. Younger's petition to strike down the order was denied by the California Court of Appeal, and the California Supreme Court refused to review the case.

In appealing to the United States Supreme Court, Mr. Younger said the curb on discussion did not balance the

need for a fair trial with the right of free speech and predicted it would give rise to irresponsible speculation.