

# 'We Can't Say Anything,' Sirhan's Mother Declares

## Sirhan Hears Court Prepare Trial Rules

By DOUGLAS E. KNEELAND  
Special to The New York Times

LOS ANGELES, Jan. 6 — Superior Court Judge Herbert V. Walker held a lengthy pre-trial conference today with defense and prosecuting attorneys to lay procedural ground rules for the trial of Sirhan Bishara Sirhan.

The 24-year-old Jordanian immigrant will go into court tomorrow charged with the first-degree murder of Senator Robert F. Kennedy.

Sirhan, who has been held for seven months in a six-by-eight-foot windowless cell on the 13th floor of the Hall of Justice here, was also present at the conference, which was held in a room near his cell.

The closed meeting began shortly after 10 A.M. and re-

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sumed after a luncheon break. Court officials described it as routine and said it had dealt primarily with procedural matters.

Attending for the prosecution were Lynn D. Compton, chief deputy district attorney, and John E. Howard and David N. Fitts, deputy district attorneys.

They will seek the death penalty for Sirhan for the assassination June 5 of Senator Kennedy as he left a victory celebration at the Ambassador Hotel. He had just defeated Senator Eugene J. McCarthy in the June 4 California Democratic primary.

### Faces Other Charges

In addition to murder, Sirhan is charged with assault with intent to murder five other persons who were wounded at the Ambassador.

Representing Sirhan today were two of his three court-appointed attorneys, Russell B. Parsons and Grant B. Cooper.

Mr. Cooper, a 65-year-old former president of the Los Angeles County Bar Association, was excused from a hearing before United States District Judge Francis C. Shelan this afternoon to return to the Sirhan conference. His actions in another case are being investigated by a Federal grand jury.

Judge Whelan had ordered Mr. Cooper to appear at today's hearing. Last Friday Mr. Cooper conceded to the grand jury that during his defense of another client he had

possessed unauthorized transcripts of the testimony of four grand jury witnesses.

He also admitted that he had lied in court about the source of an unauthorized transcript found in his possession during the trial. The case involves alleged cheating at cards at the Friars Club.

In refusing to answer some of the questions, Mr. Cooper had said that to reply would violate the sanctity of the lawyer-client relationship. Today's hearing before Judge Whelan was to determine the propriety of his refusal to testify on these matters.

The grand jury investigation and the uncertainty as to what,

if any, action would be taken against Mr. Cooper raised a question in the minds of many connected with the twice-postponed Sirhan trial about whether it would be delayed again.

However, Mr. Cooper, reached in District Court before he was excused to go back across the street to the Hall of Justice for the discussions of the Sirhan trial, said that he had no plans to withdraw from the defense of Sirhan.

Asked if he thought the trial would go ahead on schedule, he replied:

"Yes, yes. I would certainly think so."

When Mr. Cooper returned to the talks at the Hall of Justice, Judge Whelan asked him to be on call to return to the Federal Court hearing if he was needed. In his absence, Mr. Cooper was represented by his attorney, Herman F. Selvin.

Meanwhile, throughout the 15-story Hall of Justice, court officials and the sheriff's security personnel prepared fever-

ishly for the opening of the Sirhan trial at 9:30 A.M. tomorrow. The trial has attracted more than 100 outside newsmen.

Although other business will continue as usual in the building, two tight security areas have been established. These are around the eighth floor Superior Court Department 107, the 75-seat courtroom where Sirhan will be tried, and an auxiliary courtroom on the fourth floor, where the overflow of reporters will watch the trial on closed-circuit television.

In the actual courtroom, the windows have been sealed by steel plates to prevent anyone from a neighboring building from looking or shooting into the room.

Everyone, including the judge and jurors, who enters the courtroom will be thoroughly searched. Lesser searches are planned for those entering the auxiliary courtroom on the fourth floor.

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PASADENA, Calif., Jan. 5—

The small figure in the white wool coat was Mary Sirhan. She walked quickly along East Howard Street in the shade beneath the tall eucalyptus tree. Her head was bent down and she clutched a black handbag.

It was two days before her son, Sirhan Bishara Sirhan, would enter the small courtroom in downtown Los Angeles, and she had been to church. For the next 30 minutes she stood on the front porch of her small, white, frame house with her 20-year-old son, Munir, and a visitor.

She refused to talk about anything that has happened in the seven months since the day in early June when Senator Robert F. Kennedy was killed.

### 'Can't Say Anything'

She did, however, reveal warmth, strength, faith in God and a great sadness. Of Sirhan's trial, which begins Tuesday, all she would say was: "I am going to go."

Mrs. Sirhan watched children riding tricycles up and down the quiet street and listened to the warm afternoon breezes moving through the palm trees. "I must not say anything,"

she repeated over and over again. "We can't say anything about what has happened. The judge has ordered and we must obey. Please forgive me, please."

Her voice was quiet and her brown eyes moved from her son to her visitor. "How can anyone ask if this has been difficult?" she asked once, rubbing her small fingers along her forehead and touch-

ing the thin gray hairs pulled back into a tight bun. Munir leaned against the railing. Every now and then he repeated with a smile, "I don't mean to be rude but I can't say anything." The three other sons, Saidallah, 36, Adel, 30, and Sharif, 37, were nowhere in sight, and the house appeared to be empty.

### Recollection of Jerusalem

And slowly she began to talk, shyly, tentatively, about the warm sun and the passing cars, children playing, the flowers growing. Outside in front of the house a police car stopped.

Mrs. Sirhan brought her visitor a soft drink and apologized that she was forbidden to allow anyone inside the house. She looked up at the high San Gabriel Mountains, rising nearby behind the church steeples and the low houses.

The mountains and the hills near Jerusalem that she saw for the last time in 1957 had the same colors, green and brown, she said. "But everything else is different," she



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Mrs. Mary Sirhan

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"I like to have people understand this is a family of fine sons, of good people," Mrs. Sirhan said as she watched Munir run on onto the lawn to romp with the family's two new dogs.

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Judge Walker has announced that to allow more time for the searching procedure the court will not open until 9:30 A.M. each day and will recess from noon until 2 P.M. The sessions are scheduled to end at 4:30 P.M.

The jurors will be selected from the court's regular panel of about 300 and will be sequestered throughout the trial, which is expected to take from two to three months. Most persons involved in the case predict that it will take at least three weeks to pick a jury.