

7 FEB 69  
239 AES

A011

Sirhan Bjt 450  
By GENE HANDSAKER

Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES AP - Sirhan Bishara Sirhan and his mother testified during some preliminary legal maneuvering about how little income the family had - a few thousand dollars a year.

Yet three prominent criminal trial lawyers are defending him. Where is the money coming from?

Grant Cooper, 65, the chief defense attorney, says he and Russell E. Parsons, 69, and Emile Zola Berman, 66, are working for free. What would such a legal trio cost a rich man?

"A half million dollars probably would not be out of line," says Cooper.

How can Sirhan, 24, a Jordanian charged with murder in the slaying of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, command such legal defenders?

"I've been making speeches around the country to bar associations and service clubs on the duty of lawyers to represent persons accused, especially in unpopular cases. I decided I'd better practice what I was preaching," explains Cooper.

"And I like to be where the action is. It's an interesting case and a challenge."

Until now, perhaps Cooper's best known case was the defense of Dr. R. Bernard Finch and Finch's paramour, Carole Tregoff, who were convicted of murdering Finch's pregnant wife.

Parsons says he took the assignment because "I'm a lawyer nearing the end of my career, it's probably the most important case in the world today, and I want to see this man has a fair trial."

Both Cooper and Parsons are from Los Angeles.

Berman, head of a Manhattan law firm, said: "I've felt all my life a man is entitled to a defense and I was asked to assist."

Berman said Cooper asked him last August at a bar association meeting in Philadelphia to join the defense "because, I like to think, I'm not a novice."

Cooper said defense expenses include the fees and living and transportation costs for psychiatrists, psychologists and other defense expert witnesses; Berman's hotel bills, meals and transportation; photo copying services, etc.

Cooper said these will be paid by things such as writer Robert Kaiser's contract with Sirhan. Kaiser

intends to write a book after this is over" and has already written an article for Life magazine and some European publications, Cooper said. Part of the proceeds are going to the family and part for expenses.

Also, Cooper said, there have been some contributions for defense expenses by mail. He estimated their total at less than \$500.

Taxpayers of Los Angeles, of course, pay the prosecution costs. These already are approaching \$400,000, and still with no prospects for an immediate start ~~of the trial~~. Security

ryrzzyy  
Sirhan CORRECTION

LOS ANGELES Sirhan Bjt A011 4th graf from end read it x x x immediate start of testimony on the assassination. Security precautions x x x

The AP  
KS1002aes Feb. 7

precautions - such as a special courtroom with armored windows and overtime for guards - make up much of this expense.

The eight men and four women jurors were sworn in this week, but selection of six alternates is continuing. Five have been seated provisionally. However, defense and prosecution have most of their peremptory challenges remaining.

Judge Herbert V. Walker, dean of the Los Angeles Criminal Court bench, is hearing the case. He said Thursday that the jurors will be housed nights at the Biltmore hotel. The county will pay \$9 daily for 25 rooms on a sixth floor wing. The area includes a recreation room. Jurors also will be allowed \$8.50 daily for meals.

Wives and husbands will be allowed to join them over weekends at their own expense.

Trial resumes 10:30 a.m. EST.  
PL239aes Feb. 7