

# Step to Limit Trial For Sirhan Hinted; Jury Is Completed

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Special to The New York Times

LOS ANGELES, Feb. 11—Selection of a jury for the murder trial of Sirhan Bishara Sirhan was completed today amid informed speculation that the prosecution and defense might reach an agreement to avoid a full-scale trial.

Attorneys for the 24-year-old Jordanian immigrant, who is accused of slaying Senator Robert F. Kennedy last June 5, declined to comment on the reports, which were widely circulating at the Hall of Justice here.

Lynn D. Compton, chief deputy district attorney, noted that he could not say anything that would in any way be prejudicial to the defendant by seeming to imply that he might be considering entering a guilty plea. Mr. Compton, who is heading the prosecution team, said in an interview:

"I'm not able to comment at this time on any plea possibility. This would be the kind of thing we'd never be able to comment on."

Although emphasizing that he was not confirming that discussions had been held, Mr. Compton said that his office would give "very serious consideration" to any defense offer of a plea to the first-degree murder charge in return for a

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guarantee that a life sentence would be imposed rather than death in the gas chamber.

"We wouldn't entertain a plea to manslaughter or to second-degree," he went on.

Under California law, the defense would be permitted to plead guilty to first-degree murder with the specific provision that the sentence would be life imprisonment. Such an arrangement would have to be approved by the prosecution and Superior Court Judge Herbert V. Walker, who is presiding at the trial.

### Sirhan's View Unknown

The judge is believed, at present, to be opposed to any such agreement. Partly because of this, these closest to the case are unwilling to predict whether an arrangement will be

worked out. The feelings of Sirhan, himself, on the matter also are unknown.

However, some verbal fencing is known to have taken place between the defense and the prosecution about various possibilities.

Although Mr. Compton was careful not to speak specifically in terms of the Sirhan case, he offered another possibility for a defendant who could not get a judges approval of an agreement for a life term in exchange for a guilty plea.

"There's a possibility that a guy can plead guilty to first-degree murder," he said, "and have a trial just on the penalty."

"He could plead guilty to first-degree murder and he doesn't have to have anybody's permission for that. Then you'd have to have a penalty hearing. There's always the possibility

that we wouldn't urge the death penalty."

In this state, a first-degree murder trial is divided into two parts. If the defendant is convicted of first-degree murder, the penalty phase, is held at which the jury must decide on life imprisonment or death.

While Sirhan has pleaded not guilty to the first-degree murder charge, his attorneys have conceded that he fired the pistol that mortally wounded Senator Kennedy in a serving pantry at the Ambassador Hotel.

However, the defense counsel—Grant B. Cooper, Russell H. Parsons and Emil Zola Ber-

man—have said that they would attempt to prove "diminished capacity." Such a defense is permissible in California to attempt to show that the defendant, at the time of the act, was not capable of giving him mature and rational consideration to his deed that must have been present if a first-degree conviction is to be obtained.

### Impact on the Public

Mr. Compton said that, should the prosecution "really get to that point of taking a plea," it would have to weigh the public impact of forgoing a trial.

"We would certainly have

As for the possibility that the most of Mr. Compton's state-  
ment, particularly relate to problems Judge Walker then recessed  
the trial until Thursday morn-  
ing.  
The jury alternates are  
George A. Spitzel, a pressroom  
supervisor at The Los Angeles  
Times; Mrs. Eleanor J. Land-  
green, the wife of a pension  
administrator for the Prudential  
Insurance Company; Clarence  
Yaw, a purchasing agent for  
Standard Oil; Miss Ruth A.  
Stillman, an insurance claims  
adjuster; John H. Johnson, a  
designer of printed  
circuit boards for Scientific  
Data Systems; and Miss Gloria  
Haffey, an employee of the  
Pacific Telephone and Tele-  
graph Company.  
Immigrant From India  
"I made it convenient for  
appropriate officials in the  
Government to express an opin-  
ion to me. They declined and  
made no comment or recom-  
mendations."  
Sirhan, who came to this  
country from Jordan in 1957,  
has been described by some  
adjusters, John H. Johnson, a  
nationalist who favored Israel  
over the Arab states.  
The Sirhan jury was finally  
completed today with six alter-  
nates.  
Mr. Younger, who has been  
considered a likely candidate  
for some post in the Nixon  
Administration, visited Wash-  
ington last week. This led to  
speculation that he was con-  
sidering a trip to Washington  
about the Sirhan case.  
"I didn't discuss Sirhan with  
anyone in Washington," he said  
today. "If you want to know  
whether I spoke to anyone in  
the Administration about this  
case, the answer is 'No.'"  
However, he added:  
"In the event the Govern-  
ment wished to make any com-  
ments concerning the disposi-  
tion of this case, insofar as it  
may have international impli-  
cations, I would be glad to  
discuss them with you."  
As for the possibility that the  
widespread rumors of con-  
spiracy that have persisted  
since Jack Ruby killed Lee  
Harvey Oswald, the assassin of  
President Kennedy, Mr. Com-  
pton added:  
"I can tell you that we in-  
tend to file with the court  
eventually all the files and in-  
vestigation reports we have.  
There's not going to be any-  
thing sealed up and put in the  
archives, available only to cer-  
tain people, in this case."  
Trip to Washington  
Interviewed later, District  
Attorney Evelle J. Younger,  
while equally cautious, echoed  
the same message.  
"We'd just have to hope that  
the average reasonable person  
would accept this as valid."  
"There's no way in this case  
that you could do something  
that would please everybody."  
"I've been guided by this  
principle throughout—that the  
more you try to approach this  
case as you would any murder  
case under similar circum-  
stances, the better."  
"Maybe, because of the iden-  
tity of the victim, there should  
be greater exposure, which  
we've certainly gotten simply  
by virtue of the press interest  
in the case."