

Editor's Note:

In his 3½ days in the witness chair last week, Sirhan Bishara Sirhan insisted he didn't go to the Ambassador Hotel with the intention of killing Robert F. Kennedy, doesn't remember the shooting and doesn't know why he did it. Here is a summary of his testimony telling of the little decisions that brought a candidate for president of the United States and his assassin together.

Sirhan's Decisions Bjt 500, 2 Takes, Total 900

By HARRY F. ROSENTHAL

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LOS ANGELES AP — On the fourth of June last year, Sirhan Bishara Sirhan mulled over ways to spend a leisurely, warm day. He says he considered the races, a gunnery range, a Rosicrucian meeting or work on his car that night.

Robert F. Kennedy, he says, was not in his thoughts. Psychiatrists and psychologists will attempt, beginning today, to interpret nine months later what was in Sirhan's mind when he shot the senator that night.

Sirhan professes not to remember. A series of chance, spot decisions put him into position to place his stubby little .38 revolver near the senator's head, he said last week in 3½-days of testimony during his trial for first degree murder. The prosecution says Sirhan's diaries prove the action was premeditated.

The 24-year-old Jordanian Arab, who said he has a "built-in bug" about Jews, Zionists and Israel, said his love for Kennedy turned to hate when he found out about the New York senator's long-standing support of Israel.

"Curiosity," replied Sirhan when asked why he went to Kennedy's hotel.

Kennedy, too, had a day of relaxation. Behind him were 81 days of his campaign for the Democratic nomination for president of the United States. This day, when Californians voted in their primary, would make or break the quest.

Kennedy frolicked with his children in the surf at Malibu, then returned to the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles for his brief taste of victory.

Sirhan, jobless but with \$400 left from a \$2,000 settlement for a fall from a horse, arose at 10 a.m. and made his first decision of the day. The entries at Hollywood Park race track displeased him. He decided not to go.

"I had the idea of going target shooting," he testified. Three days earlier, he bought a box of minimags ammunition more powerful than any he had used before. The minimags, he said, were suggested by a salesman who was out of Sirhan's favorite brand.

He bought more than a half-dozen boxes of ammunition and practiced at the San Gabriel Valley Gun Club until closing time, 5 o'clock, when all he had left were the eight cartridges in his gun.

"Why didn't you take the bullets out?" asked defense attorney Grant B. Cooper.

"Because it would have taken more time," Sirhan replied.

He put the gun in the back seat of his car and, en route home, stopped at a restaurant in Pasadena.

His chronology continued:

At the restaurant he met a friend named Mistri, an East Indian exchange student. He challenged Mistri to a couple of games of pool and was turned down.

But Mistri had bought a newspaper and Sirhan looked through it. "An advertisement caught my attention," Sirhan said.

The ad was for a "Miracle March for Israel," along Wilshire Boulevard commemorating Israel's victory in the six-day war with the Arabs a year earlier.

"The fire started burning inside of me, sir, at seeing how these Zionists, these Jews, these Israelis, and whoever in hell they were that were supporting this ad, rub in the fact that they had beat the hell out of the Arabs one year before," said Sirhan, his voice rising.

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I was having in my mind to go to the Rosicrucian meeting. I had that in mind, but that was at 8 o'clock . . . I had nothing to do . . ." So, Sirhan said, he set off to find out what the paraders "were up to."

Another decision. But Sirhan said he failed to notice the parade was for the next day. So the ad, he said, brought him from Pasadena to Los Angeles—note far from the Ambassador whotel where Kennedy, about that time, was returning from his eay at the beach.

Sirhan, "driving like a maniac," got los on unfamiliar routes but finally found Wilshire Boulevard.

Q. Did you have in mind shooting up the Zionist parade?

A. Sir, at that time the gun was completely out of my mind. I did not have anything to do with the gun . . .

Q. What did you finally come to?

A. Well, I came—I couldn't find them, so I as almost reidy to give up . . . I spotted a store with a very highly illuminated interior and I thought that it might have something to do with this parade."

The store was headquarters for another candidate in the day's primary. Sirhan said he parked his car, leaving the gun in the back seat, and went into the store.

Then came a crucial turning point, as Sirhan told it.

"These two boys was speaking to themselves that there was a bigger party down at the Ambassador. Curiosity, sir, amde me go down there."

Q. You didn't know there was to be a Kennedy party there?

A. No, I did not.

As he walked down the street "I noticed a big sign about some Jewish organization . . .

"Again, sir, that kept met boiling because the main purpose

for my bein

was to see that Israeli parade."

Sirhan walked into the Ambassador, the length of the lobby and into another political party.

Did he know it was election day?

"I learned that, sir, at the Ambassador that night," Sirhan said.

He had at least three gin mixed drinks, talked to some people and felt "quite high." He walked back to his car and got in it "but I couldn't picture myself driving my car at the time in the condition that I as in . . ."

Another decision: "To go down back to the party and sober up, drink some coffee."

Q. Did you pick up your gun?

A. I don't remember, sir.

Q. As a result of what has happened, you know you must have picked it up?

A. I must have, sir.

Sirhan returned to the hotel and found his coffee.

Soon Robert F. Kennedy came downstairs to accept the plaudits of his followers.

He made a short speech, raised his arms in victory and said

"On to Chicago," where he hoped to get his party's nomination at its national convention.

His entourage had made a route change—to have him go through a kitchen pantry to a press room before going downstairs to another ballroom and another celebrating crowd.

When Kennedy passed by, Sirhan was waiting.