

SIRHAN DEFENSE CLOSES ITS CASE

Expert Insists View Is Valid
Even if It Seems 'Absurd'

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LOS ANGELES, March 27—The defense in the trial of Sirhan b. Sirhan rested its case today and the prosecution prepared to call several psychologists and psychiatrists who are expected to have differing views of the defendant's mental condition.

The end of the defense's effort to save Sirhan from the gas chamber came after 29 witnesses had been heard. Many of them testified that the 25-year-old Jordanian immigrant was a schizophrenic paranoid psychotic incapable of premeditating the murder of Senator Robert F. Kennedy.

The presentation of the prosecution's rebuttal witnesses is expected to take at least three days. Presumably, the lawyers will then deliver their summations and the case will go to the jury.

The conclusion of the defense's case came on the 49th day of the trial. The defense witnesses have been heard for the last 19 court days.

This morning Dr. Bernard J. Diamond completed three days of testimony on Sirhan's mental state before and at the time of the shooting by acknowledging that his version of how Sirhan killed Senator Kennedy while in a self-induced trance might seem like an "incredible story."

'Absurd, Preposterous'

"I have stated that this is an absurd, preposterous story, unlikely and incredible, which is extraordinary and possibly in a unique case such as Sirhan's does raise the gravest problems of clinical proof and credibility."

Dr. Diamond, a psychiatrist who teaches at the University of California at Berkeley and who hypnotized Sirhan several times in his jail cell, said that Sirhan was a "prenostorous person" and that his actions were "a logical even for the theater of the absurd."

"When I first had personal contact with Sirhan," he continued, "I was prepared for the usual case of a paranoid fanatic who dreams of grand delusions and that is what has been found to be so."

"I was not, however, prepared for what I discovered, these stirring instances of correspondence courses, hypnosis, dissociate trances, mystical occultism of the Rosicrucian mind power and black magic and that this, in my psychological thinking, would have resulted in the death of Senator Kennedy that affected the destinies of the entire world."

Dr. Diamond told the court that he had investigated Sirhan's mind "by every psychiatric means within my power."

He said he had little expectation that he would be believed, but added that he thought it was "important that there exist this full record of how the assassination of Robert Kennedy came about."

The psychiatrist said that his story of how Sirhan went into a trance after seeing himself in the mirrors of an alcove in the Ambassador Hotel, and how the trance related to experiments in self-hypnosis before a mirror in his bedroom, was a "script that would never have been acceptable in a class B motion picture."

Called 'the Realities'

"And yet," he concluded, "these are, I think, the realities of the psychiatric findings."

Outside the courtroom, during a television interview, Dr. Diamond said that the only reason to believe his story was that it was so "absurd," he declined to speculate as what verdict the witness stand by Dr. Georgechologist who had been retained by the prosecution to study the test findings of two other psychologists who had examined Sirhan.

In testifying for the Defense, Dr. Seward confirmed the earlier diagnosis that the defendant was a "schizophrenic-paranoid type."

Under cross-examination, the psychologist conceded that some of the defendant's answers that served to indicate paranoia might have been colored by the stress experienced by virtue of being in jail awaiting trial for a capital offense.

She resisted the prosecution's efforts, however, to suggest questions would be affected by Sirhan's anxiety.

The last defense witness was Dr. George De Vos, a psychologist and a professor of anthropology at the University of California at Berkeley.

Dr. De Vos, who has given psychological tests to different groups, said that the fact that Sirhan was an Arab did not have "any bearing" on the validity of the tests.