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LOS ANGELES AP - Sirhan Bishara Sirhan's lawyers made a last intense plea for his life Monday, asking that his mother's prayers be answered, as the fate of the young Arab assassin of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy was placed in a jury's hands.

After about 22 hours deliberation, jurors were sent to their hotel for the night. Deliberations were to resume Tuesday morning.

The seven men and five women got the penalty phase of the case at 11:30 a.m.

Now, at last, the issue was a simple and solemn one—whether the 25-year-old slayer gets life imprisonment or death in the California gas chamber.

"An issue that should be God's alone," defense attorney Grant B. Cooper told the jury. "Should Sirhan spend the rest of his life in prison or should his life be ended by inhaling the deadly fumes of cyanide gas?"

But Deputy Dist. Atty. John Howard declared: "This defendant will regard permission to live as an additional triumph. You will not be obliged to hear this defendant boast that he committed the crime of the century. Others will."

Cooper, 66, again argued that Sirhan was mentally impaired when he shot Kennedy June 5, 1968, as the 42-year-old New York senator campaigned for the Democratic presidential nomination.

"Mary Sirhan, may your prayers be answered," Cooper concluded, turning toward the defendant's 56-year-old mother, sitting in a second row spectator's seat.

Superior Court Judge Herbert V. Walker then delivered his instructions to the jurors and gave the case back to the men and women who last Thursday adjudged Sirhan guilty of first-degree murder.

Lifers are eligible for parole in California in seven years, although normally they serve longer.

Walker told the jury: "The matter of parole is not to be considered by you in determining the penalty for this offense."

Sirhan chewed gum, a slight 5 foot-4 figure in blue open-collar shirt and dark trousers. His even tinier mother went. The jurors were attentive as all the drama of the 15-week trial was capsuled in the brief final arguments of both sides.

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Earlier, Mrs. Sirhan took the witness stand and Cooper put but a single question to her.

"In his entire life, before the shooting, had Sirhan Sirhan at any time been in trouble with the law?"

"He has never been," Mrs. Sirhan replied. "And that is not from me or from him, that is because I raised him up on the law of God and His love."

Howard then stood before a lectern as he read his last arguments. He is 44, a 6-foot-2, 220-pound prosecutor who fervently believes in capital punishment. In his argument, however, he did not present the death penalty as a state demand.

"Sen. Robert Francis Kennedy," Howard said, "was struck down at a moment when he represented the ideals and hopes of a substantial segment of this nation.

Beyond doubt the tragedy which occurred in the early morning hours of June 5, 1968, at the Ambassador Hotel, was politically motivated... Mitigation of political assassination to any degree must sooner or later spell an end to the traditional democratic election process we now enjoy."

Sirhan's motive in killing Kennedy, the defense claimed, was his pro-Arab anger over the senator's support of the Israeli cause in the Middle East conflict with the Arabs.

"By your verdict," Howard went on, "you may eliminate Sirhan Bishara Sirhan altogether from society, or merely eliminate him from your society..."

"We have lavishly expended our resources for the sake of a cold-blooded political assassin while content to send patriotic Americans to their deaths with a \$70 rifle and our best wishes.

"Sirhan was entitled to a fair trial, which he has received. He has no special claim to further preservation."

Howard—who called no witness for the prosecution—was followed by defense attorney Russell E. Parsons, who said: "Without asking you to invoke the death penalty, it's quite plain, at least to me, that's what they seek..."

"Do we execute sick people in California? Do we follow Hitler who believed in striking down the lame, the halt and sick? I don't believe we've gotten down to the bottom rung in California where we execute sick people, as such as he is."

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Finally it was Cooper's turn. A veteran of innumerable courtroom battles, his was the last word for or against Sirhan. He said of Kennedy: "He died the victim of hate, hate engendered at an early age in the child Sirhan, a hate that consumed what was once a healthy mind, hate that reduced that mind to a state of severe mental impairment..."

"If the death of Sirhan Sirhan could restore Sen. Kennedy to his country and his family I think I'd be the first to demand his life..."

"Do not tell the community, do not tell the world that we in the United States will execute a mentally sick person. Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I beseech you to spare Sirhan Sirhan's life, it would carry forth the true spirit of Sen. Kennedy's compassion."

Then Cooper turned and looked at Sirhan and concluded:

"And now, Sirhan Sirhan, I've done all that I could do to the very best of my ability for you and for the American system of justice.

"To you, Mary Sirhan, his mother, I say I can do no more. I now entrust the life of your son to the hands of the jury. Mary Sirhan, may your prayers be answered."

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