

Sirhan Lawyer Guilty of Contempt in Friars Case

LOS ANGELES, Aug. 25 (UPI)—Grant B. Cooper, defense attorney for Sirhan B. Sirhan, pleaded guilty today to two counts of contempt of court in connection with the unlawful possession of secret grand jury transcripts in another trial.

The criminal lawyer who failed to save the slayer of Senator Robert F. Kennedy from a death sentence, changed his plea from not guilty to guilty. The transcripts dealt with last year's Friars Club card-cheating trial.

United States District Judge Charles H. Carr set sentencing for Sept. 23 and asked Mr. Cooper, 66 years old, if he was aware of the penalty that could be imposed.

"I'm thorough familiar with the punishment, your honor. I can be imprisoned as long as the court desires and fined with no limit," Mr. Cooper replied.

Mr. Cooper had previously entered a plea of not guilty along with 10 other defendants. Judge Carr severed Mr. Cooper's case from that of other defendants, explaining he had done so "without the motion of anybody—on the motion of this court."

United States Attorney Matt Byrne objected without success.

Mr. Cooper, a former president of the Los Angeles County Bar Association, is one of the nation's top criminal lawyers. He has also served as vice president of the California State Bar, president of the American College of Trial Lawyers and as the chief deputy to the Los Angeles County District Attorney.

The transcript dealt with the testimony of victims in the Beverly Hills club attended by greats of the motion picture industry. The documents were found on the defense attorney's table during the trial.

Mr. Cooper admitted previously he had not told the truth when he said he had found the transcripts on a table in the courtroom. He said he considered it would be a breach of the attorney-client relationship if he had told where he got the transcript.

The documents included testimony given the jury by Phil Silvers, the comedian, and others fleeced in rigged gin rummy games.

Mr. Cooper's client, Maurice H. Friedman, a Las Vegas gam-

bler, and the other defendants in the card-cheating trial were convicted and given prison sentences.

Mr. Cooper was also the successful defense attorney at the first two trials of Dr. R. Bernard Finch and Carole Tregoff for the slaying of the doctor's wife.

At their third trial both were convicted. Miss Tregoff recently was released on parole. Finch is still in prison.