

SFChronicle FEB 21 1973

High Court Turns Down Sirhan Plea

Washington

The U.S. Supreme Court rejected yesterday an appeal by Sirhan Sirhan, convicted assassin of Senator Robert F. Kennedy, that he was denied a fair trial and that new evidence would show his innocence.

Without comment and by a 7 to 0 vote, the court refused to grant a hearing to Sirhan, who was found guilty of fatally shooting Kennedy in a Los Angeles hotel kitchen during the 1968 presidential primary campaign.

Sirhan was initially sentenced to death but this was commuted to life imprisonment when the California Supreme Court abolished capital punishment.

Justice Byron R. White and William O. Douglas declined to participate in the court's action. Both were close personal friends of the late New York Democrat.

In their appeal, Sirhan's lawyers — Roger S. Hanson and George R. Milman of Beverly Hills — raised 12 legal arguments, including a claim that police had conducted illegal searches of Sirhan's home after the shooting June 5, 1968.

They also said that although Sirhan "was captured at the scene wielding a still smoking gun," they would be able to produce new "significant physical evidence" to show he had not fired the fatal bullets.

United Press