

BUILDING A BIOGRAPHY

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The week also produced a mixed bag of claims from people who said they had some special knowledge of the sullen defendant [Sirhan]. A former Castro commandant, José Duarte of Miami, said he had scuffled with Sirhan a month ago in Los Angeles when he heard Sirhan tell a group of leftists: "What the U.S. needs is another Castro." In London, Journalist Jon Kimche, who is known mainly for his sensational anti-Arab diatribes, wrote in the Evening Standard that Sirhan had returned to the Middle East twice, in 1964 and 1966. The story was flatly denied by the FBI and State Department. In fact, the peripatetic Sirhan to whom Kimche was alluding may be an American citizen named Sirhan Selim Sirhan, ten years older than the accused and no kin, who frequently visits the Middle East.

Every Scintilla. While all this second-guessing was going on, Los Angeles officials were diligently scrutinizing every scintilla of evidence, mindful of the 1963 mess made by their counterparts in Dallas. Twenty-three of L.A.'s top cops have been assigned full time to the case, while a special three-man legal team, whose members have handled 200 homicide cases for the D.A.'s office, will make sure that neither Sirhan's rights nor potential evidence is perjured.

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