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New Sirhan Lawyers Win Trial Delay to Jan. 7

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LOS ANGELES, Dec. 5—The trial of Sirhan B. Sirhan, alleged assassin of Senator Robert F. Kennedy, was postponed today to Jan. 7 to give two new defense lawyers time to familiarize themselves with the case. The trial was to have started Monday.

The two additional attorneys are Emile Zola Berman of New York and Grant Cooper, Los Angeles trial lawyer, who said he had invited Mr. Berman to join the case. They will be associated with Russell E. Parsons, who has been handling defense preparations pending Mr. Cooper's completion of another case.

The postponement was granted—over a routine objection by the prosecution—by Superior Judge Herbert V. Walker at a 12-minute hearing in an improvised courtroom on the 13th floor of the Hall of Justice about 50 feet from the defendant's isolated cell.

The 24-year-old Jordanian, attired in an open-neck white shirt and dark trousers, smiled and waved at his mother and two of his brothers, seated about 25 feet away in a spectator section amid plainclothes officers. Sirhan's ninth court appearance took place six months to the day after the fatal shooting of the New York Senator in the Ambassador Hotel here.

Television Coverage

Judge Walker announced that the trial proceedings, to be conducted in a small courtroom on the eighth floor of the Hall of Justice, would be transmitted by closed-circuit television to an adjacent room accommodating an overflow of 60 to 80 press representatives.

The courtroom, chosen with security considerations in mind for its proximity to the jail above, will have only about 75 spectator seats. Judge Walker said he had received applications from more than 100 "responsible press" quarters, and

that no more than 30 or 40 seats could be allotted to them in the courtroom.

The television arrangement was arrived at in conferences between Judge Walker and officers of a statewide Freedom of Information Committee representing the press.

Reporters in the auxiliary room, Judge Walker said, would be subjected to the same regulations as those in the courtroom, including rigorous personal search and exclusion of cameras and other recording devices.

The courtroom television camera will be concealed behind the grill of an overhead air-conditioning duct. Its view of the proceedings will be stationary, except for shifts from narrow-angle to wide-angle lenses.

Arrangement Tested

The arrangement has been tested, and Judge Walker said technicians had assured him there was no way the closed-circuit could be tapped, "even

by induction" (noncontiguous electronic interception) for unauthorized eavesdropping on the courtroom proceedings. No recording of the television transmission will be made.

"I want you to listen to this, Mr. Sirhan," Judge Walker said to the defendant—who had been whispering with his lawyer—as he outlined the arrangement in detail.

Asked if he had "any objection whatever," Sirhan replied: "No, sir."

Judge Walker announced that he planned to "sequester" the jury from the time it was sworn until the trial was over, but was considering allowing jurors to be visited by their spouses over weekends. The prosecution—represented by Deputy District Attorneys John E. Howard and David N. Pitts—reiterated its standing objection to the sequestering, but said that if this were done, it had no objection to the visitations.

The trial is expected to last more than two months.