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Jurors in Sirhan Trial Preparing Themselves for Long Period of Seclusion

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LOS ANGELES, Feb. 3—Today, as Sirhan Bishara Sirhan waited in his small, windowless cell for court to resume tomorrow, eight men and four women were spending one of their last days as free citizens for what was likely to be several months.

Those 12 people will stand up some time this week in the eighth floor courtroom of the Hall of Justice here and swear under oath to decide fairly and impartially, after hearing all the evidence, upon the guilt or innocence of the 24-year-old man charged with the assassination of Senator Robert F. Kennedy.

And from the day that they, as well as six alternate jurors not yet chosen, take the oath until the day they hand down a verdict, they will, in effect, be prisoners themselves.

To prevent them from seeing or hearing anything prejudicial to the case, they will live in a hotel, be driven to the court-

house in a prison bus, and, except for a Sunday excursion with the deputy sheriffs, go nowhere else.

They will not be allowed to make telephone calls and the only outside person each will communicate with is his "spouse of record," who may visit him overnight on weekends.

Preparing for Ordeal
Since last Thursday, when the jurors were excused, until this Wednesday, they have been preparing for their long ordeal in different ways.

Meanwhile, in court, the lawyers have argued the defense's motion to quash the indictment against Sirhan. Tomorrow, in connection with the attempt to discredit the grand jury by an unrepresentative of all ages and economic backgrounds, Sirhan will testify about his family's poor economic status.

Some of the jurors, like Bruce D. Elliott, a bachelor

with a Ph.D. degree in electrical engineering who is an assistant analyst at T.R.W., Inc., an aerospace company, go to work as usual.

Others, like 32-year-old Laurence K. Morgan, a leader in the Mormon community here and the father of five children under the age of 8, are staying home.

Mr. Morgan, who explained to his children that to be on a jury was "part of supporting our country," has thought a great deal about his responsibilities as a juror.

'A Lot of Soul-Searching'
"I expect it would change my outlook on life and even my personality," he said. "I don't think anyone can contemplate the ideas we will face in the coming weeks and confront the issues which may arise — especially if the case goes to the ultimate question of penalty — without a lot of soul-searching. I'll have to look

into myself and search for what I believe."

"It's very sobering and even a little frightening to contemplate, he said."

A computer programmer for International Business Machines, Mr. Morgan plans to continue working in the hotel at night on his current remote terminal control project. He all so wants to do jigsaw puzzles, and read three volumes of the Readers' Digest Condensed Books, and the Book of Mormon.

Yesterday, Ronald G. Evans, another juror, and an installer for the Pacific Telephone Company, went for a drive with his wife and three young daughters along the beach area and through Beverly Hills "to see the nice homes and the gardens."

"It'll be a long time before I can do that again," he said. During the next few months he expects to play a good deal of solitaire. "Being by myself

so much," he said, "I'll probably get better at it."

Judge Herbert V. Walker, who has not yet decided whether to impanel the jury before or after the six alternates are chosen, told the 12 jurors last week that they would be restricted to one section of the hotel.

They will have their own private bedrooms, he said, and two common rooms for eating and talking. In addition, he said, there will be one television set and one radio, both monitored by deputy sheriffs.

"If you can decide on one program you all want," he said, "you can use them. And we'll give you newspapers and magazines," he added with a smile, "but they'll be cut in shreds so you don't see anything you shouldn't."

"I simply cannot grasp what this isolation will mean," said Neil Bortells, a customer representative for the telephone

company, as she paused in packing several suitcases full of clothes, books, including detective stories and philosophy, and such useful articles as a small traveling iron.

"My family understands the seriousness of what I'm doing," she said. "An awful lot is going through my heart and mind which I know they are also feeling, but I'm forbidden to share it with them. This will be a very lonely and a very difficult experience."