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Sirhan Bjt 480

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LOS ANGELES AP — Sirhan Bishara Sirhan says he's "not sorry, but not proud" of having killed Sen. Robert F. Kennedy and claims the details of the assassination are a blank in his mind. The defense said Thursday it had 17 more witnesses to present to the jury trying Sirhan for first degree murder for the slaying early on June 5, 1968.

Sirhan's 72 days in the witness stand became more a forum for invective against Jews and Zionism than an explanation of why he killed the presidential aspirant he claimed to love and admire.

"I don't remember," Sirhan kept saying when questioned about the murder or about the notebooks in which he wrote of his plans to kill the senator.

"Are you glad he's dead?" asked Lynn D. Compton, the prosecutor.

"No, sir," said Sirhan, "I'm not glad."

"Are you sorry?"

"No, sir, I'm not sorry, but not proud of it either because I have no exact knowledge of having killed him."

Except for the times when the subject of Jews or Zionism was brought up, Sirhan testified calmly. But he fidgeted, toyed with the microphone cord and appeared to be concentrating on defense attorney Grant B. Cooper leaning against the rail halfway across the room.

Sirhan told of having some gin drinks at a post-election party in the Ambassador Hotel and, "feeling quite high," going to his car where he had left the .22-caliber revolver he had used on a gunnery range that afternoon.

But, he said, he felt too drunk to drive; returned to the hotel to find some coffee, and didn't remember picking up the gun.

"As a result of what has happened, you know you must have picked it up," said Cooper.

"I must have sir."

Sirhan said he poured himself coffee from a big urn and was talking with a pretty girl.

"What happened next?"

"I don't remember."

"What was the next thing you did?"

"The next thing I remember, sir, I was being choked."

After Kennedy was shot, following a speech proclaiming his victory in the California Democratic Presidential primary, Sirhan was subdued by a half dozen members of Kennedy's party and hotel personnel.

Compton asked Sirhan whether he had any recollection previously of having blacked out.

"No, sir," said Sirhan.

The defense claims Sirhan has had blackout spells since his childhood in war-torn Jordan.

"As a matter of fact, except for this night at the Ambassador hotel, you have never had any experience where you couldn't remember the things that you have done or had any periods like that?"

Compton asked.

"No, sir. There are some things that I couldn't remember,"

Sirhan replied. "I don't remember those notebooks, sir."

Sirhan said his love for Kennedy turned to hate when he learned of the New York senator's long-standing support of Israel in the Mid-east crisis.

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John Strathmann, a classmate of Sirhan's at Pasadena City College, testified he noticed a decided change in the defendant after Sept. 24, 1966, when Sirhan fell from a horse.

"He seemed considerably depressed, lonely and becoming worse,"

Strathmann said. "I'd say he had a generalized loss of ambition. He seemed no longer

interested in talking about the things he used to."

Strathmann, a language instructor at a military academy, said he became friends with Sirhan because he was interested in learning Arabic.

"He was a very intense person," Strathmann said of the years before the fall from the horse. "Whatever he was considering at the moment was always the most crucial thing—the most important thing."

The defense contends that Sirhan was never the same after falling from the horse while exercising it.

Another witness, Robert Prestwood, who owns a race horse that Sirhan had exercised, said Sirhan always wanted to become a jockey.

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