

Sirhan's Mental Kinks Unraveled

Examiner News Services

LOS ANGELES — Sirhan Sirhan's claimed amnesia during the assassination of Sen. Robert Kennedy would not have been caused by schizophrenia, a psychiatrist said today at Sirhan's murder trial.

Dr. Eric Marcus, like psychologists who testified before him, said the young Jordanian suffers from schizophrenia.

But, asked by the prosecution if this would explain the mental blackout Sirhan says he suffered when Kennedy was shot last June, Marcus said:

"No, I don't consider there is any direct connection between amnesia and schizophrenia."

Marcus used a comparison of lines and plugs in a telephone switchboard to describe Sirhan's schizophrenia. He said many persons have as many as 10 percent of their lines in the wrong holes but that Sirhan had far more.

Marcus, appointed by the court, was called to testify by the defense.

He was asked if he determined that Sirhan had periods of amnesia after falling from a horse while working as an exercise boy at a ranch in 1966. "I wasn't able to determine that," he said.

But Sirhan showed symptoms of increased mental illness afterward, Marcus said — increased seclusion and reading, a fight with his brothers that alienated them, and he became increasingly preoccupied with politics.

In testimony yesterday, Marcus said Sirhan "thought he was really more or less the savior of society . . . He was going to destroy the current political leaders of the country. He thought he knew what was best for society."