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Sirhan NL 250

By ARTHUR EVERETT

Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES AP — Point by point, the state attempted Wednesday to destroy a defense version of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy's assassination at the hand of Sirhan Bishara Sirhan.

"He killed Kennedy because he hated him," said Dr. Seymour Pollack, star psychiatric witness for the prosecution at the first degree murder trial of the 25-year-old Arab-born Sirhan.

There was no uncontrollable explosion, Pollack testified; there was no trance, there was no split personality in which a schizophrenic mind was torn between love and hatred for the New York senator, who was shot to death June 5, 1968.

But as cross-examination got under way, Pollack, a portly University of Southern California psychiatry professor, was asked by the defense:

Q. You did say Sirhan has a mental illness?

A. Yes.

Q. He is emotionally disturbed?

A. Yes.

Q. And he was at the time of the killing?

A. Yes.

Q. And he is now?

A. I believe so.

Q. You and the other doctors disagree to a great extent on the degree and kind of his mental illness?

A. That is correct.

The defense has contended in the more than 12 weeks that Sirhan has been on trial for his life that the intensely anti-Israeli defendant programmed himself subconsciously like a computer to kill Kennedy — through occult studies, self-induced hypnosis, written threats in private notebooks, and a festering conviction that Kennedy was anti-Arab and pro-Israeli in his campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination.

Sirhan's emotions were torn between a schizophrenic love and hatred for Kennedy, the defense claimed, and he was in a self-induced trance when he sent a bullet into the brain of the 42-year-old senator.

Said Pollack, under questioning by the state about the trance: "Sirhan was exercising a good deal of reasoning ability at the time and that reasoning ability is inconsistent with an alteration of consciousness."

"I would interpret Sirhan's struggle after the shooting as his trying to escape."

As for the split personality, which characterizes schizophrenia, Pollack testified: "Sirhan talked to me about Robert Kennedy as if he both loved and hated Kennedy at the same time. But I recognized that he didn't both love and hate Kennedy.

"He had loved Sen. Kennedy. He had loved him very strongly. Then he no longer loved him. He hated him and wanted him dead. It wasn't both love and hatred. His love had turned to hatred."

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LOS ANGELES Sirhan NL A273LA add: hatred."

In an afternoon of cross examination that ended with the overnight recess, defense attorney Grant Cooper got Pollack to admit that on occasions he had referred to Sirhan as a psychotic—a person suffering from a major mental illness.

But Pollack said this did not mean that Sirhan was clinically psychotic, mentally impaired to a detectable degree.

Pollack said he formed his diagnosis of Sirhan's mental condition in part through observations of witnesses to the Kennedy shooting, although he said they were not qualified to detect psychosis in individuals.

The psychiatrist testified he considered but did not agree with findings of defense psychologists and psychiatrists that Sirhan suffered from schizophrenia, a form of psychosis.

Pollack, who is due back on the stand Thursday, said he spent 25 hours interviewing Sirhan but with more time might have found "more evidence of psychosis."

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