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Sirhan 450

By ARTHUR EVERETT

LOS ANGELES AP - Sirhan Bishara Sirhan's bitter hatred of Jews was among motives advanced for his assassination of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy. Ironically, his very life may rest on compassionage testimony from Jewish witnesses at his murder trial.

"I have gotten somehow to like Sirhan," said one of them, Dr. Seymour Pollack, with a wry smile. "He may think I'm an SOB, but regardless-."

As the voice of the prosecution psychiatrist trailed off, the sentence incomplete, the 26-year-old Arab defendant looked up at the Jewish witness and grinned broadly.

The murder trial resumes Monday, and the case may reach the jury of seven men and five women before the week ends.

A first-degree murder conviction in California carries a maximum penalty of death in the gas chamber.

Sirhan, pro-Arab, anti-Israeli, shot Kennedy in the Ambassador Hotel June 8, 1968. The defense has contended he did so because he resented the senator's appeal for the sale of 50 jet bombers to Israel.

One of Sirhan's three lawyers is Jewish. He is Emile Zola Berman, 56, a prominent New York lawyer. Like the other two, he is serving without fee in the interest of a full and fair trial, he says, not because he sympathizes with the defendant or his deed.

The first psychiatrist to testify in Sirhan's defense was Dr. Bric Marcus of Los Angeles. He called the defendant a schizophrenic who lacked the mental capacity to maturely and meaningfully premeditate the assassination, such premeditation being a requisite for any death sentence.

In a controlled experiment after his arrest, Sirhan was made drunk in his jail cell. Only then, Marcus recalled, did the defendant express his dislike of the psychiatrist—because he is Jewish.

Another defense psychiatrist was Dr. Bernard Diamond, a professor of law, criminology and psychiatry, who reviewed Sirhan's experiments in self-hypnosis, in which threats against Kennedy were committed to writing. Then the psychiatrist advanced a novel theory of ~~the assassination~~ "with absolutely no knowledge," Diamond said, "he was gradually programming himself for the coming assassination. He was confused and bewildered, the mirrors in the hotel lobby, the flashing lights. This was like pressing a button that starts the computer. This time it was for real. This time there was no pencil in his hand. This time there was a loaded gun."

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Finally, there was Dr. Pollack, star psychiatric witness for the state, who said Sirhan was mentally ill, but not so ill he was unable to meaningfully and maturely premeditate the assassination.

Then, near the end of his testimony, while under cross examination, Dr. Pollack told of a report for which he said Sirhan's mental illness "should be considered a substantial mitigating factor in the matter of penalty."

"Sufficient to mitigate it from death to life?" asked defense attorney Grant Cooper.

"Yes," the jury heard the prosecution witness reply.

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