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## **Inventory of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Records - Sirhan Sirhan Case File**

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## Inventory of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Records - Sirhan Sirhan Case File

**Collection number: 96-03-17**

California State Archives  
Office of the Secretary of State  
Sacramento, California

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### Descriptive Summary

**Title:** Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Records - Sirhan Sirhan Case File

**Dates:** 1968-1969

**Collection number:** 96-03-17

**Creator:** Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

**Collection Size:** 12 cubic feet of textual and photographic records

**Repository:** California State Archives  
Sacramento, California

**Abstract:** The Los Angeles Sheriff's Department records - Sirhan Sirhan case file contains twelve cubic feet of textual and photographic records covering the period of his confinement by the Sheriff's Department following the assassination of Senator Robert F. Kennedy in 1968. The materials consist of two groups of records, the Sheriff's Department office files and a partial transcript of the proceedings during Sirhan Sirhan's trial.

**Physical location:** California State Archives

**Languages:** Languages represented in the collection: English

### Access

Every effort has been made to provide the fullest possible disclosure of the records. In the few places where restrictions are noted, the justification is firmly rooted in California statutory law. The specific statutory restrictions are as follows:

Specific law enforcement security procedures are restricted under California Government Code Section 6254(f) that exempts from public disclosure records of security procedures of any state or local police agency.

Records of intelligence information of the Office of the Attorney General, Department of Justice are exempt from public disclosure under California Government Code Section 6254(f).

Personnel information is restricted under California Government Code Section 6254(c) that exempts from public disclosure personnel, medical, or similar files, the disclosure of which would constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

Consistent with the California Public Records Act, California Government Code Section 6254, selected pages of the Courtroom Admittance Rosters have been restricted since they contain personal information concerning individuals including social security numbers, credit card numbers, and drivers' license numbers.

In addition, two other types of records are restricted: FBI records; and police records from agencies other than the Los Angeles Police Department noted as "confidential". Researchers who desire access to these records should contact the FBI or appropriate originating jurisdiction directly to obtain records from that agency.

### Note

A number of the items contained in the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department files are in poor physical condition. Some original documents were photocopied and then microfilmed to enhance the readability of the documents on microfilm. The photocopies are certified as true copies of the originals.

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### **Alternative Form of Materials Available**

A researcher should be aware that, with few exceptions, access to the records will be provided through a user version of a 16mm microfilm copy. Microfilm roll numbers are printed next to each microfilmed series described in the guide. The collection is being made available on microfilm not only to preclude use of information excluded from public access by state law, but also to ensure preservation of the originals. The entire collection has been microfilmed for security purposes.

### **Publication Rights**

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### **Preferred Citation**

[Identification of item], Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Records, 96-03-17, [box and folder number], California State Archives, Office of the Secretary of State, Sacramento, California.

### **Acquisition and Custodial History**

The California State Archives acquired the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department Records in January 1996 when the deed of gift for the records was received.

### **Historical Notes**

In the early hours of June 5, 1968, New York Senator Robert F. Kennedy addressed a crowd of his supporters at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles. Senator Kennedy, a candidate for President of the United States, had just won the California Democratic Primary. Winning the California primary was critical to his quest for the Democratic Party nomination. Senator Kennedy concluded his victory speech and then stepped from the stage and proceeded to walk through a kitchen pantry area of the hotel, shaking hands with some of the people who had gathered to see him. Shots were fired and Senator Kennedy and five other people were wounded in the shooting. Senator Kennedy died the next day as a result of his wounds.

Sirhan Bishara Sirhan, a twenty-four-year old, unemployed former racetrack employee, was subdued by some of the people crowded into the pantry. They held him until officers of the Los Angeles Police Department took him into custody. Initially, he did not speak or identify himself and was identified only as "John Doe." Nine hours after the shooting, he was transferred to the custody of the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department. He remained in the custody of the Sheriff's Department through his trial until May 22, 1969 when he was transferred to San Quentin State Prison following his conviction in the death of Senator Kennedy. Sirhan Sirhan was sentenced to death as a result of his conviction. When the United States Supreme Court overturned the California death penalty law in 1972, Sirhan's sentence was automatically commuted to life imprisonment.

The Sheriff's Department records detail Sirhan Sirhan's confinement in the hours, days and months following his arrest and through the end of his trial.

For an overview of the case, researchers are encouraged to consult the Final Reports in the Los Angeles Police Department Records of the Robert F. Kennedy Assassination Investigation, a separate collection at the California State Archives.

### **Scope and Content**

The Los Angeles Sheriff's Department records-Sirhan Sirhan case file contains twelve cubic feet of textual and photographic records covering the period of his confinement by the Sheriff's Department. The materials consist of two groups of records, the Sheriff's Department office files and a partial transcript of the proceedings during Sirhan Sirhan's trial. The office files include jail logs that document Sirhan Sirhan's activities twenty-four hours a day and memoranda from deputies describing their conversations with Sirhan. The jail logs and deputies' statements are notable in that they document Sirhan's behavior and interests. Also included are courtroom security files, press releases, newspaper clippings, and Sirhan's requests for reading materials. In addition, there is a large quantity of letters from the public sent to Judge Herbert Walker, the presiding judge for Sirhan's trial in Los Angeles County Superior Court. There are photocopies of letters sent by the public to Sirhan. The collection also includes photographs of Sirhan's jail cell, the courtroom, and of Sirhan meeting with his attorneys. There are a few artifacts in the collection including a pen that Sirhan broke in the courtroom and safety pins used to prick Sirhan's hand during neurological tests.

The records have been organized following the filing system and order established by the Sheriff's Department, as is customary in archival practice. Series titles have been retained. Significant duplication shows up throughout the records. For example, a particular press release or photograph may be in several different parts of the collection. In order to document this practice, such duplication has not been eliminated unless it occurred within the same file unit. All duplicate material has been retained.

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**Related Collections at the California State Archives**

California Supreme Court case file, *People v. Sirhan Sirhan*, CRIM 124026

Los Angeles Superior Court case file, *People v. Sirhan Sirhan*, A233421

Los Angeles Police Department, Robert F. Kennedy Assassination Investigation Records, F3901, F3906

**Related Collections at Other Repositories**

Robert F. Kennedy Assassination Archives, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, 285 Old Westport Road, North Dartmouth, MA 02747-2300

**Indexing Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Los Angeles County (Calif.). Sheriff's Dept.

Kennedy, Robert F., 1925-1968

Sirhan, Sirhan Bishara, 1944-

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96-03-17, Box  
1/1-Box 1/30

**Series 1 Jail Logs 1968-1969**

**Physical Description:** 30 file folders

**Alternative Form of Materials Available**

Researchers are required to access this series on microfilm (MF11:1(1)).

**Arrangement**

Arranged chronologically by date.

**Scope and Content Note**

The jail logs document Sirhan's behavior, meals, visitors, and movements on 24-hour basis, recorded by deputies at least every fifteen minutes and often more frequently, from June 5, 1968 to May 22, 1969. Log entries include titles of books requested and received by Sirhan during his imprisonment. The jail logs also record Sirhan's sleeping and eating patterns and exercise activities.

96-03-17, Box  
1/31-Box 3/6

**Series 2 Personal Deputies Statements 1968-1969**

**Physical Description:** 54 file folders

**Alternative Form of Materials Available**

Researchers are required to access this series on microfilm (MF11:1(1-4)).

**Arrangement**

Arranged chronologically by date then in reverse chronological order by shift.

**Scope and Content Note**

Memoranda from individual deputies to Sheriff's Department supervisors describing in detail their conversations with Sirhan, his behavior, and visitors from June 5, 1968 to May 22, 1969. Deputies also reported his requests for candy bars, cigarettes, books, and other items. On a number of occasions, Sirhan asked deputies what was being reported about him in the press as well as about current events. Deputies were instructed to give very brief answers and not to engage Sirhan in conversation.

96-03-17, Box  
3/3-Box 3/9

Series 3 **Visitor Passes and Interview Request Forms 1968-1969**

**Physical Description:** 3 file folders

**Alternative Form of Materials Available**

Researchers are required to access this series on microfilm (MF11:1(4)).

**Arrangement**

Arranged chronologically by date.

**Scope and Content Note**

Signature cards recording Sirhan Sirhan's visitors as well as requests from the media to interview him from June 5, 1968 to May 22, 1969. Visitors include Sirhan's mother, brothers, attorneys, Russell Parsons, Grant Cooper, Emile Z. Berman and investigators Michael McCowan and Robert Kaiser.

96-03-17, Box  
3/10

Series 4 **Meal Diaries 1968-1969**

**Physical Description:** 2 volumes

**Alternative Form of Materials Available**

Researchers are required to access this series on microfilm (MF11:1(4)).

**Arrangement**

Arranged chronologically by date.

**Scope and Content Note**

Records kept by deputies of the foods served to Sirhan from July 14, 1968 to May 22, 1969.

96-03-17, Box  
3/11

Series 5 **Requests for Reading Materials 1968-1969**

**Physical Description:** 1 file folder

**Alternative Form of Materials Available**

Researchers are required to access this series on microfilm (MF11:1(4)).

**Arrangement**

Arranged chronologically by date.

**Scope and Content Note**

Notes and memoranda concerning Sirhan Sirhan's requests for books from the Los Angeles County Public Library from June 1968 to February 1969. Subjects include U.S. history, psychology, and mysticism.

96-03-17, Box  
3/12-Box 3/29

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Series 6 **Subject Files 1968-1971**

**Physical Description:** 15 file folders

**Alternative Form of Materials Available**

Researchers are required to access this series on microfilm (MF11:1(4-5)).

**Arrangement**

Arranged chronologically by date.

**Access Information**

Specific law enforcement security procedures are restricted under California Government Code Section 6254(f), which exempts from public disclosure records of security procedures of any state or local police agency.

Records of intelligence information of the Office of the Attorney General, Department of Justice are exempt from public disclosure under California Government Code Section 6254(f).

Personnel information is restricted under California Government Code Section 6254(c), which exempts from public disclosure personnel, medical, or similar files, the disclosure of which would constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

**Scope and Content Note**

Subject Files date from June 5, 1968 to September 12, 1971 and include expenditures by the Sheriff's Department for emergency security alterations to the jail and courtroom and personnel overtime cost. The series also includes press releases, newspaper clippings, memoranda, correspondence, and information concerning the Organizing Committee for Clemency for Sirhan. The files also include records of other inmates jailed at the same time or people arrested in the vicinity of the jail for various reasons, reflecting the precautions taken by the Sheriff's Department to insure Sirhan's safety.

Files also contain Sheriff's Department operational plans for Sirhan's security.

96-03-17, Box  
3/30

Series 7 **Publicity Order 1968**

**Physical Description:** 1 file folder

**Alternative Form of Materials Available**

Researchers are required to access this series on microfilm (MF11:1(5)).

**Scope and Content Note**

Order issued by Judge Arthur Alarcon on June 8, 1968 prohibiting anyone associated with the case from discussing the case. Also includes records of service of the publicity order.

96-03-17, Box  
3/31-Box 4/15,  
Box 15

Series 8 **Chronological Files 1968-1969**

**Physical Description:** 25 file folders

**Alternative Form of Materials Available**

Researchers are required to access this series on microfilm (MF11:1(5)).

**Arrangement**

Arranged chronologically by date.

**Access Information**

Personnel information is restricted under California Government Code Section 6254(c), which exempts from public disclosure personnel, medical, or similar files, the disclosure of which would constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

**Scope and Content Note**

Chronological Files include a log of events from June 5, 1968 to May 28, 1969 relating to Sirhan's incarceration, press releases, newspaper clippings, memoranda, correspondence, and reports.

Included with the chronological files is a glass vial that at one time contained a sample of Sirhan Sirhan's blood. The chronological files also include the safety pins used by Dr. Bernard Diamond to prick Sirhan Sirhan's hand during neurological tests, and the ballpoint pen Sirhan broke in an incident in the courtroom during the trial.

96-03-17, Box  
4/16

Series 9 **Letter Logs 1968-1969**

**Physical Description:** 1 file folder

**Alternative Form of Materials Available**

Researchers are required to access this series on microfilm (MF11:1(6)).

**Arrangement**

Arranged chronologically by date.

**Scope and Content Note**

Record of letters received from the public for Sirhan Sirhan dating from November 25, 1968 to May 28, 1969.

96-03-17, Box  
4/17-Box 6/27

Series 10 **Letters 1968-1969**

**Physical Description:** 85 file folders

**Alternative Form of Materials Available**

Researchers are required to access this series on microfilm (MF11:1(6-7)).

**Arrangement**

Arranged chronologically by the date received or by the date the letter was recorded into a letter log.

**Scope and Content Note**

There are two groups of letters dating from June 5, 1968 to July 1969. The first group consists of photocopies of letters sent to Sirhan Sirhan. The second group consists of letters sent to Judge Herbert Walker, who presided over the trial.

Subjects include arguments for and against Sirhan Sirhan being given the death penalty. Many letters offer prayers or religious guidance to Sirhan. Some letters are from individuals seeking Sirhan's autograph. Included is correspondence from the Organizing Committee for Clemency for Sirhan and the Action Committee on Arab-American Relations. The letters are multi-lingual with many letters sent from outside the United States.

96-03-17, Box  
7/1-Box 7/9 and  
Box 14/1-Box 14/3

Series 11 **Security Files 1968-1969**

**Physical Description:** 7 file folders and 2 notebooks

**Alternative Form of Materials Available**

Researchers are required to access this series on microfilm (MF11:1(8)).

**Arrangement**

Arranged chronologically by date. Photographs of security and court personnel are arranged alphabetically.

**Access Information**

Specific law enforcement operational procedures are restricted under California Government Code Section 6254(f) which exempts from public disclosure records of security procedures of any state or local police agency.

**Scope and Content Note**

Security Files date from October 1968 to January 1969 and include operational plans and procedures for security of the courtroom during Sirhan Sirhan's trial, courtroom floor plans, security passes, security post orders, and Hall of Justice and court personnel photographs and assignments. Also included is information concerning courtroom security procedures used by Alameda County during the 1968 trial of Black Panther leader Huey P. Newton. Also included is information concerning press access to the courtroom during the trial of James Earl Ray for the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Security files also include five x-rays taken of Sirhan Sirhan's shoes and signs listing jail rules.

96-03-17, Box  
7/10-Box 8/3

Series 12 **Courtroom Admittance Rosters 1969**

**Physical Description:** 18 file folders

**Alternative Form of Materials Available**

Researchers are required to access this series on microfilm (MF11:1(8)).

**Arrangement**

Arranged chronologically by date.

**Access Information**

Consistent with the California Public Records Act, Government Code Section 6254, selected pages of the Courtroom Admittance Rosters have been restricted since they contain personal information concerning individuals including social security numbers, credit card numbers, and drivers' license numbers.

**Scope and Content Note**

Rosters of individuals admitted into the courtroom from January 7 to April 23, 1969 during Sirhan Sirhan's trial. Lists include members of the public, the media, investigators, attorneys, and Sirhan family.

96-03-17, Box  
8/4-Box 8/10

Series 13 **Correspondence and Memorandums 1968-1969**

**Physical Description:** 7 file folders

**Alternative Form of Materials Available**

Researchers are required to access this series on microfilm (MF11:1(8-9)).

**Arrangement**

Arranged chronologically by date.

**Scope and Content Note**

Memorandums to and from the Sheriff's Department and inter-office memorandums dating from June 5, 1968 to February 13, 1969. Includes a copy of a handwritten letter from Robert Kennedy's brother, Edward M. Kennedy, to Los Angeles District Attorney Evelle Younger asking that Sirhan Sirhan not be given the death penalty.

96-03-17, Box  
8/11-Box 9/3

Series 14 **Newspaper Clippings 1968-1969**

**Physical Description:** 23 file folders

**Alternative Form of Materials Available**

Researchers are required to access this series on microfilm (MF11:1(9)).

**Arrangement**

Arranged chronologically by date received by the Sheriff's Department.

**Scope and Content Note**

Newspaper articles dating from April 22, 1968 to July 9, 1969 sent to the Sheriff's Department by news clipping services concerning the shooting, Sirhan's arrest, incarceration, and trial.

96-03-17, Box  
9/4-Box 9/11

Series 15 **News Releases 1968-1969**

**Physical Description:** 17 file folders

**Alternative Form of Materials Available**

Researchers are required to access this series on microfilm (MF11:1(9)).

**Arrangement**

Arranged chronologically by date of issue and numerically by summary number.

**Scope and Content Note**

Weekly summaries were issued by the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office concerning the progress of the case against Sirhan Sirhan and other matters relating to the assassination investigation. A total of fifty-two summaries were issued from June 12, 1968 to April 9, 1969.

96-03-17, Box  
9/12

Series 16 **Press Inquiries Log 1968**

**Physical Description:** 1 file folder

**Alternative Form of Materials Available**

Researchers are required to access this series on microfilm (MF11:1(9)).

**Arrangement**

Arranged chronologically by date.

**Scope and Content Note**

Log of requests from the press dating from June 10-21, 1968 for information concerning Sirhan Sirhan, security measures to protect him, and threats against him.

96-03-17, Box  
10/1-Box 10/25

Series 17 **Photographs 1968-1969**

**Physical Description:** 25 file folders

**Alternative Form of Materials Available**

A microfilmed copy of this series is available (MF11:1(10)). However, photocopies of the photographs have been produced for researcher access.

**Arrangement**

Arranged chronologically by date and includes photographs removed from other series.

**Access Information**

Specific law enforcement operational procedures are restricted under California Government Code Section 6254(f) which exempts from public disclosure records of security procedures of any state or local police agency.

**Scope and Content Note**

Photographs date from June 14, 1968 to April 23, 1969 and include Central Jail chapel where Sirhan Sirhan was arraigned, Sirhan's cell area at the Los Angeles Hall of Justice, and photographs of the courtroom. Other photos show Sirhan consulting with his attorneys and being escorted to and from the courtroom. Also included are photographs from a press conference with Kathy Fulmer, one of the women investigated and cleared, as "the woman in the polka-dot dress." Diagrams showing the location of security personnel in the courtroom are restricted.

**Note**

There is a considerable amount of duplication in this series.

96-03-17, Box  
11/1-Box 13/13

Series 18 **Trial Transcripts 1968-1969**

**Physical Description:** 90 file folders

**Alternative Form of Materials Available**

Researchers are required to access this series on microfilm (MF11:1(11-14)).

**Arrangement**

Arranged chronologically by date.

**Scope and Content Note**

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department was provided with copies of the Reporters' Daily Transcripts from the Los Angeles Superior Court trial of Sirhan Sirhan, *People v. Sirhan Sirhan*, A233421. The transcripts begin with volume number 10 and date from January 15 to April 21, 1969.

96-03-17, Box 15

Series 19 **Publications 1968-1969**

**Physical Description:** 1 file folder

**Alternative Form of Materials Available**

Researchers are required to access this series on microfilm (MF11:1(10)).

**Arrangement**

Arranged chronologically by date.

**Scope and Content Note**

Publications date from June 21, 1968 to January 17, 1969 and include issues of *Life Magazine* containing stories relating to Sirhan Sirhan, another magazine concerning Robert Kennedy, and several newspaper clippings.