SHELBY COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT
CRIMINAL COURTS BUILDING
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

July 1, 1968

MEMO TO: Sheriff William N. Morris, Jr.

FROM: C. F. Holmes

DATE: July 1, 1968

SUBJECT: Press Security

In a telephone conversation with Inspector Anthony of the Press Relations division of the Los Angeles Sheriff's Office several interesting bits of information were revealed. What was available to the press was "tied down" by a court order of the presiding judge in the hearing held last week for Sirhan Sirhan, but prior to that at least two press conferences were held -- one by the Sheriff's Office and one by the District Attorney's Office. Copies of the information released at these conferences are being mailed to me at your office and should be here in a couple of days.

The arraignment was held in a courtroom with a capacity of 365 seats, so there was no over demand for seating by the press. No cameras, recorders or equipment other than pencils, pens and paper were allowed. Artists (four of them) were allowed in the hearing. The majority of the press corps had previously been issued Identification Cards of the Los Angeles Police/Sheriff's Offices and no further security was done on the holders. In the case of a lost pass, a temporary permit was issued. These temporary permits were for one day only and the loser was to apply for a new card from the issuing agency.

The mess hall in the building was used as a staging area for people who were to attend the trial. The press were processed along with the others. In groups of ten, the spectators/reporters were escorted to a search area and any property taken from them, tagged and held for return to the individual after court. After the search by deputies (men for men, women for women), the group of ten was then escorted to seats in the courtroom while another ten was escorted from the mess hall to the search areas. All members of the press were properly identified on the outside of their jackets. Only one press representative, Inspector Anthony said, objected to the search, but he was reprimanded by fellow members of the press and the issue was settled amicably on the spot.

In one or two cases, Inspector Anthony said, men who did not have proper press credentials were in the group and they were allowed to take seats as citizens at the public trial. This is something we must be alerted to here, and I assume that if a newsman does get in the group to be admitted as citizens at a public trial, it will be necessary to do so.

Inspector Anthony strongly suggested (if it has not already been done) that an officer of our department might benefit from the total security picture there by a visit, most beneficially on July 19 when a hearing in a 100-seat courtroom will be held to enter a plea for Sirhan.

Any requests should be directed to Under Sheriff Bill McCloud, MAdison 6-9511, Los Angeles. Mr. McCloud also appears to be acquainted with several law enforcement people here, including Mr. Holloman.

CH/ts