

Visiting Reporters See Guilty Verdict

A majority of the visiting press seems to believe that Jack Ruby will be convicted of the Nov. 24 slaying of Lee Harvey Oswald, but there is tremendous disagreement as to the penalty the jury will render.

Of 21 reporters The News questioned, 18 believe Ruby will be found guilty and 3 say a hung jury is likely. Of the 18, 7 more consider a hung jury a possibility.

Home bases for the reporters range from Australia to Europe, and from Long Beach to New York.

Most predictions fell in the 20-to-35-years range.

William Hunter of the Long Beach (Calif.) Independent Press Telegram looks for the death penalty. Said Hunter:

"I don't think the defense has proved in any way that Ruby is insane. They've proved he was volatile, impulsive, but that's what we have laws for today, to keep people like this from killing."

Francois Peleu, Agence France Presse, said, "I think he'll get 25 to 50 years."

"I just don't think there's a possibility of the death sentence here," he added. A hung jury? "Always the possibility, it's a 1-out-of-12 shot."

Gene Roberts, Detroit Free Press: "I look for 25 to 35 years. There was a period when I thought Ruby might do better, but then the state had about eight witnesses that changed my mind."

Roberts said he had talked with nine other reporters, who leaned toward heavier punishment, life imprisonment or death. "The least was 25 years," Roberts said.

Frederick Pottecher, French Broadcasting System, "I do not think he will be electrocuted. I look for an important penalty, about 20 years at least."

John Bulbeck, Reuters (from

Perth, Australia): "A hung jury. Just looking at the jurors you can see they are going to wind up being divided. The professional people among the jurors will try to think out the insanity issue logically, and they'll start losing the others in the jury right there." Bulbeck added, "If it's not hung, they will convict . . . from 20 to 50 years."

Bob Considine, Hearst Headline Service, New York: "I would expect an intermediate sentence. I can't conceive of them killing him . . . but it would be difficult to see how they could show him the way to the door either. I expect something like the Dr. Sam Shepard case, where he will be eligible for parole in about 10 years."

Bob Sanford, Kansas City Star: "I don't think he'll be acquitted or get the electric chair. I look for a midrange sentence, 10 to 20 years, but don't rule out the possibility of a hung jury here."

Ray Coffey, Chicago Daily News: "I think they will find him guilty. I expect him to get 30 years or life." Coffey remarked he felt (Bill) Alexander (assistant district attorney) is a remarkably good cross-examiner. "He turned the tide."

Homer Bigart, New York Times: "I'd be shocked to death if they gave him the electric chair. I think he should be punished. There are too many people in the United States that take the law into their own hands. We just can't let them do it. Of course, with Ruby there are extenuating circumstances. He shot a man accused of—a man everybody in Dallas theorizes—killed the President. Any sentence he gets will be a strong one to a man like Ruby, a broken man who has no ego left. He should have some punishment, unless he is insane. In that case a mental hospital would be punishment enough."