

Jurors in High Spirits After Dooming Sirhan

By Kathleen Neumyer

LOS ANGELES, April 24 (UPI) — After two months and 11 days locked up together for the murder trial of Sirhan Sirhan, the jury was in no hurry to go home.

An hour after recommending the death penalty Wednesday for the convicted assassin of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, the jurors were back in their wing at the Biltmore Hotel, laughing and talking.

As they hurried off the bus and into the hotel, a crowd of spectators cheered and applauded.

Loud phonograph music blared "Gimme gimme good loving every night . . ." from a sitting room where the jurors lunched on sandwiches and coffee with Superior Court Judge Herbert V. Walker, who praised them as "a good jury" and autographed pictures of himself for them.

Most of the women jurors changed to slacks, and there was a party mood as they ran from room to room, shouting goodbyes and making plans to see each other again.

Juror Gilbert F. Grace shouted, "Here I am, baby," as his wife arrived on the sixth floor. She rushed into his arms and kissed him.

"A Wonderful Time"

"I sure will miss everyone. We've had a wonderful time," juror Susan Brumm told a matron who helped her elude newsmen by slipping up a side stairway and along the seventh floor to an elevator.

Most of the jurors seemed anxious to avoid the approximately 250 newsmen and photographers waiting in the lobby to question them.

Juror George Stitzel said four ballots were taken, the first about an hour after the jury retired at noon Monday. On that ballot, he said, eight favored the death penalty, two life imprisonment and two were undecided. In a second

vote Tuesday, 10 favored death and two a life sentence. By Wednesday morning the vote was 11 to 1, and by 11:04, when they signaled they had a verdict, the last juror had been persuaded to vote for the maximum penalty.

"As long as we have capital punishment in California," Stitzel said, "we felt Sirhan deserved the ultimate penalty for this crime."

Stitzel said notebooks in which Sirhan had scrawled "RFK must die" were the most damning evidence against him.

Albert N. Frederico, a plumber, said the fact that the victim was Robert F. Kennedy affected his decision.

"After all, he killed a United States Senator," Frederico said.

Not Impressed

Frederico told newsmen he was not impressed with testimony from eight defense psychiatrists and psychologists who said Sirhan was incapable of maturely and meaningfully premeditating the crime.

"It stunk," he said. "I don't buy that stuff."

Jury Foreman Bruce Elliott, an analyst for an aerospace corporation, expressed surprise when informed that early in the trial the prosecution and defense had agreed to accept a guilty plea from Sirhan in exchange for a life sentence.

Walter overruled the plan, and word of the bargaining was kept from the jury in accordance with California law.

Asked if knowing the prosecution was once willing to have a life sentence imposed would have altered the jury's decision, Elliott replied, "I'll have to think about that a long time."

Sirhan to Return To Court Today

LOS ANGELES, April 24 (UPI)—Sirhan returns to court Friday for the first step in months, perhaps years, of legal appeals to try to save him from the gas chamber.

Chief defense attorney Grant B. Cooper said today he would ask at Friday's appearance that Judge Herbert Walker set another hearing date on a motion for a new trial.

After the jury had decreed death for Sirhan Wednesday, Walker set May 14 for the hearing date and for formal sentencing. Cooper said a conflict in his own schedule forced him to ask for a new date.

Unruh Says Sentence Wouldn't Please RFK

Los Angeles Times

SACRAMENTO, Calif., April 24—State Assembly Democratic Leader Jess Unruh, an eyewitness to the murder of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, said today he disagrees with the death sentence for Kennedy's assassin.

"The great memory of Robert F. Kennedy—his concern for the poor, the afflicted, his

identification with the less fortunate, and his deep love for all people," Unruh asserted, "will not be served by yet another violent death."

Unruh, manager of Kennedy's California presidential primary campaign last year, was in the party accompanying the Senator when he was fatally shot in the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles last June.

"To close out the career of Robert Francis Kennedy by exacting the life of another human being—sane or insane, mad killer or demented exhibitionist—is not the last chapter that ought to be written in the brilliant public record of a gentle man who bore hate for no man, woman or child and who sought instead to eliminate violence and suffering from American society," Unruh said.

"I personally would have preferred that the jury decided to put Sirhan away for the rest of his life rather than to send him to the gas chamber. I agree he should not again be turned loose on society."