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## Sirhan Jury Retires After 9-Hour Day

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By a Washington Post Staff Writer

The courtroom buzzer was silent all day. Hands in pockets, Sirhan Sirhan's top defense lawyer looked at the big wall clock and shrugged apprehensively.

"Muy malo," he said in a brief exchange with defense investigator Michael McCowan that had lapsed into Spanish.

"It looks pretty black," McCowan agreed.

Upstairs, in a bleak room on the ninth floor of the Hall of Justice, the jurors who convicted Sirhan last week of first-degree murder for assassinating Sen. Robert F. Kennedy were still debating whether they should spare the Palestinian's life.

At the so-called "penalty trial" Monday, the State called for death in the gas chamber as the only "proper penalty." Sirhan, prosecutor John Howard charged, had forfeited his claim to any place in American society, even a prison cell.

Pinning his hopes on a life sentence, chief defense lawyer Grant B. Cooper protested that execution was hardly in order for the mentally sick. But he and the rest of Sirhan's defense team expected a verdict quickly if it were to favor their client.

"The longer it goes on, the more depressed I get," Cooper said.

The jury had deliberated nine hours by the time it returned for the night.

Should the jury become deadlocked, Judge Herbert V. Walker could take over and sentence Sirhan to a life term or he could appoint a new set of jurors to consider the death penalty. That, however, would be practically equivalent to a new trial.