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LOS ANGELES AP - The best verdict Sirhan Bishara Sirhan's defenders hope to win for him is conviction of manslaughter, chief defense attorney Grant B. Cooper said Friday.

Manslaughter carries a penalty of 1 to 15 years in prison.

Sirhan, 24, a Jordanian, is on trial charged with murdering Sen. Robert F. Kennedy last June.

In questioning a prospective alternate juror, Cooper remarked that the defense claim of diminished capacity on Sirhan's part "could not result in a verdict of not guilty."

This contention holds that an otherwise sane person may have diminished responsibility for a violent act.

On that contention, Cooper told newsmen after court, the possible verdicts would be guilty of first or second degree murder, or manslaughter.

A first-degree murder carries a penalty of life imprisonment or death at the discretion of the jury. Second degree calls for five years to life in prison.

Cooper said he didn't want to mention the penalty for manslaughter because "it's not proper for the jury to take into consideration." The state penal code, however, prescribes 1-15 years.

Friday was another day of questioning and excusing candidates to serve as six alternate jurors. Altogether, 10 were released.

Two were excused on hardship pleas of being needed on their jobs, three because of ill wives or other family problems and two for undisclosed reasons after being questioned in the judge's chamber.

Two were dropped on peremptory challenges requiring no stated reason—one each by prosecution and defense.

Another, housewife Linda S. Katrenich, was excused after telling Superior Court Judge Herbert V. Walker: "I do not believe in the death penalty."

Sirhan seemed alternately solemn and in high spirits. He smiled broadly at his mother Mary and brother Munir, 21, seated in the back row and once was heard whistling as a detention room door closed behind him during a recess.

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