

## Sirhan Jury Spends 2 Hours Picking Foreman on First Day

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LOS ANGELES, April 15—The jury deciding the fate of Sirhan B. Sirhan for the murder of Senator Robert F. Kennedy began its deliberations today in a conference room on the ninth floor of the Hall of Justice.

Although the case went to the panel yesterday afternoon, the jurors spent two hours electing a foreman. They decided on Bruce D. Elliott, a youthful-looking computer analyst who holds a Ph.D. degree.

At 4 P.M. a bailiff announced that the jury was returning to the Biltmore Hotel for the night after almost seven hours of deliberation. The only request made by the panel during the day was for a light bulb and a piece of chalk.

A spokesman for the team of defense lawyers representing Sirhan suggested that if the decision did not come with "will probably go on a long time."

The state has asked for a verdict of guilty of murder in the first degree, while the defense has urged a verdict of second-degree murder. The jury has two other choices—voluntary manslaughter or, even more remote, acquittal.

### Deny Premeditation

All during the trial, the defense has acknowledged that Sirhan fatally shot Senator Kennedy last June 5 at the

Ambassador Hotel, but it has insisted that the 25-year-old defendant did not possess the mental capacity to "maturely or meaningfully" premeditate the slaying.

The prosecution has already indicated that it will not press for the death penalty but will settle for a sentence of life imprisonment. A conviction for second-degree murder also carries a potential life sentence.

Today, newsmen and the knot of security men that has been on hand since the trials started milled about the courtroom, awaiting the sound of three buzzes on a signal system at the desk of the court clerk—a sound that will mean the jury has arrived at a verdict.

### Lawyers on Stand-By

All the lawyers in the case are on one-hour standby, although both Emile Zola Berman and Russell E. Parsons, two of the three defense lawyers, wandered into the courtroom to chat with newsmen and court aides. Mr. Berman is leaving for New York tomorrow, whether or not the verdict is in.

If the jury should bring in a verdict of murder in the first degree, a separate penalty phase trial will be held before the same panel. This will allow it to determine whether Sirhan should go to the gas chamber at San Quentin Prison or spend a considerable part of his life in a three-room cell at the California medical facility at Vacaville.