

Phil Spector trial begins in Los Angeles

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The long-delayed trial of legendary music producer Phil Spector has finally begun with opening statements starting in Los Angeles today. Several sources have noted that the fate of Phil Spector, on trial for the murder of Lana Clarkson, will be decided by a predominantly male jury, after a drawn-out, complicated jury selection process from last week. The jury that will hear the very public case of Phil Spector will be made up of nine men and three women. They will decide if Phil Spector is guilty of shooting B-movie actress Lana Clarkson four years ago after the producer brought the hostess home from The House of Blues. People speculate that the trial of Phil Spector could take up to three months.

The trial of Phil Spector will be very televised (expect Court TV to cover practically nothing else) but Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Larry Paul Fidler promised the jurors that their faces would never be on camera and that their identities would be kept secret for the entire process. During last week's jury process in the Phil Spector trial, several of the potential jurors said that they believed that the producer was guilty of shooting Lana Clarkson in the mouth, possibly while trying to prevent her from leaving his mansion, which is what the prosecution will allege occurred on February 3rd, 2003.

Who will decide what happens to Phil Spector? The nine men and women are, of course, unidentified, but Playfuls reports that they consist of several county employees including two engineers and a network TV producer. Kathy Kellerman, a jury consultant, believes that the jury is a complex mix and that it could be helpful for both sides in the case. Kellerman says, as quoted by Playfuls, "*It's a dream jury, demographically, for the prosecution...(but) these people who are more advanced in their professions are also very creative, a great sign for the defense.*"

Bruce Cutler, the defense attorney for Phil Spector, can't deny that Lana Clarkson died of a gunshot to the mouth at his client's house, but will likely argue that the actress killed herself. You can expect Cutler to argue that Clarkson was depressed at the time that she went to Spector's house and it should be interesting to hear their theories on how she went from depressed to finding one of Phil Spector's guns and fatally using it. Cutler has said, as quoted by Playfuls, "*There was no crime here. This lady died in Phil Spector's home, but there was no crime.*"

Prosecutor Alan Jackson said today at the trial of Phil Spector, "*Lana Clarkson...was simply the last in a long line of women who fell victim to Philip Spector over the years. He put a loaded pistol in Lana Clarkson's mouth and he shot her to death.*"

Phil Spector has long claimed that Lana Clarkson was waving a gun around his home on the night of her death and that she committed suicide for reasons unclear to the producers. Well, sort of "long claimed." On the actual night of her death, Phil Spector told the first officers on the scene that he had killed Lana by accident. How that turned into her killing herself could be a major hurdle for the defense.

Even worse, a chauffeur who drove Phil Spector and Lana Clarkson to the house is likely to testify and his memory of what happened that night is pretty damning. He claims to have heard a gunshot and seen Phil Spector emerge from the house with a gun in his hand. It gets worse. The chauffeur even claims that Phil Spector said to him, "*I think I killed somebody.*"

It's unclear if the reclusive and bizarre Phil Spector will testify at his own trial, but Playfuls reports that the case of Spector could have a very unusual guest as a character witness, Yoko Ono.

Phil Spector is 67 and is best known for his innovative "Wall of Sound" technique that he used to produce The Beatles, The Righteous Brothers, and The Ronettes.