

Phil Spector verdict a 'painful' decision says juror

Reaching the verdict in Phil Spector's murder trial was a 'painful' decision, the foreman of the jury said.

By Tom Leonard in New York

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On Monday, the jury in a Los Angeles court found the 69-year-old record producer guilty of second-degree murder in the killing of Lana Clarkson.

But the foreman, who declined to be named, admitted that the jury remained unsure about the victim's mental state.

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Spector, who worked with the Beatles and many other stars, must serve at least 18 years of a mandatory life sentence after being convicted in his retrial on Monday for the 2003 killing of the actress-turned-nightclub hostess as well as using a firearm in committing a crime.

Defence lawyers had claimed that Clarkson, who was found shot dead in the foyer of Spector's Los Angeles mansion, had committed suicide.

The victim's mental state was a key issue in the trial, with prosecutors insisting that she was in good spirits before her death, while the defence claimed she was depressed.

The jury foreman said that jurors remained unsure over the conflicting claims.

"None of us were psychologists. None of us could evaluate a person we never met," she said.

However, she said that the panel was swayed by the "totality" of the prosecution evidence, rather than individual pieces, which was laid out during five months of testimony.

Lawyers presented contrasting scientific theories over Clarkson's death, with both sides insisting bloodstains and other evidence supported their version of the shooting.

"Each side had their experts," said the 48-year-old foreman, who works as a paralegal in the court system. She wept as she recounted the pressure of deciding the fate of another person.

"It just is a painful decision," she said. "You are talking about another human being. We all had hearts. We all have people

we love," she said.

Spector was remanded in custody sentencing is scheduled for May 29 and is likely to spend the rest of his life in prison, barring a successful appeal.

In the original trial the first jury was deadlocked at 10-2 in favouring Spector's conviction in 2007. This time, jurors spent about 30 hours in deliberations before finding Spector guilty unanimously. They had the option of choosing involuntary manslaughter, but did not do so.

The panel also found Spector used a firearm in committing a crime, adding a minimum of three years to his minimum of 15 years for second-degree murder.