



Spector still lacks new lawyer

Two attorneys have rejected his request to defend him during his retrial in Lana Clarkson's killing.

By John Spano, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer
October 23, 2007

Music legend Phil Spector told a judge Monday that he's seeking a new attorney to defend him for the retrial of his murder case but has yet to find the lawyer he wants.

His first trial for the alleged murder of actress Lana Clarkson in his Alhambra mansion in 2003 ended in a mistrial last month. Jurors deadlocked 10 to 2 for conviction after a four-month trial.

The 67-year-old Spector was accompanied in court by Christopher Plourd, the only lawyer remaining from his six-attorney defense team. Spector already has tried unsuccessfully to hire two new lawyers.

Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Larry Fidler rebuffed Deputy Dist. Atty. Patrick Dixon when he asked to see sworn statements filed by Spector. Plourd had opposed disclosure, saying they related to Spector's effort to assemble a new defense team, and Fidler agreed.

Of Spector's original team, Bruce Cutler resigned during the trial and three others have withdrawn since the mistrial was declared: Bradley Brunon, Linda Kenney-Baden and Roger Rosen. Dennis Riordan was hired shortly before the end of the trial. He wrote the disputed "special instruction number three," which Fidler later was forced to announce was flawed. When he withdrew it and instructed jurors to ignore it, three who had held out for acquittal changed to favoring conviction.

Riordan will stay with Spector and focus on motions, Plourd said. "Mr. Spector has interviewed a number of lawyers," Plourd said. "Given the desire of the judge for him to find a lawyer who can be ready to try the case in four months, there are not many qualified lawyers who are available. He's having difficulty finding a lawyer with an open schedule, but he's making progress."

Minutes after the fatal shot was fired in his home Feb. 3, 2003, Spector walked out of the house holding a pistol with blood dripping from a finger and said, "I think I killed someone," according to his chauffeur's testimony.

The defense contended that Clarkson was depressed because her movie career was crumbling and that she had been forced by dire financial straits to take a job as a hostess at the House of

Blues on Sunset Boulevard, where Spector picked her up the evening she would later die of a single gunshot to the head.

Clarkson's survivors have filed civil claims against Spector, and both her mother and sister were in court Monday.

In sparring over the issue of the new lawyer, Dixon said he would be forced to refer to him as "Mr. X." Plourd quickly responded by saying Dixon should not rule out the possibility of a "Ms. X."

Fidler scheduled a Nov. 10 hearing in the case.

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