

Jury selected in Letelier murder trial

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WASHINGTON—After four days of being questioned on their impartiality, 12 jurors and six alternates were picked yesterday for the trial of three Cuban exiles charged in connection with the 1976 car bombing of former Chilean diplomat Orlando Letelier.

U.S. District Court Judge Barrington D. Parker immediately ordered the panel to be sequestered at an undisclosed location in the Washington area. The jury will be sworn in formally Monday, before prosecution and defense lawyers present opening arguments.

The all-black jury that will judge the guilt or innocence of the defendants—Guillermo and Ignacio Novo and Alvin Ross, all leaders of the Union City-based Cuban Nationalist Movement—consists of seven women and five men. Four women and two men, all black, were picked as alternates.

The final panel was selected from an original pool of 152 potential jurors, and after about 70 would-be jurors were excused from jury duty for various reasons or challenged by defense or prosecution lawyers.

Also yesterday, Judge Parker disclosed a list of witnesses expected to testify at the trial, among them Sen. George McGovern, D-S.D., U.S. Ambassador to Chile George Landau and former CIA Director Rich-

ard Helms. The government listed 61 potential witnesses, the defense, 24.

Several defense witnesses are from New Jersey, including: Alda Leyva, apparently the Novos' brother-in-law; Luis Vega, a Union City building superintendent who already has testified at a pre-trial hearing; and others identified only as Martha Lopez, Felipe Martinez and Carólos Pol.

Court officials yesterday described the Letelier jury selection process as being the longest since the Watergate jury was picked.

Court records portray the jury as middle-aged. Among the 12 main jurors are a crossing guard, a

mechanic, a food service worker, a nurse, a car cleaner, a packer, an electronics technician and a retired warehouse superintendent. Their names will not be made public even after the trial for security reasons, court officials said.

The defendants are charged with assisting DINA, Chile's secret police, in carrying out the plot to assassinate Letelier, an outspoken critic of Chile's military junta at the time of his death.

Guillermo Novo and Ross are charged with murder and lying to a grand jury. Ignacio Novo is charged with lying to a grand jury and concealing knowledge of the crime.