

Avowed White Supremacist Church Shooter Dylann Roof's Jury Selection Begins

Several hundred people reported to the U.S. courthouse in Charleston, South Carolina, on Monday for the start of jury selection in the death penalty case against a white man who shot dead nine black parishioners in a church in June 2015.

Prosecutors have said the man, Dylann Roof, 22, is an avowed white supremacist who carried out a racially motivated attack. Defense lawyers have said he would plead guilty if prosecutors agreed not to seek the death penalty.

Roof sat in shackles and kept his head down as U.S. District Judge Richard Gergel explained the timeline for the trial, which begins on Nov. 7.

Roof faces 33 counts of hate crimes, obstruction of religion and firearms charges in the shooting deaths of the parishioners during a Bible study at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston.

Twelve jurors and six alternates will be chosen from a total of 3,000 people summoned from several counties for the trial. The final jury panel will be selected after a smaller group is questioned further in court in November.

Jurors will not be sequestered, but the court will pay for their hotel rooms in Charleston, Gergel said.

The judge urged people to avoid researching the case or talking to anyone about it but acknowledged that the killings had received wide publicity.

"I know that many of you have seen, read or heard about this case," Gergel said.

Roof also faces murder and attempted murder charges in state court, with jury selection in that trial set for January.
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