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Tempers Tempered In Painseeker Jury Selection

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LOS ANGELES -- The fireworks that brought a premature conclusion to the opening day of jury selection in the Painseeker Murder Trial were not on display Tuesday in Los Angeles Superior Court. Exchanges between Judge Michael Rodriguez and lawyers for prosecution and defense showed no acrimony from the previous day's events.

Defense attorney Les Levin showed the most stunning difference. The combative counsel for accused murderer Laura Douglass continued to ask potential jurors about their Internet activities; however, he failed to remove a single person Tuesday on those grounds.

Nine jurors were impaneled in Tuesday's session. With three juror and six alternate slots yet to be filled, prosecutors expect that opening statements will begin on Thursday or Friday at the earliest.

For a second day, Levin refused comment outside the courthouse, leaving many to speculate as to the reason for the sudden change in his tactics with the jury. While many suspect that the personality reversal was a result of Judge Rodriguez' sidebar discussion yesterday, others believe that Laura Douglass herself has intervened on her own behalf.

Prosecutors were surprisingly open in their skepticism of Levin's strategy.

"After today, there is no question that what happened yesterday was a deliberate attempt to control the pace of this trial," asserted Assistant District Attorney Thomas Andrews. "I can read a calendar... It's all about the weekend."

Andrews pointed out that by short-circuiting Monday's jury selection, it is unlikely that the prosecution will begin presenting their case until Monday.

"[Levin] expects that if the jury is given a weekend to think about the prosecution's case against Ms. Douglass, they will be more likely to convict her. The jury isn't even complete and he's already sending a clear message that he doesn't trust them."

Andrews sidestepped questions asking him if he would categorize Levin's delay as the same type of "pure gamesmanship" that Levin had himself previously decried.

"It's a legitimate tactic. I'm not going to call him a hypocrite for acting like a defense attorney. That's his job."

"Besides," he added, "it wasn't anything we hadn't already anticipated."