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Scrushy trial could last 4 months

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The trial of ousted **HealthSouth Corp.** CEO Richard Scrushy is now expected to last as long as four months, exceeding initial estimates of 10 weeks to 12 weeks.

U.S. District Judge Karon Bowdre announced the timeframe to the first 30 potential jurors Tuesday as they were questioned about their backgrounds, hobbies and possible prejudices.

Jury candidates also were asked if they or anyone they know have a professional finance/securities or law enforcement background or if they have ever felt unfairly targeted by an investigation.

Jurors who are selected for the trial - now scheduled to begin Jan. 25 - will get a week off, the period that coincides with spring break.

Scrushy has pleaded not guilty to a 58-count indictment that the government says involves more than \$2.6 billion in alledgedly overstated earnings at HealthSouth between 1996 and 2002.

Verna Gates is a Birmingham-based writer.

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