

Lampasi Gets 25 Years Plus for Shootings

By JERRY HICKS,
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Ronald Lampasi, 19, of Laguna Hills, who killed his adoptive father and left his adoptive mother lying wounded for two days, was given a 25-year-to-life sentence Thursday.

The maximum possible sentence was 37 years to life, but Orange County Superior Court Judge James Cook pointed to Lampasi's troubled childhood as a factor in the lesser sentence.

Cook also ordered that Lampasi be turned over to the California Youth Authority until he is 25 and then be sent to the state prison to serve the remainder of his sentence. Lampasi could be out of custody by the time he is 30.

Father Shot in Head

In a rare move, the judge reduced the standard sentence for a first-degree murder conviction with a firearm from 27 years down to 15 years. But he added the maximum of 10 years for the attempted murder of the mother and ordered that Lampasi serve the terms consecutively.

Lampasi, convicted four months ago, admitted shooting his parents, John and Ruth Lampasi, on June 2, 1983, at their Laguna Hills home, 10 days before his 17th birthday.

He shot his father, 60, who was watching television, in the back of the head. His mother, 47, was shot a short time later when she came



DON KELSEN / Los Angeles Times

Ronald Lampasi waits in Superior Court for sentencing in the murder of his father and the attempted murder of his mother.

home with the family dinner.

Ruth Lampasi moved in and out of consciousness for the next two days, lying in what police described as a pool of her own blood, before she was found by relatives. She is still recovering, with a bullet embedded in her brain but was able to testify against her son.

The Lampasis had adopted Ron Lampasi and his two sisters when they were young. John Lampasi

had admitted molesting the two daughters, and Ron Lampasi claimed at his trial that his father had also molested him.

Deputy Dist. Atty. Mike Maguire claimed that Lampasi exaggerated his childhood difficulties and fabricated the claim that his father molested him. Maguire depicted the shootings as a result of Lampasi's acting out a game of Dungeons and

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Dragons, a role-playing game popular among young people. Maguire also pointed to evidence that Lampasi was involved in devil worship.

But Cook was more sympathetic. He questioned the importance of Dungeons and Dragons and the devil worship as factors in the shootings and instead pointed to Lampasi's childhood.

"His first parents abandoned him, and his adoptive parents betrayed him," Cook said. The judge echoed the defense view that Lampasi killed his father because he saw no options.

"He was faced with a choice of staying in a home where conditions were difficult or leaving without any place to go," the judge said.

While Cook's decision clearly disappointed the prosecution, the judge refused to accept all the recommendations of Lampasi's attorney, Deputy Public Defender Paul Stark.

Stark had asked Cook to reduce the first-degree murder conviction to that of second-degree. While the judge refused, the sentence he gave Lampasi for his father's murder was the equivalent of a second-degree murder conviction. But Cook did not allow Lampasi to serve the sentences for each conviction at the same time, as requested by Stark.

Cook cited evidence that Lampasi had tossed things at the wounded woman while she lay near death to see if she would move. He also pointed to Lampasi's own testimony that he wanted his mother dead because she would have been upset to learn he had killed his father.

"I do not think he would have treated the family pets the way he treated his wounded mother," the judge said, adding Lampasi's conduct after his mother's shooting was "heartless and cruel."

The judge did not say whether he believed Lampasi was the one who actually shot his mother.

A close friend of Lampasi, David Christianson, was charged with participating in the shootings with him, using the Christianson family gun. Ruth Lampasi testified at both the Christianson trial and her son's trial that it was actually Christianson who pointed the gun at her.

Christianson, however, was acquitted by a separate jury last year.

Despite that acquittal, both Lampasi's attorney and the prosecution presented to the Lampasi jury a scenario that included Christianson's participation in the shooting of Mrs. Lampasi.
