

Lampasi Convicted of Shooting Parents

Man Guilty of Murdering Father, Attempting to Kill Mother

By JERRY HICKS,
Times Staff Writer

A Laguna Hills man was convicted Thursday of murdering his adoptive father and attempting to murder his adoptive mother.

Ronald Lampasi, 18, was found guilty by an Orange County Superior Court jury.

Lampasi, who was 16 at the time of the shootings, told police that he shot his father because he wanted more freedom, and that he was tired of being "nagged" about homework by his parents. He contended at his trial that he had been sexually abused by his father.

Lampasi's conviction was, in effect, only the first phase of the trial. A second key issue remains: whether Lampasi should be sentenced to state prison for 29 years to life, or to the California Youth Authority, where he could be released in four years.

The father, John Lampasi, 60, was shot while watching television June 2, 1983. His wife, Ruth, now 47, was shot in the head when she returned home from a nearby res-

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Ronald Lampasi, during murder trial; jury found him guilty.

taurant a short time later. She lay on the kitchen floor for two days before she was discovered by family members. She has recovered, although a bullet remains lodged in her skull.

Jurors deliberated for three days

before reaching their verdict. They declined to discuss the case with the news media. They did talk to attorneys but asked the attorneys not to reveal what was said.

Lampasi's attorney, Deputy Public Defender Paul Stark, contended that Lampasi had been physically and sexually abused by his father, and that the slaying was self-defense because Lampasi believed "he had no other way out."

But Deputy Dist. Atty. Mike Maguire brought in witnesses who testified that Lampasi liked to play Dungeons and Dragons, a role-playing game in which the participants act out assignments. The elder Lampasi's death, Maguire contended, could have been just for thrills or could have been related to Dungeons and Dragons.

Lampasi testified that he shot his father but that a friend, David Christianson, 15, grabbed the gun and shot Ruth Lampasi when she came home.

Ruth Lampasi testified that it was Christianson she saw point a

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gun at her before she passed out.

Christianson was also charged with murder and attempted murder in the incident. But a jury acquitted him of all charges last year.

Superior Court Judge James Cook set Lampasi's sentencing for Sept. 19.

Stark could not be reached for comment after the jury verdict. But Maguire said he expects "quite a battle" over Lampasi's sentence.

While Lampasi was a juvenile when he committed the crimes, he was tried as an adult. The judge has the discretion to sentence Lampasi to state prison or the Youth Authority.

Maguire said he will argue for a state prison sentence.