

Role-Playing Game May Have Played Role in Slaying, D.A. Says

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Role-Playing Game May Have Played Role in Slaying, D.A. Says

By JERRY HICKS *Times Staff Writer*

Ronald Lampasi and David Christianson were best friends at Laguna Hills High School two years ago who loved to play "Dungeons and Dragons," a role-playing game in which participants use their imagination to create new levels of competition.

Dungeons and Dragons became an issue Wednesday when the prosecution began its case against Ronald Lampasi, 18, charged with murder in the shooting death of his father, Thomas Lampasi, and attempted murder of his mother, Ruth Lampasi, at their home on June 2, 1983.

Deputy Dist. Atty. Mike Maguire suggested to jurors that the game could be related to what happened.

Witnesses' Versions Conflict

Another issue at the trial could be the conflicting versions about what happened from the prosecution's two key witnesses: David Christianson, 19, and Ruth Lampasi, who survived the shooting attack despite lying on the floor with a bullet in her skull for two days before being found.

Mrs. Lampasi claims that her son Ronald and David Christianson were in the Lampasi house together that day and that it was Christianson who actually pointed the gun at her when she came home. She did not implicate Christianson, however, until several weeks after the shooting.

Christianson and Ronald Lampasi were both arrest-

ed and charged with murder and attempted murder. But Christianson was acquitted last summer of all charges.

Christianson testified at his trial that he was at the Lampasi house that day, but not until later, when Ronald Lampasi took him there to show him that he had shot his parents. Christianson said he did not try to help Mrs. Lampasi because he thought she was dead.

Ronald Lampasi has admitted shooting his father, and has not wavered from that statement. He also admitted in one version of events that he shot his mother too. He later changed that to say Christianson shot her.

Testimony in the Ronald Lampasi case began Wednesday with prosecutor Maguire undisturbed that his two key witnesses do not agree on what happened.

"I don't see a conflict," Maguire said after the trial adjourned for the day. "A jury has already said that David Christianson was innocent. If Ronald Lampasi didn't shoot his mother, he at least set it up."

However, the defense may try to use the discrepancy in the two versions to try to mitigate Lampasi's involvement in his mother's shooting.

Lampasi's defense is that he was sexually abused by his father and that he finally retaliated. The couple adopted Ronald when he was 3 years old.

"Dungeons and Dragons has nothing to do with this

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Ronald Lampasi listens to testimony during trial in which he is charged with killing his father.

Henry Tuttle, a close friend of murder defendant Ronald Lampasi, takes stand in Lampasi's trial.

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LAMPASI: Case Begins

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case," said Deputy Public Defender Paul Stark, Lampasi's attorney. "This is a simple case of child abuse."

But Maguire does not agree. "I think Dungeons and Dragons helps explain (Lampasi's) state of mind at the time," he said. "I can't say right now how far we're going to go with it."

Stark objected to the game being brought into the case, but Superior Court Judge James W. Cook allowed it. At Christianson's trial, Judge Robert H. Green agreed with defense objections that the game was irrelevant to the case when the district attorney's office tried to make it an issue.

Forced to 'Kill'

Dungeons and Dragons—called "D and D" by many of its players—did get before the Christianson jury, however. In a videotaped interview with police, played for jurors, Christianson said he and Lampasi were avid D and D players. He also said they were best friends.

Maguire's first witness Wednesday was Henry Tuttle, another close friend of Lampasi, who said that he and Lampasi played Dungeons and Dragons together and that at least one session involved a player being forced to "kill" something to reach the next step in the game.

Maguire did not tell jurors in his opening statement that the game led Lampasi to shoot his parents, but he made it clear through Tuttle's testimony that it was a possibility.

The Lampasis were shot with the Christianson family gun. Christianson testified Ronald Lampasi admitted to him he stole the gun earlier in the day. Christianson said Lampasi told him he had shot both parents.