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Hall on trial after four years

One of the reasons Honolulu businessman Robert W. Hall shot three men at the Waikiki Yacht Club in May 1980 was that he was suffering an allergic reaction to a specific ingredient in wine he drank earlier in the evening, his attorney said in court yesterday.

Hall's problem was not intoxication or even a general allergy to wine, emphasized defense attorney David Schutter in opening statements of Hall's trial for attempted murder.


Rather it was an allergic reaction to a non-alcoholic ingredient in a special "house wine," not available in retail stores, that Hall drank earlier at a Waikiki restaurant, Schutter said. The allergy caused a lesion in the right temporal lobe of Hall's brain, substantially impairing his judgment, he added.

He also said Hall was suffering from a pre-existing paranoid personality, was "scared to death" of one of the men he shot — real estate broker Rodney Y. Inaba — and had taken seven years of constant abuse from Inaba.

In his non-jury trial before Circuit Judge Patrick Yim, Hall is accused of four counts of attempted murder and one count of carrying a firearm without a permit or a license.

The case centers on a May 17, 1980, confrontation between Hall and Inaba at the yacht club. Hall does not deny shooting Inaba, injuring him in the hip and knee, and firing shots that injured two other men.

But Schutter maintains that Hall did not attempt to murder anyone and had no idea that the allergic reaction would occur. And Schutter said Hall was carrying the gun because he planned to sleep on his yacht at the Waikiki Yacht Club that night and was afraid of vandals who had been damaging some of the boats there.

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