



SOLEMN—Robert Hall awaits beginning of his attempted murder trial in Circuit Court yesterday. —Star-Bulletin Photo by Terry Luke.

Robert Hall Goes on Trial for 1980 Shooting Incident

By Lee Catterall
Star-Bulletin Writer

Honolulu businessman Robert W. Hall mentioned getting a gun about three hours before he fired shots wounding three people four years ago in the Waikiki Yacht Club, a club member testified yesterday.

Franklin Opperman, a real estate developer, testified in Hall's non-jury trial on four counts of attempted murder stemming from an incident at the club's bar early in the morning of May 18, 1980. Hall also is charged with illegal possession of a firearm.

Hall, 50, is accused of firing four to five shots, injuring club members Rodney Inaba, a real estate broker, and Stephen Gratwick, and guest Joseph McKeown, a Happy Valley, Calif., dentist.

Hall also is accused of firing a shot that missed club member Harold K.H. Chun of Kaimuki in the club at the Ala Wai Boat Harbor.

About three hours before the shooting, Opperman said Hall told him, "If Rodney doesn't stop picking on me, I have a gun and I'm going to shoot him."

BUT DURING questioning by defense attorney David Schutter, Opperman said Hall instead had told him he intended to "go get a gun," not that he already had one.

The shooting followed insults leveled by Inaba at Hall, according to testimony. Inaba and Hall had been involved in a feud for several years, Schutter said.

Schutter said an ingredient other than alcohol in wine consumed by Hall at a downtown

bar before he went to Ala Wai Boat Harbor triggered an "organic brain dysfunction," resulting in unexpected "pathological intoxication."

Schutter said Hall suffered a "loss of control" of part of his brain because of the wine's effect on a "physical disorder."

The wine increased Hall's paranoia and tripled the amount of stress he felt, Schutter said.

Hall "had no idea" that drinking the wine would have such an effect, Schutter said.

Club member Stanley Thornton, an accountant, testified that Inaba had been "throwing barbs" at Hall for several hours earlier in the evening.

THORNTON SAID he had been sitting next to Inaba at the club's bar, while Hall had been standing at various spots and been walking by Inaba.


Schutter acknowledged that Hall fired shots that struck Inaba in the left hip and right knee, hit McKeown in the right calf and grazed Gratwick in the buttocks.

At the time of the shooting, Hall was head of Island Airways Hawaii, an air cargo business, and was a marketing consultant.

The feud between Inaba and Hall began when Hall, chairman of a yacht race, disqualified a yacht party owned by Inaba because the yacht's crew hoisted a Japanese flag at the finish line, Schutter said.

Inaba claimed to police investigating the shooting that he was the club's only member of Japanese ancestry.

The trial was to resume today before Circuit Judge Patrick Yin.

 Member Photo

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