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Rewald jury starts its deliberations; no quick verdict seen

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Amid indications it will take them at least a few days to wade through more than 2,600 exhibits and reflect on testimony from 140 witnesses, the Rewald jury went home last night after four hours of deliberations.

They must consider 98 separate charges against 43-year-old Ronald Ray Rewald, a failed businessman from Wisconsin, who after arriving here in 1978 built a flashy financial facade on other people's money.

Rewald, who once hobnobbed here on his own polo field with Air Force generals, Hawaii politicians, Arab princes, an Asian sultan, British gentry, and Philippine millionaires, could be sentenced to about 500 years in prison if convicted.

Alternate jurors who were released yesterday appeared far from unanimous in their assessment of the case. One leaned toward acquittal, one toward conviction, one declined to say, and three others made no comment.

Their reactions suggested Rewald's lawyers succeeded in planting some seeds of doubt about the CIA's relationship with Rewald.

Rewald himself left the courthouse clearly hoping to harvest an acquittal from the crop of questions in jurors' minds.

The jury must be unanimous in any verdict. A hung jury would result in a mistrial and a new trial on the charges.

Two of the alternate jurors released yesterday said they didn't think there was much more in Rewald's CIA connection than telephone, Telex and stationery, as admitted to by the CIA for maintenance of "light commercial cover."

"I don't think there's substantial evidence" that the CIA directed Rewald to spend investors' money as Rewald claimed, said Kerry Moyer, a Maui golf club employee. "But I think there is some CIA involvement, . . . possibly a little more" than what was revealed at trial, "kind of somewhere in between what each side was saying."

Moyer said at times he felt "the whole story wasn't being presented," but said part of the reason may have been because of Judge Harold Fong's rulings that much of what the defense wanted to bring in was irrelevant. He said Fong was "impartial — you can't really question his judgment on that. If he doesn't feel its relevant, you can't deal with" what's outside the case.

The key, Moyer said, was what the law provided: whether Rewald's claim of CIA authority would excuse him from taking money from investors.

Another juror, an insurance claims clerk who asked not to be identified, said that "to be honest with you, no," she didn't think there was much to Rewald's CIA connection beyond the telephone and Telex bills, but that she had kept an open mind and was prepared to examine the CIA question closely.

The clerk also said she found the CIA witnesses to be believable, and the testimony from investors who lost money convincing.

"I woke this morning . . . and

I sort of made up my mind, but I would have given myself the opportunity to look over the evidence," she said.

But a third alternate, a social worker, said she had "plenty questions" about the CIA and wanted to "look into the documents" because she felt "they wasn't coming out, really, with the whole thing."

The social worker said she didn't believe former CIA Honolulu office chief Jack Kindschi and was disappointed not to see other witnesses testify, including Rewald himself and his secretary, Sue Wilson.

The three alternates indicated they were not particularly scandalized by the undisputed allegations that Rewald spent more than \$280,000 on sexual and social intercourse with women.

"Everybody does it," one of the women alternates said.

The alternates agreed a verdict may be hard to reach. One said the verdict would come next week. Another said that since the prosecution and defense had taken 2½ months, there was no reason the jury shouldn't take as long.

"The others still up there have got a tough decision," said Moyer. "If they are going to look through all that, . . . they are going to have it tough."

The jury was not allowed to take notes, nor will it have a chance to review numerous charts prepared by both sides. But it took with it into the jury room carton after carton of bank records, CIA documents, canceled checks and other pieces of paper that tell the story, or much of it, of Bishop Baldwin Rewald Dillingham & Wong.