

DE LA ROCHE ADMITS LIES IN QUESTIONING

By ROBERT HANLEY Special to The New York Times  
New York Times (NYT-Carroll file), Jan. 24, 1978, ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851 - 2001)  
pg. 47

## DE LA ROCHE ADMITS LIES IN QUESTIONING

Acknowledges Not Telling the Truth  
in Two Instances in Murder Trial

By ROBERT HANLEY

Special to The New York Times

HACKENSACK, Jan. 23—Harry De La Roche Jr., the 19-year-old former military-school student charged with having murdered his parents and two younger brothers in their Montvale home in November 1976, acknowledged two lies during intense cross-examination today.

Under persistent questioning by the assistant Bergen County prosecutor, Richard E. Salkin, Mr. De La Roche acknowledged that he was not truthful with military superiors at the Citadel when he asked for an early Thanksgiving furlough from his studies in the fall of 1976 on the ground that his mother, Mary Jane, had "terminal" cancer.

"It was not a full lie, she did have a malignancy," Mr. De La Roche said when Mr. Salkin first confronted him on the reason for the leave. The teen-ager's initial answer to the question referred to a tumor that was removed from Mrs. De La Roche's lung in 1975. Medical experts testified at the trial earlier that post-mortems conducted after Mrs. De La Roche was shot to death in her bed disclosed no traces of cancer.

Pressed again by Mr. Salkin about his mother's not having cancer at the time she was murdered, Mr. De La Roche agreed and said he had lied.

He also admitted lying when he told police investigators in the first hours after the murders that his 15-year-old brother, Ronald, had threatened to "bury his father under his bed" because the father had discovered Ronald smoked marijuana and had threatened to tell the police.

During the trial, which began in Bergen County Court here on Jan. 5, Mr. Salkin has sought to convince the jury that Mr.

De La Roche killed his parents and two brothers early on Nov. 28, 1976, after a Saturday night of drinking because he could not face, despite parental admonition, returning to a life of hazing and harassment at the Citadel.

Mr. De La Roche acknowledged that and admitted all four murders 12 hours after he led the police to the bodies of his parents and his 12-year-old brother, Eric, in their second-floor bedrooms.

But in his first full day of testimony in his own defense last Thursday, the tall, thin teen-ager said Ronald had killed his parents and Eric after their father had discovered Ronald's "pot paraphernalia." The defendant, in turn, said he killed Ronald.

The defense contends that Mr. De La Roche was temporarily insane at the time of the murders. Today the defendant testified that he confessed to the police initially to all four murders because he wanted to get into jail "to commit suicide."

In his second and final day in the witness chair today, Mr. De La Roche maintained his composed and unemotional posture as he again denied the state's contention that he killed all four family members.

### Used Expressionless Tones

Throughout conclusion of the direct testimony by the defense attorney, John R. Taylor, and during all of Mr. Salkin's cross-examination, the teenager spoke in the same firm and expressionless tones in describing both extraneous events such as "popping off a few rounds" at the target range where he taught, and crucial elements in the murders, such as feeling for a pulse on his dead father's wrist or placing his hands over his dying brother Eric's eyes to "calm him."

Mr. De La Roche described his efforts to stem bleeding from Ronald's head wound with a towel. Mr. Salkin argued, however, that Mr. De La Roche put the towel to Ronald's head to prevent any blood from dripping on rugs or stairways as the defendant carried his dead brother's body to the attic to hide it in a metal clothes-locker.

Mr. Salkin accused the defendant of lying both to the police by telling them that Ronald was missing, when in fact his body was in the locker, and to his uncle, John Greer, when he told him in a telephone call that the police were looking for Ronald.

Mr. De La Roche replied at first by saying that he was "not too well of mental status" when he said Ronald was missing and being sought. But pressed further on the story he told his uncle, he said: "That wasn't exactly a lie—they were looking for Ronald."

Mr. De La Roche engaged in repartee later when confronted with his statement to the police that his father's body was "cold" when he found it, when in fact