

De La Roche Found Guilty and Given Life Sentence

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since the trial started on Jan. 5. One juror, Daniel McCarthy, said that the jury was not convinced of Mr. De La Roche's insanity. "There was no one who ever really came forward for the defense to prove to the jury's satisfaction that the defendant was insane," Mr. McCarthy said.

Richard E. Salkin, the prosecutor, said he was relieved that the trial was over. He also said he thought that Mr. De La Roche's confession to all four murders 12 hours after they had occurred was instrumental to the verdict.

Rights Violation Charged

"The confession . . . was devastating," Mr. Salkin said. "You have a man, and the man is saying what and why he did it."

Mr. Taylor said he would appeal principally on the ground that the police had violated Mr. De La Roche's constitutional rights in obtaining the confession. Judge Madden had ruled otherwise during the trial.

The four members of the De La Roche family were all shot to death as they slept eight days after Harry had returned on Thanksgiving furlough from his first three months at the Citadel.

The family had been widely known in Montvale, a small white-collar suburb in northern New Jersey, some 25 miles from midtown Manhattan. They were generally well-liked and appeared to most neighbors and friends to be a normal and well-adjusted family.

The father was an import official for the Ford Motor Company in Newark. He was active in Montvale's Boys Club, Boy Scouts and the Athletic Club. He was a gun enthusiast, and kept in his modest two-story frame house a .22-caliber rifle and three pistols—a 10-shot .22-caliber automatic, a .38-caliber Smith and Wesson, and a 9-mm. automatic.

His wife also was popular in Montvale. She worked in the library and for the Chamber of Commerce, and earned extra money for the family by working as a regional distributor for a county newspaper.

Brothers More Outgoing

Ronald and Eric were more outgoing and athletic than Harry Jr., who stood 6 feet 3 inches tall and was frequently the butt of jokes and pranks by his peers. Harry had little interest in girls or dating and spent most of his free time collecting old coins, tinkering with his car and teaching target shooting at a rifle range in the neighboring community of Park Ridge.

Although the elder De La Roche Sr. frequently boasted about his three sons, he was also known to be a strict disciplinarian with a quick temper. He wanted Harry Jr., upon graduation from high school, to begin pursuing a military career. Poor eyesight doomed the boy's admission applications to the United States Military, Naval and Air Force Academies. Harry Jr. eventually settled on the Citadel.

But from the moment he enrolled for freshmen orientation there in August of

1976, he developed a strong dislike for the school. He testified that he had run-ins with his company sergeant and was often physically abused, harassed, and hazed by upper-class students.

Harry's grades were poor and he wanted to quit. But his parents urged him to remain at the Citadel. "Quitters are failures," he father wrote once, according to trial testimony.

At Discotheque Before Slayings

Just before midnight on Nov. 27, 1976, he went by himself to a discotheque in Rockland County, N. Y., drank three beers, left for home, drank several more beers in his car, and arrived at his house around 2:30 A.M. After taking off his military jump boots and Army field jacket, and his pants and socks, he sat in his room for several minutes.

"I was thinking about what I was going

to do, thinking I can't go back," he later told the police in a 21-page confession given voluntarily 12 hours after he had shot his parents and brothers. "I really couldn't tell my parents because they wouldn't listen."

For the next several minutes, he paced the darkened hallway between his room and his parents' room, holding the 10-shot, .22-caliber target pistol.

"Finally I walked into my parents' room, got real close to my father, must have stood in his room about a half an hour just holding the pistol up," he said in the confession. "Finally I said 'I can't go back,' closed my eyes and pulled the trigger and that set it off, shot my mother right then and there, and I went to my brothers' room."

Mr. and Mrs. De La Roche, both shot twice in the face, died instantly. Then Ronald was shot fatally once in the face as he lay half-awake. Then he shot Eric five times, according to medical testimony, and returned to his own room. But Eric was not dead.

Harry admitted that he heard "heavy breathing" from Eric's room. "I went back to my brothers' room, and there was Eric. He was getting up and trying to get out. . . I put my hand over his eyes and said, 'Eric, go to sleep, go to sleep, it's just a dream,' trying to calm him down. Then he got up and started screaming and I hit him with the pistol butt on the head. Then he went down to the ground. I hit him again."

Mr. Taylor fought strenuously against admission of that confession as evidence. But Judge Madden ruled that Harry had voluntarily waived his constitutional rights to remain silent before he made the admissions and allowed the confession into evidence.

The defense then concentrated on trying to prove that Harry killed only Ronald in a seige of temporary insanity after Ronald had killed his parents and Eric after an argument with his father over the use of marijuana use.

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Harry De La Roche Jr.

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