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ON TRIAL—Ronald Rewald, center, is accompanied by his wife, Nancy, and his attorney, federal Public Defender Michael Levine, on the way to court for his trial on fraud charges. — Star-Bulletin Photo by Terry Luke.

Opening Statements Due in Rewald Trial

Attorneys in the Ronald Rewald trial were to present their opening statements to the jury this afternoon after two and a half days of jury selection.

A panel of 12 jurors and six alternates was sworn in late this morning. Only the judge and attorneys know who the 12 jurors are. That is to assure that all 18 people will give their full attention to the trial, U.S. Judge Harold Fong said.

Fong said the trial may take up to three months.

Yesterday, individual questioning of potential jurors, out of the presence of the public and news reporters, continued.

Fong conducted the questioning in his chambers with attorneys on both sides present to keep the selection process moving quickly and without delay.

The Star-Bulletin and KITV objected to the closed portion of the selection process. Fong, however, said the transcript of the individual questioning would be made public.

Fong yesterday denied requests by Rewald's attorney to have Star-Bulletin reporter Charles Memminger disclose the source of his information for an article about the Rewald case published Monday.

Federal Public Defender Michael Levine also asked that the trial be moved to another state or that jurors be sequestered in reaction to the article.

Fong denied those requests, saying that the article was not so inflammatory that an impartial jury cannot be chosen.

Fong also denied Levine's request to have the government attorneys state on the record that they did not "leak" any information in the article to the newspaper. Fong said there was nothing in the article to suggest that either defense attorneys or prosecutors were the source of leaks.

The article was a summary of events and issues involved in the Rewald case.

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