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'Five-0' star takes the stand in Rewald trial

Special to The Sentinel

Honolulu, Hawaii — Jack Lord, one-time star of the television series "Hawaii Five-0," played a role in a real-life criminal case Wednesday, testifying in the federal fraud trial of former Milwaukee businessman Ronald Rewald.

Lord, who has lived in Hawaii since the days he played tough Steve McGarrett, chief of the Hawaii Five-0 special state police force, said he critiqued a few movie ideas for Rewald as a favor to a mutual friend.

But Lord denied as "a damnable lie" Rewald's assertion that Lord occupied an office and used an exclusive parking space at Rewald's Honolulu firm of Bishop, Baldwin, Rewald, Dillingham and Wong.

The firm collapsed in 1983 after 400 investors put \$22 million into it in response to promises of 26% interest.

The prosecution said Rewald used the names of famous people, including Lord and other business, military and political figures in Hawaii, to create

an illusion of substance at the company. The prosecutors have claimed Rewald actually made no investments and diverted much of the money for his own use.

Rewald has acknowledged taking the money under false pretenses but insists it was all to maintain his cover for the CIA as a wealthy businessman.

The CIA, which did use Rewald's company as a mail and telephone "backstop" for some personnel, denies involvement in the alleged fraud.

Lord said he became social friends with Rewald, exchanged gifts with him and sold Rewald his mobile dressing room from the television series for \$45,000.

But when Lord was asked why his name appeared on a Bishop, Baldwin chart, he said it was because Rewald "put it there without my knowledge or consent."

Lord turned in the witness chair and glared across the courtroom at Rewald in his best McGarrett manner. This prompted some in the courtroom audience to whisper the famous McGarrett line, uttered by the actor to his television sidekick, "Book him, Danno."

Lord testified he was impressed with Rewald's opulent office and remembered seeing degrees from Marquette University on the office walls.

Two Marquette officials testified Tuesday that the diplomas Rewald displayed were fake.

Rewald never enrolled at Marquette but was listed on the alumni rolls after he sent in \$10 for a card saying he was a Marquette Law School graduate, the officials said.

Rewald also wrote to the university about getting Marquette cocktail napkins, balloons and posters for alumni social events in Honolulu and was sent a list of Marquette alumni in Hawaii, they testified.

Rewald claimed the CIA provided him with the diplomas. A CIA documents expert testified earlier that the diplomas were transparent fakes and were not provided by the CIA.