

LAWYER AIDED IN MAN'S SWINDLE OF 4 INVESTORS, PROSECUTOR SAYS

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Byline: By Catherine Vespereny Of the Post-Dispatch Staff

Text:

Robert A. Hampe, a lawyer from St. Louis charged with felony theft, aided and encouraged a confidence man in swindling four investors in a computer company out of more than \$30,000, a prosecutor said Tuesday in closing arguments.

Investors depended on the "honesty and decency" of Hampe, the attorney representing the computer company, said Tim Finnical, an assistant state attorney general who is prosecuting the case. But, "in this case, honesty and decency were not present," he said.

The trial is being conducted without a jury by St. Louis County Circuit Judge Edward L. Sprague. He said he would take the case under advisement.

Hampe's attorney, Alan G. Kimbrell, said Hampe had done nothing to deprive the investors of their money.

Authorities say Hampe and Jackie G. Turner defrauded investors in CCC Computers Inc. in the 9600 block of Olive Boulevard in Olivette. Authorities allege that money put up by four investors in the company in 1982 never was invested or used for the company's operations.

Hampe, 41, of the 6200 block of WestwayPlace, represented Turner in incorporating the business and dealt with investors, authorities say. At the time the business was set up, Hampe was also representing Turner on four theft charges.

Turner, 35, of the 1500 block of Cass Avenue, was fatally shot in October 1983. No one has been arrested in the case.

Hampe testified that he hadn't known that Turner was defrauding the investors.

Finnical called Hampe's account "the ostrich defense . . . I stuck my head in the ground and didn't see what was going on around me."

Kimbrell said Turner had written bad checks to Hampe. Hampe was guilty only of naiveté and gullibility toward his client, said Kimbrell.

Turner was convicted of writing bad checks and felony theft.

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