

## Filipino legal team off to Texas to help adoptee on death row

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**Gabriel Paul Hall (extreme right) converses with his lawyers during a court appearance.**

The Filipino American Legal Defense and Education Fund (FALDEF) is heading to Dallas, Texas this week to help save a Filipino adoptee from Cebu City, Philippines, who is facing a possible death sentence after allegedly stabbing and shooting to death an elderly man during an alleged burglary before turning to the man's wheelchair bound wife and slitting her throat and left her to die.

The woman, who managed to call 911 before the teen tried to finish her off, survived.

FALDEF was contacted for mitigation assistance by the Regional Public Defender Office

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(RCPDO) in Texas to lessen the gravity of the case and save the life of 18-year-old Gabriel Paul Hall from possible lethal injection, FALDEF head and volunteer attorney J.T. Mallonga told the **Filipino Reporter**

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The suspect, who was 11 years old when he and his two other siblings were adopted seven years ago from Cebu City by a Texas-based couple, reportedly confessed to killing retired Texas A&M oceanography professor Edwin Shaar, 68, who used a walker to get around, in his home garage, and also attacking his wife Linda Shaar, 69, inside their home in College Station, Texas on Oct. 20, 2011, police said.

Mr. Shaar died on the spot, while Mrs. Shaar was covered in blood and was gasping for air when cops arrived, and an ambulance rushed her to the hospital, according to a police report.

Hall was indicted by a grand jury on Dec. 21, 2011 and is being held without bail at the Brazos County Jail.

Mallonga said he will personally meet with Hall, along with Hall's public defenders and RPDO mitigation specialist Joseph Ward.

Joining Mallonga at his upcoming Texas trip are FALDEF attorney Merit Salud, along with FALDEF director and New Jersey-based Cebuana Nimfa Tinana, who speaks Hall's dialect and liaison to a Cebu-based attorney, Dorothy Francisco Arcenas, who is also helping FALDEF.

Fil-Am community leader Gus Mercado, who heads the National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA) in Texas, is also joining the group.

Hall, a senior at A&M Consolidated High School, was reportedly adopted along with his three other siblings from the Philippines to join a brood of 12 adopted children, and seven biological and stepchildren.

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The adoptive parents were identified as Wes Hall, an attorney and justice of peace; and Karen Kruse Hall, president of Central Texas Orphan Mission, an organization that “supports orphans across the globe.”

### Witness helps ID Hall

College Station Police said they were led to Gabriel Hall after a witness came forward to say that Hall matched the murder suspect’s description.

“He (witness) recognized him and he was provided with a yearbook from A&M Consolidated High School and was able to pick him out of that yearbook,” Officer Rhonda Seaton told a local paper.

Police said on the night of the horrendous crime, the victim Linda Shaar can be heard screaming as a 911 dispatcher answers her desperate call for help.

Seconds later, a shot was heard, killing Mr. Shaar.

“Why are you doing this?” Mrs. Shaar shouted at the intruder before quietly giving her address on Deacon Drive to the dispatcher.

“Get here!”

The dispatcher, according to the *Bryan-College Station Eagle*, tried to get more information from Mrs. Shaar, who struggled to explain her situation, when the suspect turned to her.

“He’s going to kill me,” Mrs. Shaar cried out between a series of shrieks that faded to silence.

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Det. James Webb, one of two state witnesses to testify at a hearing last year, gave a chilling account of an interview with Hall less than 24 hours after the alleged attack.

Not only did Hall confess to the crime, according to Webb, but he answered a question the lead detective hadn't yet asked:

“He told me he wanted me to know why he did it and he said it wasn't because of his rage — it was because of his killer instinct.”

Defense attorney Billy Carter didn't call any witnesses, but cross-examined Webb, suggesting at one point that perhaps Hall suffered from a mental condition.

Webb said he would learn later that Hall ran to a nearby pond park, changed his clothes and returned home to cook and eat a supper of brisket with onions.

Webb added that Hall, a straight-A student who attended classes the day after the murder, initially was questioned by police as a possible witness to the crime, rather than a suspect.

Within 15 minutes of speaking with him in the late afternoon of Oct. 21, Webb said it was clear from Hall's responses that they had the suspect already in custody.

### **Suspect confesses, say cops**

He said Hall indicated he had been planning a murder for six months and picked the Shaars as targets two months prior.

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“He said he didn’t know them and had never had contact with them whatsoever,” Webb testified, adding that when he questioned Hall about why he chose the Shaars, he said “that he liked that location. It was a good location for him to do surveillance.”

During his confession, Hall walked investigators through the crime, describing how he snuck into the couple’s garage just before it was shut.

He stabbed the man in the chest before being shoved to the ground, Hall told Webb.

“He said he liked the fact that Mr. Shaar put up a fight,” Webb said.

“He went to the kitchen...and stabbed [Linda Shaar.] He couldn’t tell me how many times, but multiple. He looked back and saw Mr. Shaar was able to get back up. Mr. Shaar slipped in his own blood and fell down in the garage.”

“At that point, the defendant grabbed his 9 mm and shot him in the forehead point blank,” Webb said.

He then walked back into the house toward Linda Shaar — already suffering from being stabbed in the upper back and still on the 911 call with the dispatcher — and slit her in the throat after his gun jammed, Webb also said.

When the dispatcher attempted to get a response from Shaar, she managed to say, “Get here now. I’m dead. Hurry, hurry,” before going silent until police arrived, according to the recording.

The couple’s dog, which police said was found sitting next Linda Shaar when they arrived, could be heard barking during the attacks but stopped after his owner ceased talking.

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At the same hearing, none of Hall's adoptive parents was present to see their son in an orange jail jumpsuit and handcuffed throughout.

Reports said Hall displayed no emotion during the hearing.

If convicted of capital murder, Hall will be facing life in prison without parole or the death penalty.

Texas has executed (all via lethal injection) more inmates than any other state beginning in 1982.

As of Aug. 7, 2012, a total of 1,235 individuals have been executed — six of them women — under the state's capital punishment law.