

American sailor cleared of assault after drink may have been spiked

Norma Connolly

An American sailor who assaulted a policeman and a taxi driver and smashed their glasses has been acquitted of assault after hearing his behaviour might have been the result of psychosis brought on by excessive drugs or alcohol.

Anthony Jon Moore, 27, faced two charges of assault causing actual bodily harm for punching the policeman and the driver after a night of drinking in Lan Kwai Fong.

Mr Moore pleaded not guilty on the basis of automatism – performing actions without conscious thought – to attacking taxi driver Wong Ka-hung, 38, after he and a colleague from the USS Kitty Hawk took a cab from Lan Kwai Fong to the Conrad Hotel in Admiralty on February 26.

He had been drinking with shipmates when he “started to behave in a strange way”, telling them they were in danger and were going to be killed, Magistrate Bina Chainrai said in Eastern Court.

The driver said he had been punched three times by Mr Moore, who smashed his glasses, cutting his face.

Mr Wong flagged down passing policemen, who stopped to question Mr Moore and his colleague. Mr Moore then punched one of the officers, Chow Pui-fan, 27, also breaking his spectacles and cutting him over his left eye, before fleeing.

Mr Moore claimed in court he had no recollection of the events.

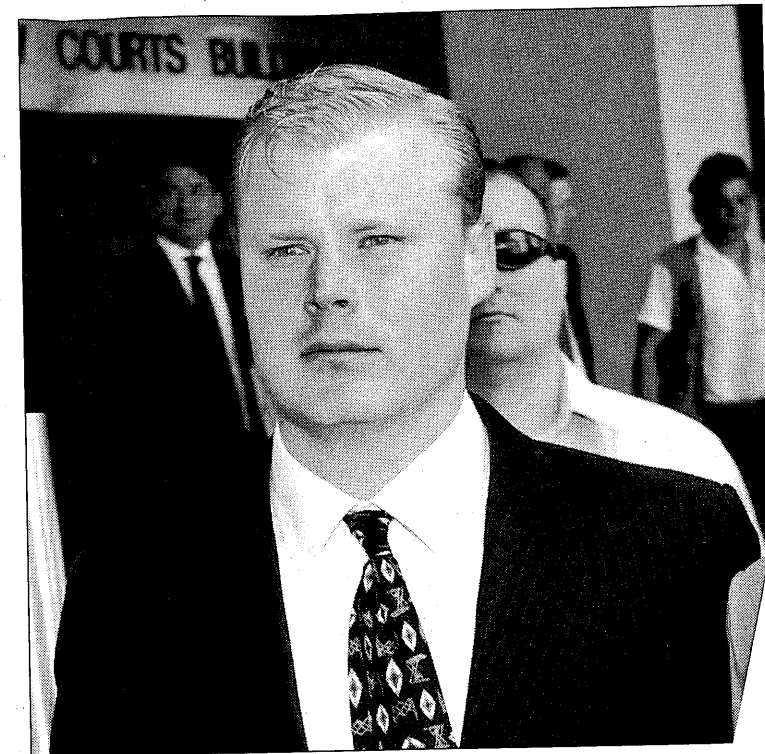
Ms Chainrai said two civilians that Mr Moore and his friends had met in Lan Kwai Fong testified that “he did not appear to be drunk and

it did not appear to them that he had been drinking excessively”.

Mr Moore’s defence counsel, Chris Morley, claimed he might have been given a drug while drinking in Lan Kwai Fong, but urine tests showed no drugs in his system. Mr Moore told the magistrate he had been drinking beer from a bottle and had kept his drink with him at all times.

Ms Chainrai said: “That someone might have spiked his drink is purely speculative. There is no evidence to suggest this.”

But since defence and prosecution medical experts agreed it was possible Mr Moore’s actions were the result of psychosis from excessive intake of alcohol or drugs, this meant there was reasonable doubt as to whether he was responsible for his behaviour.



US sailor Anthony Jon Moore leaves court. Photo: Jonathan Wong