

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Middlesex, To Wit:

At the SUPERIOR COURT, begun and holden at the CITY OF CAMBRIDGE,
within and for the County of Middlesex, on the First Monday of December in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred
and Ninety-five.

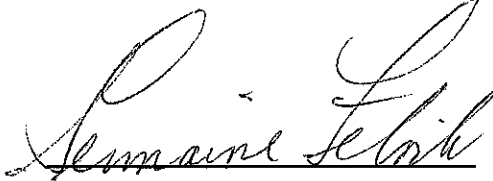
THE JURORS for the COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS on their oath present,

That **WILLIAM C. PALMER, JR.**

on the twentieth day of November in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and Ninety-five at Watertown, in the
County of Middlesex aforesaid, did assault and beat Roman Pickett (who was also known as Chanelle Pickett) with intent
to murder him and by such assault and beating did kill and murder Roman Pickett (who was also known as Chanelle
Pickett).

Against the peace of said Commonwealth, and contrary to the form of the statute in such case made and provided.

A true bill.



Foreman of the Grand Jury.


Assistant District Attorney.

Superior Court

December, Sitting, 1995

10th day - Returned by the Grand Jury and filed in Court.


O- Assistant Clerk

ORIGINAL

95-2246-001

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

MIDDLESEX, SS.

SUPERIOR COURT DEPARTMENT
DOCKET NO. 95-2246-001

COMMONWEALTH

V.

WILLIAM C. PALMER, JR.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

The following is a brief statement of the facts of the above-captioned case.

On Sunday evening, November 19, 1995, twenty-three year old Roman Pickett went to the Playland Cafe, a transvestite/transsexual bar in Boston. Roman Pickett was a pre-operative transsexual, who in manner and dress lived his life as a woman, and went by the name Chanelle Pickett. Hereinafter, Roman Pickett will be referred to as Chanelle Pickett (and by feminine pronouns). Chanelle Pickett's twin Gabrielle Pickett, who is also a pre-operative transsexual who lives his life in manner and dress as a woman, met Chanelle at the Playland that evening. While at the Playland, Chanelle Pickett struck up a conversation with the defendant William C. Palmer, Jr., who had arrived at the bar at some time around 11 p.m. that evening.

This was apparently the first time that the couple met, although both Palmer and Chanelle Pickett had each previously frequented the Playland Cafe, a known alternative lifestyle establishment. The defendant introduced himself to the twins as "Patrick" and he told them that he worked for the government in the defense/arms field. At one point during the evening, the defendant and Chanelle left the Playland and purchased cocaine. They returned to the bar and Chanelle went back inside to get her sister Gabrielle, while the defendant waited for them outside in his car.

The defendant drove the twins to their apartment in Chelsea, where they met up with Gabrielle's boyfriend Steven Letsche. Originally, the plan was for the four to go to the defendant's apartment in Watertown. However, when the defendant met Letsche, he said that he did not want Letsche to come with them. The defendant explained that he didn't know Letsche, didn't trust him and that he had roommates back at the apartment. The four smoked and snorted cocaine for a period of time at the apartment, while this discussion went on. When the defendant's cocaine ran out, the four went back into Boston, with the defendant driving. The defendant and Chanelle went to the Baybank automatic teller machine ("ATM") located on Newbury Street in Boston and the

defendant withdrew cash from his account. Bank photos depict the defendant and Chanelle Pickett at the ATM machine shortly before 2 a.m., now November 20, 1995. Once the transaction was completed, the defendant gave money to Chanelle which she and Gabrielle then used to buy cocaine for the defendant on Marlborough Street.

Once the cocaine was purchased, the group returned to the Chelsea apartment. The group continued to ingest cocaine. The defendant was observed by Gabrielle to touch Chanelle between the legs and remark, "you're the best looking pre-op I've seen in a while". The defendant again invited the twins, but not Letsche, back to his apartment in Watertown. Gabrielle would not go without Letsche; however, Chanelle accepted the invitation, telling her sister she was interested in Palmer. Chanelle packed an overnight bag with a nightgown and a change of clothes, and left with the defendant for Watertown at some time around 3 a.m.

The defendant and Chanelle Pickett went to the defendant's residence located at 7 Chandler Street in Watertown. The premises are a one family house, which the defendant shared with three other roommates. The defendant's bedroom was on the second floor. Two other roommates had bedrooms on the second floor, and the third roommate's bedroom was on the first floor. When the

defendant and Chanelle arrived at Watertown, the three roommates and two overnight guests were all asleep.

At approximately 5 a.m. or thereabouts, all five of the other occupants of the residence were awakened by loud banging and crashing sounds coming from the defendant's room. The occupants also heard the unfamiliar voice of a man yelling things like "the devil is here" and "God will never die". The first floor roommate got out of bed and went upstairs to investigate. In the hall outside the defendant's bedroom, he met up with another roommate and the two asked the defendant, through the closed bedroom door, what was going on and if they could help him. The defendant told them that he had a "crazy bitch" with him, but he had things under control. The defendant sounded calm and normal; however, it sounded as if there was still a struggle going on. The roommates tried to open the defendant's door, but were unable to because the drawer(s) of a dresser, at a right angle to the door, were open and prevented the door from being opened. The defendant assured them it was all set, and the roommates said that it better be or they would call the police. After that, the occupants heard muffled sounds for a few minutes and then it was quiet. The entire struggle lasted between ten and twenty minutes according to the witness' estimates.

At approximately 9:30 a.m. or thereabouts, the defendant knocked on the door of his roommate James Strouse and told him that "we have a problem". The defendant said that the girl from last night was dead. At some point, he also told Strouse that the girl turned out to be a guy. Strouse could see a body lying face down on the floor of Palmer's bedroom, but did not check any further. Strouse and the defendant then went downstairs and told the first floor roommate, John Tynan, that the girl from last night was dead. The defendant was observed to be upset was seen dry heaving in the bathroom. When it was suggested that the police be notified, the defendant said that he didn't want to do that until he could speak to a lawyer. The roommates, not knowing what the defendant was going to do, agreed to go along with the defendant's suggestion. The defendant then made some phone calls, obtained the telephone number of a lawyer he knew in Boston and made arrangements to meet with the lawyer at 1 p.m. that day.

The two roommates went with the defendant to the office of Attorney Brendemuehl in Boston. When he heard what it was about, Attorney Brendemuehl involved another attorney from his office who was experienced in criminal law, Howard Kahalas. After meeting with the three roommates, Attorney Kahalas, with their

assent, called the Watertown police and reported that he had three people in his office who were reporting a dead body at 7 Chandler Street in Watertown. The Watertown police asked Attorney Kahalas to tell the roommates to meet them at 7 Chandler Street, and he agreed to do so.

Watertown police immediately went to 7 Chandler Street. Finding no one home, and anticipating that someone might be injured inside, the police forced entry into the residence and found Chanelle Pickett lying face down on the floor of a second floor bedroom. Responding EMTs confirmed that she was dead. At that time, the scene was secured and the medical examiner and state police were notified for further investigation. While police were on the scene, the defendant, Strouse and Tynan arrived and were asked to go to the police station to be interviewed. They agreed and all drove to the police station to meet with the police.

The defendant was advised of his Miranda rights and agreed to speak to the police, signing a written waiver of those rights. His statement was tape recorded with his knowledge and consent. The defendant told the police that he met the victim in a bar in Boston, although he did not remember the bar's name. After giving the victim's sister a ride home to Chelsea, he and the

victim, who he had first met that night, went to his residence in Watertown. He told the police that there was no solicitation involved, but that at the bar the two sisters were trying to come on to him and he made it clear from the outset that he wasn't interested in paying for anything. They asked him for a ride home and he agreed. According to the defendant, one thing led to another, they dropped off the sister and Chanelle ended up going back to his house with him. He said that he thought that Chanelle was a woman. He denied making any stops other than at Chelsea. The defendant went on to say that they went back to his room and watched television. He said that he had a beer and Chanelle did cocaine which she brought with her. The defendant said that they were "sort of getting involved, but it wasn't to that point yet. [He] discovered that it was a man and ... said 'well, this isn't happening; I'm going to get you out of here'. [He] was embarrassed but [he] know[s] that [he] didn't flip out ...but [he] remember[s] being a little bit upset with the whole situation." The defendant said that right after that this "woman--person" started flipping out, talking about the devil and screaming and waking up the whole household, running around knocking things over, just going completely crazy. The defendant said that he wanted to keep this person quiet because she was

waking up the whole household. The deceased put the defendant's finger in her mouth and bit down, probably when the defendant was "trying to keep him quiet". The defendant said that he thought he would lose his finger, so he grabbed the person's throat, but nothing happened, she just bit harder. The defendant then punched the deceased. This didn't seem to faze her, because she was still going haywire. The defendant said that the person just became physically exhausted and he was able to contain the deceased as she was laying on the floor. The defendant could hear the person breathing. The defendant said that he was afraid that this person would just jump up and go after him again. The defendant later in the interview described how the victim either fell face down on the floor or he tackled her, and then the defendant sat on her buttocks and held down her shoulders for several minutes. The victim was breathing all the time although it was as if she were "catching [her] breath". After a while, the defendant went to bed; he could still hear the person breathing.

The defendant said that he woke up in the morning and began to straighten things up. At one point he noticed that the person wasn't moving and he went over and checked. He noticed that the person was not breathing and as he turned the body over (the victim was face down) the defendant noticed the body was stiff.

It was at that point that he told his roommates and they contacted the attorney.

During the interview, the defendant was asked how he thought the victim might have died. The defendant said that maybe she choked on her vomit, or perhaps she hit her head on the humidifier when she fell down. The defendant said the punch he threw was just one punch and that was at the beginning of the incident, so he didn't think that did it. A cut on the defendant's ring finger which he identified as the bite mark was photographed by the police. There were also abrasions to his knees consistent with rug burns which were also photographed. At approximately 5 p.m., an attorney called the police station and the defendant was given the opportunity to speak with him. In order to attempt to positively identify the deceased victim, the police, with the agreement of the defendant and his attorney, drove the defendant into Boston where he pointed out the Playland Cafe as the bar where he met the victim. The defendant was then dropped off at his attorney's office.

Subsequent investigation revealed that the victim, who was last seen wearing a long black wig, jeans and a turtleneck, was found in a purple lace nightgown without a bra on, clearly revealing an absence of breasts. The victim's padded leopard

print bra, which had straps and a back clasp, was on the dresser undamaged. The victim's long, black-haired wig was found disheveled inside her overnight case on a desk in the defendant's room. Long back hairs were recovered from the floor and bedding in the room. Chanelle Pickett was wearing underpants, jeans and a belt which was zippered and buckled shut. While it appeared that the nightgown was a shirt, tucked into the jeans, when the body was in a face down position on the floor, when the body was turned over, the skirt of the nightgown protruded, as if she had been dressed after she was unconscious or dead. There were two acrylic fingernails found broken on the floor, corresponding to two broken fingernails from Chanelle Pickett's hands. According to the medical examiner, substantial force would have been necessary to break the nails, because in order to do fingernail cuttings at the autopsy, heavy rib cutting shears were required.

Under the victim's body on the floor police found a red, white and blue New England Patriots bandana that the defendant had been seen wearing earlier on the evening of November 19 and early morning of November 20. The bandana appeared to have blood on it, although the source of the blood, Chanelle Pickett's mouth and/or nose, was not in proximity to where the bandana was found. There was a beige down comforter found stuffed in a corner

between a desk and the wall in the defendant's room. There appeared to be a considerable amount of blood on the comforter, which could be consistent with it having been in contact with the victim's nose and mouth during the assault.

There was also loose white powder, consistent with cocaine, recovered from the desk top at the foot of the defendant's bed. A packet of a white powder substance, also consistent with cocaine, along with paraphernalia consistent with cocaine ingestion were recovered from a trash basket in the defendant's bedroom.

On November 21, 1995 an autopsy was conducted on Roman Pickett by Drs. Stanton Kessler and Henry Nields. Dr. Kessler ruled the cause of death to be manual strangulation. According to Dr. Kessler, there were focal contusions and hemorrhage to multiple neck muscles, focal contusions of the left common carotid artery in the area of the carotid sinus, and marked bilateral pulmonary congestion and edema and marked cerebral vasculature congestion and edema. There were petechiae in both eyes and contusions in the upper and lower lips and gums. There were other contusions noted on the left arm and left hip and abrasions on the knees.

In Dr. Kessler's opinion, these injuries are inconsistent with the defendant's version of events. The injuries to the victim were consistent with multiple blunt force trauma to the face, not one punch. The injuries were consistent with a protracted cutting-off or blocking of the airways for a period of four to eight minutes. Dr. Kessler does not, at this time, rule out suffocation as a possible contributing mechanism of death in this case. While there is an indictment, in preliminary toxicology screens, that the victim may have had high levels of cocaine in her system, cocaine ingestion was not the cause of Chanelle Pickett's death.

As a result of the autopsy findings, the defendant was charged with murder. He was arrested at the office of his present attorney at 8:30 p.m. on November 21, 1995, when he failed to appear at the Watertown police station to surrender himself at 6 p.m. as he had previously agreed to do.

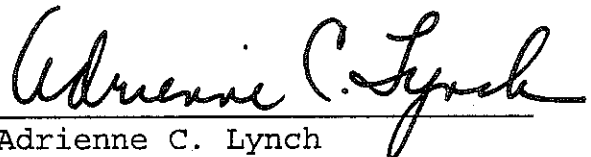
Further investigation revealed that the defendant was a regular customer of the Playland Cafe and Jacques Cabaret, two transexual/transvestite clubs in Boston. The police also spoke to bartenders at the Playland Cafe and customers of these establishments who were familiar with Mr. Palmer as a customer. One pre-operative transexual, Antoinette Shearrion, told police

that she had been with the defendant on several occasions prior to November 20, 1995. She indicated that on those occasions she engaged in sexual activity with the defendant for a fee. This contradicts the defendant's statement to the police that he was surprised that Chanelle Pickett was a man and that he wasn't "into that scene".

The foregoing is a brief summary of the facts of this case and is not in the nature of a bill of particulars.

Respectfully Submitted
For the Commonwealth,

THOMAS F. REILLY
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

By 

Adrienne C. Lynch
Assistant District Attorney
Middlesex Superior Court
40 Thorndike Street
Cambridge, MA 02141
Tel: (617) 494-4673
BBO No. 358580

Dated: January 4, 1996