

Murderer's plea for mercy denied - Herald-Mail, The (Hagerstown, MD) - June 21, 2000

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After hearing appeals from a convicted murderer and his family, Washington County Circuit Judge Frederick Wright Wednesday denied requests to reduce the 30-year sentence Timothy Lorne Massie is serving for choking and stabbing his wife to death on Valentine's Day five years ago.

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Wright said he felt the sentence imposed for a second-degree murder conviction was appropriate.

"I see no reason to modify or change" the sentence, Wright said.

Massie's mother, Virginia Massie, said her son hadn't gotten into trouble growing up and was a benefit to the community.

"He was never a violent person. That's why it's such a shock," she said.

Virginia Massie said she remains unconvinced that her son committed the crime. She said she would like the sentence modified "so that I might have some time with him."

She asked Wright to consider the good things her son had done for the community prior to the murder.

Against the advice of his attorney, Eric Reed, Timothy Massie spoke in his own defense, saying he missed his children and felt sorrow for causing them pain.

"When my little girl comes to see me, she cries. When she leaves, she doesn't understand why daddy can't come with her and live with her," Massie said.

Massie said he has a prison job and is enrolled in the Alternatives to Violence program.

Massie apologized to his and the victim's families for everything that has happened.

Assistant Washington County State's Attorney Art Rozas asked Massie if he was sorry for murdering his wife.

"I do not admit guilt," Massie said.

Massie has no remorse or acceptance of his actions, Rozas told Wright.

In April, Judge Kennedy Boone denied Massie's request for post-conviction relief on his allegations that his trial lawyer, Gordon Lynn, was incompetent.

The defendant also contended at that hearing that his conviction boiled down to trial testimony from forensic chemist Jeff Kercheval, who offered his opinion of the time of **Debra Massie's** death over defense objections at that trial.

Kercheval's testimony was the only issue raised for the Maryland Court of Appeals to consider. That court ruled that Kercheval's testimony on the range of time of death didn't warrant a reversal.

Debra Massie was found strangled to death in her home at 311 Jefferson St., two weeks after she filed for divorce from Massie.

Now 36, Massie is serving his sentence at the Roxbury Correctional Institution south of Hagerstown.

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