

Massie conviction upheld - Herald-Mail, The (Hagerstown, MD) - August 15, 1997

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By MARLO BARNHART

Staff Writer

The Maryland Court of Special Appeals has upheld the conviction and 30-year prison sentence of Timothy Lorne Massie for the strangulation death of his estranged wife on Valentine's Day 1995.

Massie, 33, of Hagerstown, was given the maximum sentence for second-degree murder Oct. 25 in Washington County Circuit Court.

At the trial, the prosecution chipped away at other possible scenarios for the slaying of Debra K. Massie. Rings were left on the victim's fingers and gold jewelry was untouched in her bedroom, ruling out robbery.

And the revenge motive, hinted at by a note found at the scene and introduced into evidence by defense attorney Gordon Lynn, also didn't hold up.

The note which said, "your husband is next, I need money," was debunked by U.S. Secret Service Agent Larry Stewart, who testified the ink in Tim Massie's Cross pen was "consistent" with the ink on the note found in the room where **Debra Massie's** body was found.

In its opinion released Wednesday, the state's second highest court addressed three points raised by Massie in his appeal:

The court ruled harmless error that the jury was allowed to hear testimony from a neighbor about

a fight between the Massies that occurred two years before the murder.

The court added that other testimony illustrated Massie's fear that divorce would take away his business and his children.

Evidence showed that a petition for absolute divorce was filed Jan. 31, 1995. Two weeks later, **Debra Massie** was found strangled to death in her 311 Jefferson St. home in Hagerstown.

The court agreed that forensic chemist Jeff Kercheval's testimony on the range of time that the murder was committed was weak but ruled it didn't warrant a reversal.

The court concurred that a delay in getting lab reports of glass fibers on Massie's pants to the defense attorney paled in comparison to the "mountain of other evidence."

Timothy Massie, who didn't take the stand at the trial, has been held at the Roxbury Correctional Institution south of Hagerstown.

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