

## **TEEN TESTIFIES MOM TRIED TO LEAVE BEFORE SLAYING BOY SAYS HIS FATHER, ACCUSED OF MURDER, WAS ACTING NORMALLY**

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Wednesday, October 25, 2000

Author: SHERYL JAMES FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

Wanda **Harrington** wanted to leave her husband, **Paul Harrington** , months before he shot her and their 3-year-old son Brian to death last October, the Detroit couple's 17-year-old son, **Paul Jr.**, testified Tuesday.

He also said he overheard his father tell his mother shortly before the shootings that he had fantasized about killing former colleagues at work.

"He told Mom he was hearing voices, telling him to go to work and blow the place up ...because they shouldn't have fired him while he was in the (psychiatric) hospital," **Paul Jr.** said.

On Oct. 15, 1999, he went to school as usual. Two hours later, his father, **Paul Harrington** , shot Wanda and Brian. He then called 911 and confessed to the crimes.

He has been charged with first-degree murder and has pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity.

His case has drawn extraordinary interest in part because he committed an almost identical crime in 1975, when he shot to death his wife and two daughters. He was found not guilty by reason of insanity in 1977 and spent just two months after his trial in a psychiatric institution.

**Harrington** , 54, has talked about his traumatic Vietnam War experiences when he mistakenly shot to death a mother and four children. He has admitted being an alcoholic and heroin user.

Wanda **Harrington** , **Paul Jr.** and Brian were in California from June until September 1999, **Paul Jr.** said. He did not explain why they returned but said the reason they went west was "because my mom wanted to leave my dad." He said that his mother slept on the couch every night and that Brian usually joined her.

**Harrington** shot her, in fact, on the couch as she slept at about 9:30 a.m. He shot Brian as he played in the dining room and put the boy on the couch with his mother, police said.

In the second day of testimony before Wayne County Circuit Judge Cynthia Hathaway, **Paul Jr.** talked about his father's behavior in the weeks and days before the killings. He said his father had been more depressed than usual in recent months because he had been fired from his job at a Livonia steel plant.

The family was struggling financially. The natural gas had been turned off, they were about to lose their electricity, and they were behind on rent and had no car.

**Paul Jr.** said that though depressed, his father appeared to be normal, in touch with reality and not angry at his family, only "towards the job."

He said the family car was "messed up" and that his father had to walk, ride **Paul Jr.**'s bike or take a cab to his appointments with a psychiatrist at Henry Ford Hospital.

He said he saw little of his father. "I really didn't know him. He was always gone" or "at home working on cars."

**Paul Jr.** testified that his father seemed to be hurrying him more than usual to school the day of the shooting. **Harrington** told the 911 operator later that **Paul Jr.** was "too big ...I didn't want to have to wrestle him."

Contact SHERYL JAMES at 810-227-8009 or sjames@freepress.com.

Caption: Photo CRAIG PORTER/Detroit Free Press

**PaulHarrington** , charged with murder, listens as his son **Paul Jr.** testifies in Wayne County Circuit Court on Tuesday. **Harrington** is accused of killing his wife, Wanda **Harrington** , and 3-year-old son Brian last October.

FOLLOWING OUTLINE RAN IN OAKLAND EDITION, PAGE 6B:

**PaulHarrington** listens to his lawyer, W. Frederick Moore, as his murder trial continued Tuesday in Detroit.

Edition: METRO FINAL

Section: NWS

Page: 3B

Index Terms: PAUL HARRINGTON; SHOOTING ; HOMICIDE ; SPOUSE ; CHILD ; WANDA ; HARRINGTON

Record Number: 0010250053

Copyright (c) 2000 Detroit Free Press