

County budget down, but tax demands are up

First page, second section

Portland Press Herald

Portland Press Herald (11 SPS 419 300)
Portland, Maine 04104
Second Class Postage Paid

* * * 34 Pages

30 Cen.

Portland, Maine, Saturday, November 23, 1985

Judge hands Lane life sentence

BY CHRISTINE KUKKA

Staff Writer

BANGOR — "I hope God has mercy on you because I simply cannot," Superior Court Justice Bruce Chandler told John A. Lane after sentencing the convicted murderer to life imprisonment for burning 4-year-old Angela Palmer to death in an oven.

"I have tried and tried to find some mitigating factor, some reason that would allow me to impose a sentence less than the maximum on you," Chandler told Lane, 37, during sentencing in Penobscot County Superior Court Friday.

But Chandler found no reason to reduce Lane's prison term. Lane is convicted of burning his girlfriend's daughter to death in their Auburn apartment oven on Oct. 27, 1984. He faces a life in a prison within a prison, con-

faced a minimum 25 years to life imprisonment for the murder.

"I'm philosophically opposed to the death penalty," Chandler told the pale, slender man, "but I am grateful that Maine does not have it because your crime tests the very outermost limits of my belief that the death penalty is not a correct one."

Lane stood emotionless during the sentencing and showed no response when Chandler announced the life sentence.

When asked if he had anything to say before sentencing, Lane told Chandler, "It doesn't matter what sentence you give me, I've already prepared for my own death. It won't take much, I'll be going."

Lane, who plans to appeal his conviction, faces a life in a prison within a prison, con-

stantly segregated from other prisoners for his own safety because of the nature of his crime.

Maine law provides no probation or "good time" for those sentenced to life imprisonment. Chandler found the death of Angela Palmer to be premeditated and carried out in a cruel and inhuman manner — two criteria required to impose a life sentence.

"The most important finding I have made is that the murder of this child was carried out in the most cruel and inhuman manner that can be imagined," Chandler said. "The total terror and intensity of her pain and suffering is beyond my capacity to imagine."

During his trial, which ended with his conviction Tuesday, Lane claimed that he was insane and thought he was burning Lucifer in the oven during an exorcism exercise.

Doctors testified that Angela was beaten and placed in the oven while still alive.

Her mother, Cynthia Palmer, is on trial for manslaughter, a lesser charge than murder, for failing to intercede on behalf of her daughter. On Friday, Chandler suspended final arguments and a verdict on Palmer until Monday.

Lane's highly-publicized trial was the first murder trial Chandler had presided over as a Superior Court justice. He was appointed to the bench 14 months ago.

During Lane's trial, a bevy of psychiatrists produced conflicting testimony on whether Lane was psychotic or insane at the time of Angela's death. Lane invoked an insanity plea.

See LANE

Back page this section



Vol. 124, No. 132

Lane

Portland Press Herald

Portland, Maine 04104

Second Class Postage Paid

PORT

Press Herald

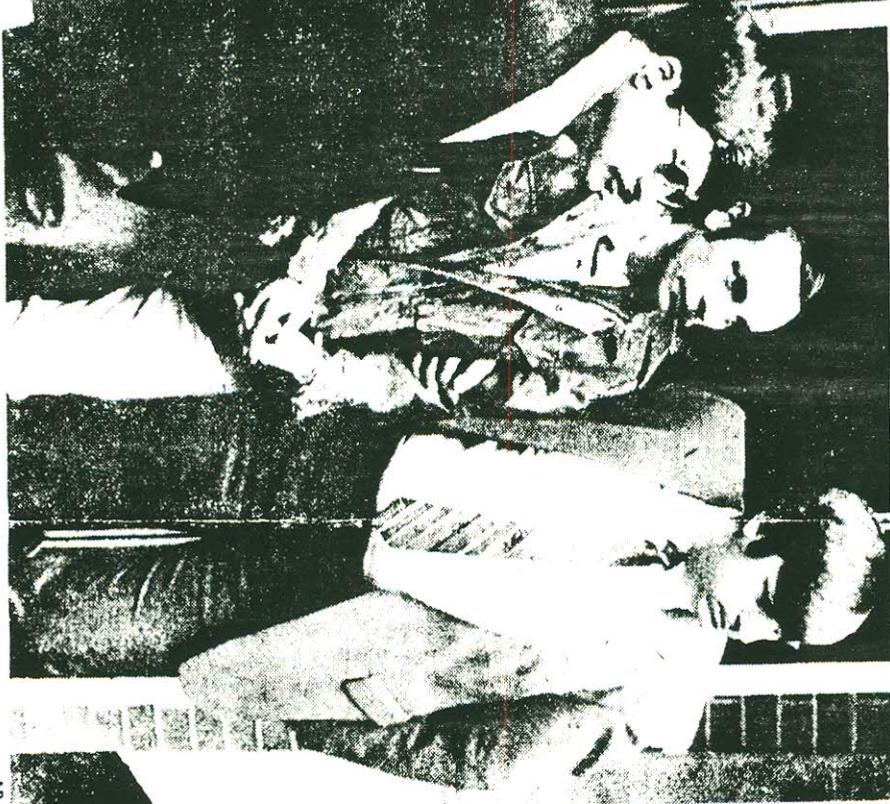
30 Cents

Portland, Maine, Wednesday, November 20, 1985

Maine

*** 62 Pages

Post Office Press Herald (U.S.P.S. 439 300)
Portland, Maine 04104
Second Class Postage Paid



AP
John Lane is escorted to Penobscot County Superior Court Tuesday before being found guilty of murdering 4-year-old Angela Palmer.

Judge convicts Lane of killing girl, 4, in oven

By CHRISTINE KUKKA
Staff Writer

BANGOR — Superior Court Justice Bruce Chandler deliberated for only an hour before finding John A. Lane guilty of murdering 4-year-old Angela Palmer by burning her to death in an oven.

Chandler rejected Lane's plea of innocent by reason of insanity and scheduled sentencing for 1 p.m. Friday in Penobscot County Superior Court. Lane, 37, faces a minimum of 25 years to life imprisonment.

In final arguments Tuesday afternoon, the prosecution claimed the murder was a grisly case of child abuse — not the act of an insane man.

Despite defense attorney E. James Burke's three-hour closing argument and the viewing of a videotape made of Lane shortly after his arrest on Oct. 27, 1984, Justice Chandler ruled that Lane was sane. Chandler heard the case without a jury.

Cynthia Palmer, the 30-year-old mother of Angela, is scheduled to go on trial for murder today.

Prosecutor Thomas Goodwin argued that Lane killed Angela "in a coherent way."

"She was beaten, carried into her bedroom, placed in the oven, the door was shut and wedged closed with a chair, another deliberate act," Goodwin said. "and the oven was set at the highest setting with two control knobs."

In a 30-minute closing statement, Goodwin said

that Lane could appreciate social standards despite mental illness.

"I don't argue that he's normal," Goodwin said. "His whole history of mental illness and abuse proves he is not. He was frustrated, angry, depressed and clearly exhibited psychotic-like symptoms."

"Whether Lane was psychotic is not the exact question you must decide," Goodwin told Chandler.

"There is no suggestion that psychosis implies a lack of responsibility."

Goodwin also cautioned that psychiatrists "often find what they are looking for," referring to testimony by psychiatrists who claimed Lane was brain damaged.

In closing arguments, Burke repeated Lane's personal history of childhood abuse, alienation from his family incarceration at the Maine Youth Center, stint in the Marine Corps and his inability to deal with anger.

Burke said Lane was heading for a mental breakdown during 1983 and 1984. Lane attempted suicide in early 1984 and began developing multiple personalities in 1984. Lane apparently assigned aspects of himself that he didn't like to his multiple personalities to divest himself of responsibility for his negative emotions.

On Oct. 27 last year, Lane attempted to exorcise

See LANE
Back page this section

Cynthia Palmer acquitted

BANGOR — Superior Court Justice Bruce Chandler acquitted Cynthia Palmer of manslaughter in the death of 4-year-old Angela Palmer Monday, explaining he was not convinced beyond a reasonable doubt of her guilt.

Less than a week after sentencing her boyfriend to life in prison for burning Angela Palmer to death in an oven in the couple's Auburn apartment on Oct. 27, 1984, Chandler vindicated Palmer.

Chandler said the "abnormal condition of Palmer's mind" at the time of Angela's death raised a reasonable doubt "as to the existence of the required culpable state of mind" needed for a manslaughter conviction.

Since the start of Palmer's trial last week, defense attorney Alan G. Stone has presented many psychiatrists to the court. They all corroborated that Palmer, 30, was in a trance-like state when Angela was killed and was not aware of what was happening around her.

That psychological defense mechanism, called dissociation, kicked into gear when Lane, 37, began physically and sexually abusing Palmer on Oct. 27, doctors — including the clinical director of the Augusta Mental Health Institution — agreed.

Lane's violent behavior during an exorcism exercise focused on Angela when the young child refused to participate in the religious scenario.

Palmer, who had been sexually and physically abused by her father and two husbands, slipped into this hypnotic state for psychological survival when Lane assaulted her.

She apparently remained in this hypnotic state and was unable to prevent Lane from placing Angela into their kitchen oven, bracing the door shut with a chair, and turning the temperature controls to maximum heat, Chandler said.

Lane had battered Cynthia Palmer,

forced tranquilizers down her throat, turned up the apartment heat and staged a religious exorcism that was designed to terrify her.

Doctors said that Palmer had been injured shortly before in an automobile accident and that household responsibilities had fallen on Lane. He apparently snapped under the pressure of taking care of an injured woman and her two children.

Chandler said there remained a reasonable doubt about Palmer's state of mind at the time of Angela's death. Her mental disorder does not qualify as insanity, Chandler said, but it raises a question whether Palmer was capable of protecting her daughter from Lane.

* This was an exorcism
done by Lane to remove
Lucifer. He believed Lucifer was in the child

The manslaughter charge, which was reduced from a murder charge last week, charged her with negligence for failing to intervene on behalf of her daughter.

"I am unable to find with a reasonable degree of certainty that Cynthia Palmer consciously disregarded a risk that her conduct would cause Angela's death," the judge said.

"In short, I do not have the conscious belief that this manslaughter charge is almost certainly true," Chandler said. A criminal conviction requires proof beyond a reasonable doubt.

In the prosecution's closing statement, Assistant Attorney General Thomas Goodwin stressed that John Lane's childhood of abuse did not prevent his conviction for murder. "It is clear he should not be excused," Goodwin said.

If Lane was not excused for his violence, Palmer should likewise be held responsible for her passivity and inability to protect Angela, Goodwin said.

A psychiatrist, specializing in women's psychology, testified that Palmer's passivity, dependence and dissociative state in the face of abuse was common among sexually abused women.

Goodwin said he did not like that "sexist attitude" of psychiatrists. "The point I would make is

that we don't excuse violent behavior because it has been explained by a past history of abuse," Goodwin said. "Our prisons are full of people brought up by sex abusers, but it doesn't excuse people for their (violent) behavior."

"We ought not to excuse an omission to act more than we should excuse the act," Goodwin said.

Chandler disagreed. "It was not Palmer's past history of abuse that excuses her, but rather her mental condition, that combined with the facts did not convince me she was guilty beyond a reasonable doubt," he said.

He added that he thought there was a gender difference in the effect of childhood abuse on men and women.

Chandler, who heard Palmer and Lane's trials without a jury, said Palmer's case was the more difficult of the two. "With John Lane, there wasn't much question that he did what the state said he did, the only question was whether he should be excused because he was insane," Chandler said.

Palmer submitted two pleas to the manslaughter charge, not guilty and not guilty by reason of insanity. Chandler admitted there was not much of an insanity defense in Palmer's case. Instead, the defense focused on her lack of criminal responsibility because of her dissociative state of mind that produced a self-imposed amnesia.

Psychiatrists testified that a dissociative state of mind could not be prevented or controlled.

That abnormal or dissociative state of mind is an unusual defense, although provided for by Maine statute, Chandler said.

Chandler explained that he had received so much positive feedback after finding Lane guilty of murder that it worried him. Lane had unsuccessfully invoked an insanity plea.

Chandler admitted that his acquittal of Palmer may not be as popular as his verdict that sent Lane to prison for life.

980210 423451284
KARL LINDNER
BYLINE
PRESIDENT

First page, second section

Portland Press Herald

Portland, Maine, Wednesday, November 27, 1985

• • • 52 Pages

Portland Press Herald (15c PS 439 300)
Portland Main. No. 94
Sec. Ind. Class Postage Paid

Many scarred by Angela's death

By CHRISTINE KUKKA
Staff Writer

State plans to fight Palmer on custody

By KIM CLARK
Guy Gannett Service

AUGUSTA — The state will fight to keep 6-year-old Sarah Palmer of her parental rights over the girl, who has been in state-supervised foster care since 4-year-old Angela Palmer was burned to death in an oven more than a year ago.

After being cleared of manslaughter charges in a jury-waived trial, Palmer told reporters: "I want my daughter back" and she hoped the family would be reunited as soon as January. But state officials said reuniting the family would be dangerous for the child.

"No matter how well intentioned, Cynthia Palmer is not, nor do we expect her to be, in position to provide the stable, safe home environment that Sarah requires," said Michael Pettit, attorney of Human Services chief Palmer. Michael Pettit said Tuesday they had asked the courts to strip

"Usually I can leave cases in the courtroom when I leave each day. This one really never got out of my mind."

— Justice Bruce Chandler

"Usually I can leave cases in the courtroom when I leave each day. This one really never got out of my mind."

— Justice Bruce Chandler

The child's slow and agonizing death prompted Chandler to tell Lane during sentencing, in a voice filled with rancor, "I hope God will forgive you, because I cannot."

Angela Palmer's death haunts all who deal with it. Several Auburn firefighters who discovered the child's burning body in the oven are still in therapy. Deputy Fire Chief Preston "Charlie" Chapman's heart still races when a report of an oven fire is called into the station. "It was so totally unexpected," said the Auburn man. "I've been on the force 17 years and never got out of my mind. I had some sleepless nights when I was constantly thinking about it."

Shortly after the murder, Auburn firefighters held several "rap sessions" with Tri-County Mental Health therapists. "We talked about everything," Chapman said. "The court employees say the death of Angela Palmer and the trial have disturbed their lives and their



Justice Bruce Chandler

he state is beside a highway near Cape Vincent, interest to abducting five on July 25, 1984. tomy Lee Clary said.



See PALMER
Page 8

served concurrently, the maximum penalty was four years, District At.

State to fight Palmer on child

BANGOR (AP) — Maine's attorney general today vowed to oppose any attempt by Cynthia Palmer, who was found innocent in the oven-burning death of her little girl, to regain custody of the victim's surviving sister.

"We will eventually seek termination of any parental right that Cynthia Palmer would have" because "it's not in the best interest of the child," Attorney General James E. Tierney said.

Asked to elaborate, he said, "We have sufficient evidence in this office to justify termination of parental rights."

After her acquittal yesterday on a manslaughter charge, Palmer said she hopes to regain custody of her daughter Sarrah, 6, who has been in a foster home since the killing of her 4-year-old sister, Angela, last year.

"I have a lot of hard work to do to get my daughter Sarrah back," Palmer, 30, told a reporter.

"I will have to undergo psychological examination" before being reunited with Sarrah, hopefully in January, she said. In the meantime, "I'm going to a private home, I don't know where."

Palmer's acquittal gave her freedom for the first time since she and John Lane, 37, were arrested on murder charges following the slaying in their Auburn apartment on Oct. 27, 1984.

Lane, convicted of murder last week for placing the girl in the oven during an exorcism rite, began serving a life sentence yesterday at maximum-security Maine State Prison in Thomaston. Officials have said he will be segregated from the other inmates indefinitely for his own protection.

Attempts today to reach Palmer's lawyer, Alan G. Stone, were unsuc-

Palmer

cessful. A secretary in Stone's office said he was out of state on vacation and could not be reached. Another lawyer in his firm who was said to be familiar with the case was not immediately available.

Tierney said Maine law requires that the state seek to reunify children in foster homes with their parents.

State Human Services Commissioner Michael Petit said yesterday that department officials will "make our own determination" on whether Palmer is fit to take responsibility for her daughter. Petit was reviewing the case with his assistants this morning and was unavailable for comment.

Petit said options include giving Palmer full custody, giving her custody with conditions, such as requiring that she get counseling; having the child remain in a foster home while Palmer undergoes therapy; or

taking Sarrah away from her mother permanently.

A District Court judge would make the decision on Sarrah's custody after hearings, said Tierney.

Yesterday, before acquitting Palmer, Justice Bruce Chandler explained that stress, fatigue, and a tranquilizer had left her in a trance or perhaps unconscious, causing her to be unaware of what was happening when Angela was being tortured and killed.

"Oh, thank you, your honor." Palmer cried out when Chandler announced his verdict in the jury-waived trial. "Oh, thank you, God," she said, leaving the courtroom. "I'm so happy I could hug everyone."

Throughout her trial, Palmer clutched a photograph of Sarrah and Angela, and when the judge read his verdict, he cited the medical report that said Angela was alive when placed in the oven.

"Oh my God!" exclaimed Palmer, who buried her face in her hands. She was not in court when the prosecution presented its case, and probably was unaware how Angela had died, said Stone.

During the defense portion of her

trial, which followed Lane's murder conviction, the charge against Palmer was reduced to manslaughter at the prosecution's request. Like Lane, she had entered dual pleas of innocent and innocent by reason of insanity.

*Sarrah was not
released to her mother.*

Lane's fate decided today

Portland Press Herald 11/19/85

By CHRIS KUKKA
Staff Writer

BANGOR — If Superior Court Justice Bruce Chandler finds John A. Lane not guilty by reason of insanity for the murder of Angela Palmer today, Lane will be treated by the same doctors who testified that he was not psychotic.

This contradiction in diagnosis and treatment is not unusual in insanity defenses. But the differing diagnoses add to the confusion created when the medical and legal worlds meet in the courtroom.

Lane, 37, is pleading not guilty by reason of insanity to murder. Lane and Cynthia Palmer, 30, are both charged with burning the child to death on Oct. 27, 1984 in an oven in their Auburn apartment.

Lane, whose trial is being held at Penobscot County Superior Court, told psychiatrists he thought he was burning Lucifer when he allegedly placed the child in the oven.

Several psychiatrists have examined Lane and arrived at several diagnoses.

Dr. Ulrich B. Jacobsohn, clinical

excellent verbal skills but could not make emotional judgments. Bear used 20 years of psychiatric tests conducted on Lane to reach his diagnosis that Lane had brain damage and a mental illness called schizophrenia-like psychosis of epilepsy.

This psychosis allowed John to function fairly normally but caused him to snap when he had the stress of caring for Cynthia Palmer and her two children.

Lane assigned negative traits such as anger and evil to his multiple personalities. His efforts to

these personal religion are al damage and d.

said that Jacobs personality was like "diagnos is a small cold." sohn suggested light chance tha ic.

n't understand reached his co said after tes . The first time wed Lane he fo illness, but lat gnosis after Lan awareness of h nd situation.

hunch is that Dr heavily on psyc d was not fa) neurological id.

contends that be of schizophr im to assimilat give him the ap ational.

person trying to ot do this good bout Lane. Twent of psychological nsistent, psycho e said.

ay, Jacobsohn is led by the prose rebuttal witness to exp diagnosis contradicts B

If Lane is found insa Jacobsohn — not Bear treat him at AMHI.

Chandler, who wil final judgment of La health, is hearing the a jury and is scheduled verdict on Lane's no reason of insanity ple lowing closing argum defense and prosecutio

"The law does not di cobsohn said recentl makes a finding of men

rial

FROM PAGE 1

director at the Augusta Mental Health Institute, said Lane had a variety of personality disorders and an altered state of consciousness when Angela was killed. "He experienced illusions but retained the capacity to appreciate social standards and expectations," Jacobsohn suggested.

While Jacobsohn works for the state at AMHI, he is separate from the prosecution and is considered an objective evaluator with no vested interest in the court's decision. He was called to testify by Lane's defense attorney.

Two psychiatrists, also called by Lane's attorney, offered a different diagnosis. Both said Lane was and is psychotic.

The latest doctor to testify was Dr. David M. Bear, a neurological specialist from Deaconess Hospital in Boston who testified at John Hinckley Jr.'s trial. Hinckley also pleaded insanity after he shot President Reagan.

On Monday, Bear said Lane had brain damage that caused psychotic behavior — the most serious type of mental illness.

Bear said that Lane had been a blue baby, sustained numerous head injuries, had epileptic seizures, was an alcoholic and showed injury to the right hemisphere of his brain.

Lane, Bear pointed out, had excellent verbal skills but could not make emotional judgments. Bear used 20 years of psychiatric tests conducted on Lane to reach his diagnosis that Lane had brain damage and a mental illness called schizophrenia-like psychosis of epilepsy.

This psychosis allowed John to function fairly normally but caused him to snap when he had the stress of caring for Cynthia Palmer and her two children.

Lane assigned negative traits such as anger and evil to his multiple personalities. His efforts to

exorcise these personalities in the guise of religion are all hallmarks of brain damage and psychosis, Bear said.

Bear said that Jacobsohn's diagnosis of personality disorder in Lane was like "diagnosing pneumonia as a small cold."

Jacobsohn suggested there was only a slight chance that Lane was psychotic.

"I don't understand how Jacobsohn reached his conclusions," Bear said after testifying on Monday. The first time Jacobsohn interviewed Lane he found serious mental illness, but later changed his diagnosis after Lane displayed a keen awareness of his environment and situation.

"My hunch is that Dr. Jacobsohn relied heavily on psychiatric testing and was not familiar with (Lane's) neurological condition," Bear said.

Bear contends that Lane's special type of schizophrenia would allow him to assimilate facts that would give him the appearance of being rational.

"A person trying to act crazy could not do this good a job," Bear said about Lane. Twenty-two years worth of psychological tests point to consistent, psychotic tendencies, he said.

Today, Jacobsohn is expected to be called by the prosecution as a rebuttal witness to explain why his diagnosis contradicts Bear's.

If Lane is found insane, it will be Jacobsohn — not Bear — who will treat him at AMHI.

Chandler, who will offer the final judgment of Lane's mental health, is hearing the case without a jury and is scheduled to render a verdict on Lane's not guilty by reason of insanity plea today following closing arguments by the defense and prosecution.

"The law does not diagnose," Jacobsohn said recently, "it just makes a finding of mental illness."

The judge's decision and a medical diagnosis are in different languages, Jacobsohn said.

If an insanity ruling is handed down, Jacobsohn said he will re-evaluate Lane at AMHI with a clean slate.

"We don't take (AMHI's earlier evaluation) for granted," Jacobsohn said, "We will start fresh, there is a lot of water over the dam here."

If Lane is judged to be insane, he will be sent to AMHI and reviewed annually until he is found to pose no threat to society. If found guilty, he faces life imprisonment.

According to Bear, Lane should be institutionalized.

"My guess is that Lane would serve less time in jail than he would serve in an institution," Bear said. In an institution, mental health experts would decide when Lane would be fit to function in society.

In prison, Lane would not receive as much therapy as he would at AMHI. To date, Lane has received no psychiatric help since his incarceration last year.

Bear pointed out that Lane's release from prison would occur when his jail term was completed — not when Lane was psychologically fit.

Jacobsohn agrees with Bear that there are limited psychiatric resources at the state prison.

"You have potential for evaluation at the prison," he said, "but that is not done routinely. A person could blend into the prison population and never be seen."

The differing diagnoses of Lane poses a difficult problem for AMHI officials, Assistant Attorney General Thomas Goodwin acknowledged.

"If Lane is found insane, the psychiatrists at AMHI will have to treat him for a psychosis that they don't think exists. It puts them in contradictory positions," he said.

Scarred

FROM PAGE 1

said, "about how child abuse can be prevented or what to do if we come across abused children or wife beaters."

Several firefighters have continued to seek counseling. "The hardest hit was a grandfather," Chapman said. "All he could think of was his grandchild in there."

Chapman's wife and two teen-age sons say the usually easy-going family man became irritable for several months after finding Angela's charred body. It was the stress, he explains, of assimilating and dealing with the horror.

Several firefighters broke down in sobs when testifying during Palmer and Lane's bail hearing and grand jury review earlier this year. Most of them made it through the recent trial in Bangor without breaking down. One waited until he was outside the courtroom before bowing his head and weeping at the memory.

Denise Khorey-Harriman, a court reporter who typed all the testimony during the three-week trial,

had disturbing dreams after hearing about Cynthia's past sexual and physical abuse and the details of Angela's death.

"I found references to children and ovens slipping into my speech," said the mother of three. "Seven days into the trial, I stayed up late to type an excerpt of it. I told my family that I was going upstairs to dump the notes into the computer, but instead of saying computer I said oven."

"As a court recorder I'm trained to deal with (offensive) details of crime, but this one just came through," she said. "Sometimes I felt like an emotional sponge."

A Penobscot County deputy sheriff who stood guard over Lane and Palmer during the trial said he had trouble sleeping and was clearly disturbed by the trial and the evidence, including the oven, presented in court during the trial.

"My wife doesn't understand it," he said on the last day of the trial, "but some nights I just get in my cruiser and drive. It's all I feel like doing."

Palmer

FROM PAGE 1

start. I am convinced that given Cynthia Palmer's tragic history, there will always be serious doubt as to whether she can provide the protection that is needed," Petit said.

Even though Superior Court Justice Bruce Chandler said there was not enough evidence to prove Palmer was responsible for Angela's death, Petit said there was enough evidence to convince a judge the woman could not protect her other daughter.

Palmer's attorney, Alan G. Stone of Lewiston, could not be reached for comment on the state decision Tuesday. Palmer's whereabouts were being kept secret.

The state will have to win permission from Androscoggin District Court to keep the child away from Palmer, explained DHS spokesman Thomas LaPointe.

State law requires the department to attempt to reunify all families split as a result of abuse investigations, LaPointe said.

To keep Sarah out of the custody of her mother, the state must ask for a court-ordered exemption to the reunification law, and show the mother is unable to rehabilitate herself to take care of the child.

Then, the state must prove it is in Sarah's best interest to abro-

gate Palmer's parental rights.

Despite opinions by the Attorney General's office and the DHS staff that the state would win its case, some fieldworkers were not so sure.

Thomas Profenno, a Portland-based DHS child protective services worker familiar with some custody battles, said he "wouldn't want to automatically write her (Palmer) off."

"If the parent shows any interest in the child at all (legal standards) make it awfully difficult to terminate the parent's rights," Profenno said.

"And people can learn and change. It is not a foregone conclusion," he said, remembering parents he and his fellow workers felt posed a clear danger to children, but who kept their rights.

The state's decision to fight for

custody was hailed by legislators, but many lawmakers said the case showed that the family reunification law must be changed so that children are not reunited with dangerous families.

"We have got to change the law. We have got to have some flexibility," said Sen. G. William Diamond, D-Windham, an announced candidate for governor who heads a legislative committee drafting new child protective legislation.

"Family reunification makes sense at the coffee shop in the morning when you talk about it, but the ultimate goal should be the protection of the child," Diamond said.

Diamond's legislative committee has studied "a lot of cases like this, where kids are being sent back because of the statute" even though they may be in danger, he said.

One-year sentence for killer of 5 teens

WATERTOWN, N.Y. (AP) — A judge has sentenced a man to one year in jail for criminally negligent homicide in the deaths of five teenagers.

David Simpson, 23, was accused of driving his station wagon into a group of nine teen-agers standing beside a highway near Cape Vincent, killing five on July 25, 1984.

Jefferson County Judge John Aylward accepted Simpson's guilty plea Monday and imposed the sentence, which included revocation for life of Simpson's New York state driver's license.

Because the prison terms must be served concurrently, the maximum penalty was four years, District Attorney Lee Clary said.

Lane

FROM PAGE 1

Cynthia Palmer of her negative personality in their Auburn apartment.

"His psychosis is such that he can't say 'I am hurting,' so he projected it onto Cynthia," Burke said.

But the exorcism got out of control, Palmer participated and became more passive, which Lane wanted. But 4-year-old Angela Palmer refused to cooperate and eventually bore the brunt of Lane's anger.

Lane claimed he had not slept for four days and his mind snapped when Angela was killed. He thought he had tied Angela in her room but she was able to get out.

"When she got out of her room," Burke said, "John thought it was a supernatural force and he failed to differentiate Angela from an evil force threatening him and he lost it entirely."

If Lane thought Angela was Lucifer, it made perfect sense in his psychotic state of mind to put Lucifer into the fire of an oven, Burke said.

"It doesn't make it good or forgiveable, but it doesn't make him criminally responsible," Burke told the judge.

Burke closed his argument by showing a poignant interview between Lane and State Police Detective Joseph Maillet that was conducted shortly after Lane's arrest last year.

During the interview, Lane sobbed, squealing out answers to Maillet in an unnatural tone.

In a high-pitched voice, Lane told Maillet that he put a green, slimy Lucifer in the oven. He said that Angela was already in heaven, having died in an abortion several years ago.

Maillet pressed Lane again and again about where

"Oh my God," Lane cried out, bowing his head in his lap.

Burke shut off the videotape at that moment. "If that is an act, I don't know where it came from," Burke told the silent courtroom.

"This is the best evidence for insanity we have," Burke said. "I think that (the film) proves John Lane was insane when he killed Angie."

Chandler did not agree. He acknowledged that Lane had a long history of mental illness and came from an underprivileged home.

"Although suffering from mental defects you were capable of acting knowingly," Chandler said. "And at the time of the killing you had the required culpable state of mind."

Chandler took into consideration the wide array of psychiatric diagnoses of Lane provided by the defense. Their diagnoses ranged from brain damage to personality disorders.

Chandler acknowledged that Lane may have a schizophrenia-like psychosis from epilepsy, as suggested by a psychiatrist called by the defense. But he ultimately sided with Dr. Ulrich B. Jacobsohn, clinical director at the Augusta Mental Health Institute, who said Lane had an "altered state of consciousness" and experienced delusions but could still appreciate social standards.

When Chandler read his decision, Lane remained expressionless and showed no emotion.

Defense attorney Burke said he was disappointed with the verdict. "I predicted it would be close," he said.

"I'm sure John Lane will consider appealing."

ess

November 20, 198

jud

jan irl

By CHRIS
Staff

GOR — Superior

No plea in girl's oven death

LEWISTON, Maine (UPI) — A man and woman accused of shoving a 4-year-old girl into an oven and burning her to death walked into District Court Monday carrying Bibles and chanting as shocked spectators looked on.

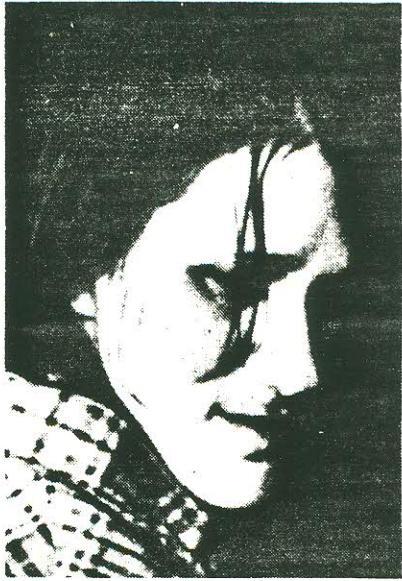
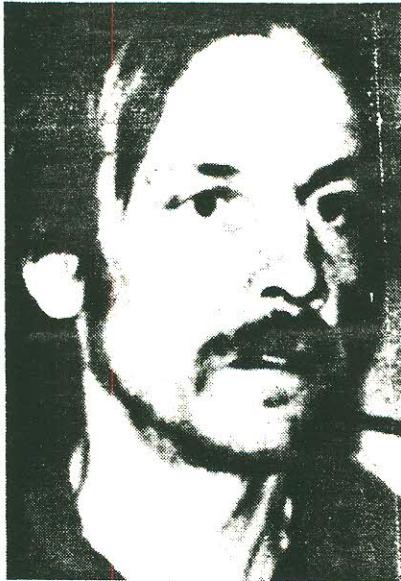
Cynthia Palmer, 29, and her live-in boyfriend, John Lane, 36, entered no plea upon arraignment in the slaying of Palmer's daughter Angela. Judge Damon Scales ordered them held without bail pending psychiatric testing.

Police were called Saturday to the tenement apartment house where the couple lived after neighbors reported the smell of burning hair wafting from the apartment.

Police found the child stuffed inside an electric oven with a chair propped against the oven door.

Palmer and Lane were handcuffed but clutching Bibles as they were led into the courtroom, reading aloud from the open books. They showed no emotion and sat staring blankly at the judge who set a probable-cause hearing for Nov. 20.

*SACRAMENTO
BEE
OCT. 30
1984*



Associated Press

Chanting from open Bibles, Cynthia Palmer and boyfriend John Lane entered court Monday for arraignment.

Courtroom security was extremely tight following a weekend threat against Lane's life while he was being held in county jail.

Neighbors reported hearing religious music blaring from Palmer's apartment Friday night, hours before the killing occurred.

Saturday, neighbors said they heard Angela banging and yelling, "Let me out, daddy, let me out." But they didn't realize the girl was in

danger.

About an hour later, when smoke billowed from a kitchen window, neighbors called firemen and police, who knocked down the door.

Earlier, upstairs neighbor Mary Deraps, 21, smelled what she thought was burning hair and knocked on the couple's door.

"I said, 'Is there something on fire?'" she said.

"Yes. I'm cooking Lucifer," she quoted Lane as saying.

The fear of demons, the death of a child

Mother awaits murder trial in slaying of girl

By John McCoy
P-I Reporter

Janet Cole, a member of a big Pentecostal church in Burien, drove to Portland last month to drown her 5-year-old daughter in a motel bathtub.

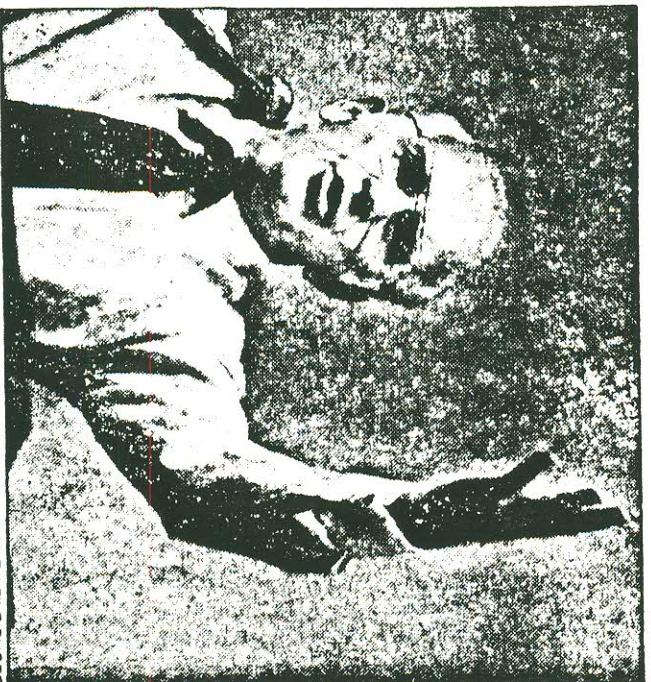
She drowned the child, the prosecutor says she told investigators, to save her. Cole was convinced, after hearing the teachings of the Community Chapel and Bible Training Center that demons had a hold of both her and her daughter.

Killing Brittany Cole before she reached the age of reason assured her of heavenly life. Letting her grow up risked a life of demonic possession and the prospect of eternal damnation.

At least, that's what some of those who know Janet Cole think was going through her mind when she drowned Brittany in Room 336 of Portland's Ramada Inn the afternoon of March 20.

Cole, who summoned police to the motel room, was charged with murder and faces trial May 29.

Meanwhile, she lives under a suicide watch in the psychiatric unit of the University of Oregon Medical Center in Portland, says Bob Leineweber, the deputy district attorney who will prosecute Wendell Birkland, her defense attorney, says Janet Cole suffers



Pastor Donald Lee Barnett preaches to his flock at the 2,000-member Community Chapel and Bible Training Center.

□ Donald Barnett seems to be taking in stride the exodus of some elders from his flock. Page A-8



Janet Cole is charged with murdering her daughter.

demons — a preoccupation that led to the death of her child — is the result of the teaching of Donald Lee Barnett, the silver-haired, 56-year-old pastor who presides over the 2,000-member Community Chapel in Burien. "In her case, I think Chapel teaching is a direct cause," says Harry Stegman, a former Chapel Bible teacher who now assists people coming out of the church. "I don't think she would have drowned her daughter if she

wasn't reading demons into it." Stegman, other ex-Chapel members and some dissenting members still in the congregation contend that Barnett's teachings on demons and "spiritual relationships" contributed to Janet Cole's mental instability. None of them, however, have any expertise in psychiatry or psychology.

Chapel officials did not answer repeated telephone messages left by the Post-Intelligencer. A receptionist said Barnett was on vaca-

tion. Jack Hicks, Chapel vice president and general manager, refused to come to the telephone.

A letter seeking information from Hicks went unanswered. Since the P-I first made requests in 1981, neither Barnett nor any other official Chapel spokesman has granted an interview. When a story about the Chapel appeared in the P-I last May, Hicks denounced the paper in writing for "maligning our church and printing outright lies about our pastor, church government, congregation, doctrines, and practices."

Pentecostal churches generally believe in possession by demons. But Chapel sources say Barnett began emphasizing deliverance from devils about five years ago when he was criticized by a group of dissidents.

"Before that, he never would have taught such a thing," says a Chapel member who asked that he not be named for fear of jeopardizing family relationships. "But then, we had a 'move of God' in the church and a lot of problems were demon possessions. There would be casting outs, a lot of flailing and screaming."

The Chapel member says Cole, who had a nervous breakdown last fall, was temporarily housed in a home for disturbed Chapel women. Although at least two elders suggested she seek psychiatric help, her husband and other members were convinced her problem was demonic, the Chapel member claims.

"She finally got to a place where she felt she had no will to resist the demons," the member

See THE FEAR, Page A-8



P/I FILE PHOTO

Harry Stegman, a former member of the Community Chapel and Bible Training Center who now helps others leave the church, says its teachings blame demons for such everyday vices as lying, cheating, gluttony, envy and lust.

The fear of demons and a child's death

From Page A-1

says.

Stegman, who has compiled a library of Chapel bulletins and tapes, says Chapel teaching blames demons for such everyday vices as lying, cheating, gluttony, envy and lust.

Charlotte Kovacich, an eight-year Chapel member who was removed from the church, or disfellowshipped, in March, says Janet Cole was preoccupied with devils. For example, she said Cole prevented her only child from playing with other little girls for fear that Brittany would pick up "a demon of hyperactivity."

But Kovacich, Stegman and others who knew Cole believe that her heightened fear of demons was compounded by her relationship with her "spiritual connection."

"She had a connection. He fell in love with her, and she knew it was improper," Kovacich claims. "She didn't know how to reconcile her feelings and had a nervous breakdown."

Dancing transformed

Last spring, Barnett began a series of lectures on "Spiritual and Soulical Relationships" in which he decreed that the highest form of spiritual realization could be found by dancing at church services with someone else's spouse. Dancing with one's "connection" opened up the possibility of pure spiritual love, he said.

The pastor's new revelation transformed Chapel "dancing before the Lord" — a free-form, exuberant solo dance — into hands-on dancing with a partner other than one's spouse.

This latest "move of God," Barnett said, allowed "connected" couples to express the love of Christ and the unity of His church by putting their spirits together. Holding hands, hugging, embracing and kissing are regarded as proper forms of "spiritual expression" as long as their motivation is not carnal.

Possibility of confusion

In his lectures, Barnett makes a careful distinction between the "soulical connection" (the physical relationship between husband and wife) and the "spiritual connection" (an experience of Christ realized in a loving dance with someone other than a spouse).

Yet, he concedes, the soulical and the spiritual can get confused. Consequently, he advises dancing connections not to hold each other too long, stare too intensely or waltz. Men who get sexually aroused should just keep on dancing.

"The spirit doesn't go around kissing and having intercourse," he says.

But Chapel critics are convinced that Barnett's doctrine of "spiritual connections" is playing with fire and wreaking havoc with some people's minds and marriages.

Dancing in the pews'

An investigator who regularly attends Chapel services on behalf of Colossal Fellowship, an evangelical Christian group concerned with biblical orthodoxy, said he could scarcely believe his eyes when he first saw the dancing.

"As the service progresses, you don't know which wife belongs to which husband," says the investigator. "They're hugging, caressing and dancing in the pews, in the hallways and in rooms set aside just for dancing."

Those deemed sufficiently enlightened are invited to dance with their connections in Room E-260, where one Chapel member claims he has seen "connections" lying together. According to Chapel bulletins, such services occur every night, although some are closed to the public.

Barnett delivered No. 53 of his lectures on Spiritual and Soulical Relationships a week after Brittany Cole's killing. Departing from his usual remarks, he insisted that the child's death, three recent suicides by Chapel members and the departure of some of the faithful had nothing to do with his teaching on spiritual connections.

Barnett blamed the events on sin and Satan, according to the investigator for the Colossal Fellowship.

He then asked how many had had their marriages healed by spiritual connections. All raised their hands, the investigator said.

Nonetheless, "intimate dancing in the spirit" has resulted in the defection of some of the Chapel's long-term and most valued members, including Barnett's son and daughter-in-law.

Cal Freden, a Burien chiropractor and respected elder who once housed Barnett's fledgling church in his basement, and his wife, Mary, left in February. Freden declines to discuss his departure other than to predict a disastrous future for the Chapel.

Roy Seibold, an ordained Pentecostal minister recently removed from membership in the Chapel, wrote a letter to the congregation deplored what he thinks is Barnett's "perversion of the pure Word of God."

"Licitous worship leading inevitably to 'Free Love' has been around a long time," Seibold wrote. "Marriages are ruined, children observing the hypocrisy are lost and the Name of Jesus is brought into reproach."

Marvin Williams, a former Assembly of God minister regarded as the Chapel's "prophet," and his wife, Joy, the superintendent of the Chapel school, left in March. In a March 16 letter to Barnett, the couple wrote in a similar vein.

Brother distressed

"We cannot agree with the teaching of the intimate dance and relationships with other people's mates," they said. "We feel it is unscriptural."

So does the Rev. Robert Barnett, the pastor's older brother and a fundamentalist minister in Boise, Idaho.

"I love my brother," Robert Barnett says. "I've tried to warn him, but he doesn't take heed. I'm praying that God will recover him from this deep deception of Satan."

Chapel critics are convinced that many more will abandon the church in the weeks to come. If they don't, say critics such as the Rev. Dan Markham, they'll never get out.

The pastor who sets them dancing

By John McCoy
P-I Reporter

Over its 19-year history, no revelation has more confounded the Community Chapel and Bible Training Center than the one Donald Barnett received last spring.

Barnett, the chapel's founder, decreed that a higher spiritual realization could be found by dancing at church services with someone else's spouse. Finding one's "spiritual connection," he said, opened up the possibility of a holy, complete and wonderful spiritual love.

Last summer, Barnett told his congregation that he was initially reluctant to replace solitary "dancing before the Lord" with spiritual couple dancing, "but a dancing angel came into me and I knew this was of the Lord."

Arthritic knee

As a result of the revelation, the pastor and his flock soon found themselves dancing for hours, night after night, with their spiritual connections.

"I began to cry uncontrollably while dancing," said Barnett, whose dancing continued despite an arthritic knee. "The spirit of the Lord was on me mightily." But this new dancing has been deeply troubling to some.

An open letter to Chapel members from David and Nancy Dobbs is typical. "We have seen the devastation in the lives of those we love, we have personally ministered to individuals who, under the deception of spiritual experience, have engaged in sexual liberties, including adultery," they wrote in a resignation letter dated March 22.

Dissenters

There are now some empty seats at Friday and Sunday services in the church's 2,000-seat Burien sanctuary. Enrollment is down at the Chapel's Bible School. At least two satellite churches have broken away; others have died for lack of interest. Meanwhile, Chapel leadership has been wracked by the departure of key elders.

Nonetheless, Barnett seems to be taking the exodus in stride. Those who are leaving, he has said, are possessed by demons of legalism, jealousy and stubbornness.

"To follow God, I'll pay any price," he told his congregation in a recent sermon.

Donald Lee Barnett, the son of a Pentecostal minister, was born in Idaho and grew up in Tacoma, says his older brother, the Rev. Robert Barnett.

"We were raised three boys in

a very godly home by very godly parents," says the elder brother, now a fundamentalist pastor in Boise.

After high school, Donald Barnett attended a Bible seminary in Boise, married and found a job with the Boeing Co. In the 1950s and early 1960s, he conducted Bible studies at fundamentalist churches in South Seattle, West Seattle and Des Moines.

Barnett was dismissed from all three churches for teaching "false doctrines," according to a biography assembled by Tim Brown, director of the Colossian Fellowship, an evangelical Christian group concerned with biblical orthodoxy.

Barnett claims a doctorate in divinity. Brown says he has been unable to find evidence that Barnett finished seminary training or

of any churches. "It might be," the Idaho clergymen says. "I just never heard it."

In 1967, Donald Barnett started a Bible study group in his South End home. The group prospered, moved to larger homes and later incorporated.

In 1969, some members of his congregation sold many of their possessions and put second mortgages on their homes to finance construction of an adult Bible school on five acres of rural land in Burien. What had begun as a spirit-filled, speaking-in-tongues, faith-healing Pentecostal fellowship, Barnett began describing as "the move of God in the final days."

As Chapel membership grew, the congregation bought 36 more acres nearby. The Chapel built elementary and secondary schools, put up a gigantic sanctuary, employed its own security force and set up a printing press and recording studio. Chapel publications soon listed nearly 150 outreach ministries ranging from hospital and jail visitation to deliverance teams that cast out devils.

About 1977, Brown contends, the Chapel took an authoritarian turn. The bylaws were rewritten so that only a four-member board headed by Barnett could make decisions.

Barnett demanded that members give a full tithe or be expelled. He also encouraged members to report the faults of other members to him or his elders, Brown says.

In 1983, Barnett told his congregation that he was taken in spirit into heaven, where he sang with angels and experienced "oneness of being" with Christ. Shortly afterward, he instituted "dancing before the Lord," the free-form, individual dance that evolved last year into partner dancing with spiritual connections."



Donald Lee Barnett leads the members of the Community Church and Bible Training Center during a moment of ecstasy.

They yell, sob, pray and dance

By John McCoy

P-I Reporter

A half hour before the Friday service is scheduled to begin, the Community Chapel and Bible Training Center is full of worshippers.

For the most part, they are young, white and middle-class in appearance. The men, beardless with hair cut short, wear coats and ties. The women wear dresses and, knowing they will dance for hours, hasset slippers.

At 7:45 p.m., the time the service is supposed to begin, the sanctuary is filled with the din of hundreds of Chapelites speaking in tongues. While children play in the pews, their mothers and fathers stretch their arms heavenward, yelling, sobbing, praying incomprehensibly.

The dancing begins

The language of the Holy Spirit fades away as the choir ascends the stage to sing.

Members of the congregation — joyful and beaming — begin to dance.

Some dance alone, throwing their arms and legs about with abandon. Others, in accord with Pastor Donald Barnett's teaching; dance with their "connections," the man or woman with whom they have achieved a special, spiritual relationship. Infrequently is the connection a spouse.

Barnett, his white hair brushed back in a pompadour, dances at center stage front. His white dress shirt is unbuttoned, partially exposing his bare chest.

He and his partner move like flamenco dancers without the castanets. He wraps his arms around the woman and stares intensely into her eyes as they glide about floor. She returns his gaze.

Clinging couples

Barnett dances first with his wife, Barbara. Then he dances with his connection, a much younger brunette. Both women are clad in long, full dresses with tight bodices.

The dancing goes on and on. In an upstairs hallway, couples hold each other tightly, many of them praying.

Finally, about 9:30 p.m., Barnett ascends the rostrum to deliver the sermon. Bowing his head in prayer, he thanks the Lord for "putting out the dross," those who have questioned his teaching.

Inevitably, some will be snatched by Satan, he says. But those who stick with him, he promises, are marching to glory.

Pastor's edicts, 'demons' wrack church

by Carol M. Ostrom
Times religion reporter

To many members of Community Chapel and Bible Training Center, 37-year-old Janet Cole seemed to be the perfect Christian woman — sweet, graceful and cheery.

But after 18 years as a member of the large Pentecostal church, where members are encouraged to establish strong "spiritual connections" with other people and demons are regularly blamed for emotional turmoil, Cole apparently became convinced that she and her daughter were possessed by unshakable demons.

On March 20, Cole drove to Portland and drowned 5-year-old Brittany in a motel bathtub, according to a prosecutor who has charged her with murder.

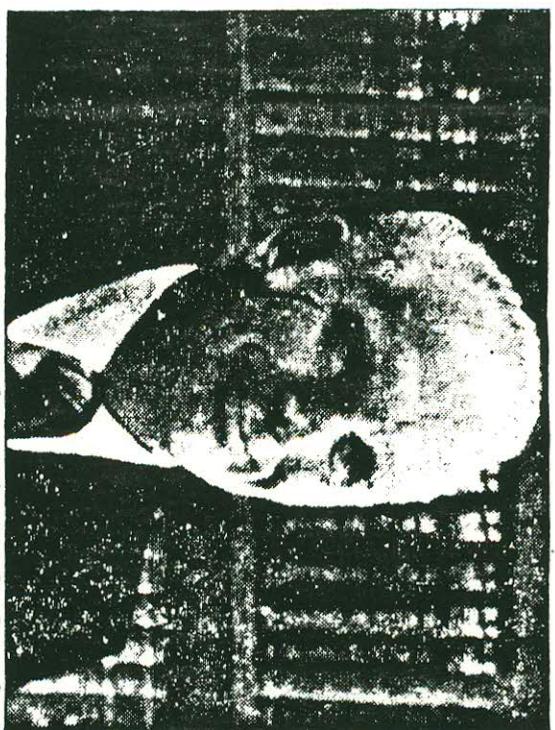
Tony Cole is not the only trouble that has recently beset the 3,500-member South End church, a sprawling, \$9 million complex that began as a small, fundamentalist gathering in the late '60s.

Since mid-December, two chaplain members have committed suicide, and a number of others, say former members, have come close.

Last month, police were called to the scene and a woman was dragged out of church in handcuffs after she refused to leave. She says she was thrown out of the church because of a problem with a church counselor. Church officials said she was dismissed, or disfellowshipped, for attacking church practices and for not following advice.

A number of church principals, including counselors, prominent elders and a couple who helped found Community Chapel, have left the church in the past few months over church practices prescribed by its pastor. Some former church members estimated within adults and children have left within the past several months.

Pastor Donald Lee Barnett is the spiritual leader of the Community Chapel and Bible Training Center, a 3,500-member church in the South End.



Janet Cole, shown here at her 1977 wedding, has been accused of drowning her 5-year-old daughter, apparently convinced the girl was possessed by demons.



The upheaval has wracked the church's family — and that of its powerful pastor, Donald Lee Barnett. His son and daughter-in-law have left the church; a brother in Idaho, also a pastor, now refuses to refer students to the Chapel's Bible College and says he's no longer in communication with his brother.

"I'm praying for that church and for my brother that God will open their eyes," said Idaho Pastor Bob Barnett.

In January, an Olympia satellite church severed relations, taking a new name.

At Community Chapel, some believe that God is testing the congregation, weeding out those with weak faith. But others, including disgruntled and former members, think recent events are the inevitable result of doctrine espoused by Barnett, an imposing, silver-haired 56-year-old former Assembly of God minister.

In the past year, Barnett has encouraged his followers to make spiritual connections with each other — through dancing, hugging and kissing. Such connections, Barnett has said, are necessary to open members of the congregation to pure, spiritual love and the possibility of complete unity with God.

Barnett's teaching, also referred to as "the move of God," began as simple joy-filled solo dancing in the church. Gradually, former church members say, the dancers became couples, married people often pairing with others' spouses.

Barnett, who said he had a revelation convincing him that this was God's will, encouraged church members to see the spirit of God's love in each other. But even his critics say he never condoned adultery. In fact, he has attempted to set guidelines for the connections several times.

Neither Barnett nor other church officials would be inter-

viewed. But in a March 20 sermon tape-recorded by church members and given to The Times, Barnett told his congregation that if spiritual connections were carnal, he, too, would object to them. Barnett's sermons are routinely tape-recorded by the church.

"God has told us to love one another fervently. . . . That's what we're trying to do. We're trying to obey God's word," he told the congregation.

But others say that to expect such intense feelings to remain spiritual and not cause jealousy is simply unrealistic.

"It's not that he's preaching adultery. It's the very nature of the thing, which can only lead to adultery," said Cheryl, who was disfellowshipped in March after she and her husband wrote Barnett a letter saying they disapproved of the doctrine. Like many others, Cheryl asked that her real name be withheld for fear of harassment and loss of contact with those still

in the church.

In several private rooms in the church, ex-members said, those with intense connections, expressing their unconditional spiritual love, often staring into each others' eyes and saying sweet things to each other, and sometimes embracing warmly.

"There are a lot of people who are on the brink of insanity in there because the whole system is schizophrenic," Cheryl said. "People who really love the Bible can't really reconcile going off and dancing and hugging and kissing someone other than their mate. They have to go through real gymnastics to reconcile that."

"We were told to release our mates to other people — their spirits didn't belong to us, and we had no right to deny them other relationships," said Rosemary Guthrie, a 14-year church member

Please see CHURCH on C 15

'Move of God' splits spouses

CHURCH

continued from C 1

who was a church counselor for 10 years.

Guthrie said her troubles with the church began last year, when her husband began to have a spiritual relationship with one of Guthrie's friends. It all began with the friend praying for Guthrie's husband.

"I got counsel from the pastor's wife (Barbara Barnett). She encouraged me to let go, and it drove me to the point of insanity over the summer. I was screaming and crying for hours on end — totally out of control of my emotions," Guthrie said.

"Lynn," who asked that her real name not be used, recently left the church after 16 years.

"I really love my husband," she said. "All of a sudden I'm being told that sister so-and-so is going to minister to him because I'm not good enough. ... I'm watching all my friends' marriages fall apart all around me. There have been numerous adultery cases, and they just blame it on the devil. But it's not just the devil, it's their teaching," she concluded.

Dozens of separations and divorces have occurred in the recent past within the church, former church members say. And while that may be the norm "in the world," Lynn said, "it's not in spirit-filled, born-again churches."

Many said they were deeply afraid to leave the church at first. Typically, those coming into the church are "divorced from their former values and have their values replaced," said Harry Stegman, a former Chapel Bible College teacher who now helps counsel those coming out of the church. In addition, he said, Chapelites cut themselves off from former associations and become taken up in a desire to ready themselves to become ultimately connected to Jesus Christ. They also believe, Stegman said, that to differ with the pastor means cutting off their chances of going to heaven.

Like others, Guthrie said she believed if she left the church she would be spiritually lost. And she didn't want to divorce her husband, the father of her three children.

"I was going mad," Guthrie said. "All of my conflicts and emotions were attributed to demons."

Kelly Scott had conflicts and emotional difficulties, too, and like Guthrie, she was told she needed to purge her demons. But on Dec. 14, Scott gave up, shooting herself in the head with one of her husband's weapons.

Kim Hamm, who left the church about six weeks ago, lived across the street from the Scotts. Scott and her children spent many evenings with Hamm, Hamm said, after Scott's husband established a spiritual connection and began spending more and more time at the church. Scott, a shy, insecure 25-year-old, became increasingly despondent, Hamm said.

"The pressure started adding. People began to tell her that she was being demonically inspired to keep her husband from getting what he needed," Hamm said. Then, Scott's husband got pneumonia, Hamm said, and his connection moved in to help tend him.

Scott asked for counseling at the church, and for a time, moved out to stay with friends. Hamm said.

The week before she committed suicide, Guthrie said, Kelly Scott asked two friends to pray with her all day about her "demonic problems" such as her jealousy.

"Their philosophy is pray and believe God. Whatever is negative is a demon and if they don't leave, it's because you're unwilling or you have sin in your life and this is God's way of purging you," Hamm said.

After Scott killed herself, Barnett told the congregation that her death had nothing to do with the "move of God" teachings. But many Chapel critics dispute that. "To have Pastor Barnett say that it had nothing to do with the move is asinine," Hamm said. "It had everything to do with the move. To have another woman come in and take over right under your nose!"

Problems in adjusting to the practice of spiritual connections also figured heavily in the suicide of church member Scott Linderson, 34, who shot himself in the head March 10, friends said.

But it was Janet Cole's actions that shocked many Chapelites the most.

"She was the epitome of Christian womanly grace, beauty, very sensible. She was teaching a Bible study for weeks on reverencing your husband that many women went to and got lots of help," said Guthrie.

But the "move of God" simply went against her conscience, said another friend. "She was pushed against her conscience until her mind snapped," she said. "She was told her mind was riddled with demons."

Cole is now under 24-hour psychiatric care at Oregon Health Sciences Center, said Bob Leineweber, Multnomah County deputy district attorney.

About two months ago, Cole contacted "Mark," a former counselor at Community Chapel who had known Cole since she first joined in the early '70s. She wanted to discuss medications and the possibility of seeing a psychiatrist, he said. Several people close to Cole said she was having difficulty with spiritual connections she and her husband established.

But her husband told Mark he was against outside help, Mark said. In a conversation with Mark one evening, Cole's husband told Mark that his wife's problems were caused by demons, Mark said.

And Janet Cole told Mark that those in the church who tried to help her simply tried to cast out her demons, but that the demons only seemed to get a better grip on her.

Mark said Janet Cole told him she was afraid Brittany had similar demons. Because of church teaching that a child who dies at a young age will automatically go to heaven, Cole felt she was saving her child from everlasting damnation by killing her, Mark said.

Soon after Brittany died, Cole's husband, Rick, said in a speech tape-recorded at the church that what happened with his wife didn't have anything to do with "what God has been doing in our body, knitting us together and unifying us."

"I have been wrestling demons ... in my wife for 7 months," he

said in his speech.

About Brittany's death, he said, "I don't despair for my daughter. There is a deep agony inside that I know hasn't fully hit yet. ... My daughter delighted in Jesus. ... And all I can do is see her dancing before him here tonight. It brings such joy to my soul."

"I will never have to watch her be tempted with the world. I will never have to watch her backslide," he said.

The devil is at work whenever God begins to draw his people closer, Cole said. "We're in a war chariot. Life is real, life is dangerous, as our pastor has said. And we have a war to fight. Heaven is on the other side. Thank you Jesus that Brittany is on the other side."

Cole refused to be interviewed about his wife or daughter, or to say whether he had seen her since she left for Portland.

And although Barnett, too, refused to speak to The Times, he has insisted in recent sermons that Brittany Cole's death and the suicides have had nothing to do with the "move of God" emphasizing spiritual connections.

"This other kind of love is heavenly love, this other-world love, is love so great that the world, will marvel and know that you are the sons of God the father," Barnett preached.

Answering critics who said the spiritual connections teaching was not scriptural, Barnett denounced their logic as "full of holes."

"Where in the New Testament does it say that you should stand up and clap your hands? No place. Where does it say you can dance solo? No place. ... There's a lot of things it doesn't say you can do," Barnett said.

And even now, in the midst of turmoil, many critics say they understand why the spiritual-connections practice has support.

In the connecting, says Mark, "people were beginning to experience and feel what we all want — love and acceptance. They were beginning to experience something that felt good, and they felt freer in it."

Wives and husbands were encouraged to become close to their spouse's connection, and many apparently did, despite jealousy.

Guthrie said she became very close to her husband's connection — "I loved her desperately." Kelly Scott, friends said, was also close to her husband's connection.

Many members and former members say they're speaking out only because they're afraid something they deeply value is taking a dangerous twist.

"I actually, honestly did meet God at Community Chapel," says Guthrie. "God actually was there at that time. And I was willing to make any sacrifice in my personal life to have him."

Jane, who left the church after seven years, says she still loves the church and the people there — even though most won't speak to her now that she's been disfellowshiped.

"The thing about the people of Community Chapel is they genuinely love God," she says. But now, she adds, "I'm kind of in the place where I'm wondering how many more people have to die before something happens."

Seattle woman guilty of drowning young daughter

PORTLAND (AP) — A judge has found a Seattle mother guilty of murder in the drowning death of her 5-year-old daughter, and ordered the woman transferred to a mental hospital in Maryland.

Multnomah County Circuit Judge R. William Riggs said yesterday that Janet W. Cole, 37, was suicidal and unable to form criminal intent when she drowned Brittany Jo Cole March 20 in a motel room in north Portland.

A report prepared for the court by a mental-health expert who examined Cole said the woman believed she could protect her daughter from evil forces by killing her.

The reports described Cole as severely disturbed and tormented, apparently as a result of increasing involvement with a fundamentalist Christian church near Burien, Wash.

The Pentecostal church, called the Community Chapel and Bible Training Center, has been the focus of controversy recently. Members are encouraged to establish strong "spiritual connections" with other people and 'demons' are regularly blamed for emotional turmoil.

The church that began as a small, fundamentalist gathering in the late '60s now has 500 members and operates from a sprawling, \$9 million complex.

Riggs' ruling came after prosecutors and defense attorneys agreed to the facts presented in the murder indictment and to reports from four mental-health experts who examined Cole after the killing.

Defense attorney Wendell Birkland said the Maryland hospital would provide treatment "for as long as necessary" in a secure ward.

Cole was to be flown from Portland to Maryland today, according to plans approved by the judge. Riggs said the hospital would provide monthly reports to the Psychiatric Security Review Board describing the treatment and progress, if any, made by the woman.

The reports also indicated that Cole intended to kill herself at the same time by taking an overdose of over-the-counter sleeping pills.

Birkland said Cole was "extremely suicidal" at the time she drowned her daughter.

Reports submitted as evidence indicated Cole had been married for 10 years and that she had been working until recently as a banquet waitress in Seattle. One report said she stopped working last December as a result of what she described as "mental pressure."

Deputy District Attorney Robert Leinweber said Cole's husband and her family's medical insurance would pay for the Maryland treatment.

The Oregonian 4-17-86

Woman given insanity ruling

A Seattle mother who drowned her 5-year-old daughter last month in Portland to protect her from evil demons was found guilty except for insanity at a brief hearing Wednesday in Multnomah County Circuit Court.

Circuit Judge R. William Riggs ruled that because of a mental psychosis, Janet W. Cole, 37, was unable to form criminal intent when she drowned Brittany Jo Cole on March 20 in a room at a North Portland motel.

Riggs made the finding after both the prosecution and defense agreed to facts in the murder indictment and to reports from four mental health experts who examined Janet Cole.

The mental reports described Cole as being severely disturbed and tormented, apparently as a result of increasing involvement with a fundamentalist Christian church in Seattle. One report said the woman felt that she could protect her daughter from evil forces by killing her.

Riggs ordered that Cole be placed in indefinite custody of the state Psychiatric Security Review Board, a state agency which supervises custody of criminal defendants found to be insane. The judge also ordered that Cole be transported to the Sheppard & Enoch Pratt Hospital in Towson, Md., for treatment for an indeterminate time.

The Oregonian 4-19-86

Girl's death triggers criticism of church

By JOHN SNELL
of The Oregonian staff

The death of a 5-year-old Seattle girl who was drowned by her mother in a North Portland motel room last month has triggered intense criticism of her suburban Seattle Pentecostal parish, which preaches that some people are possessed by demons.

Janet W. Cole, 37, was found guilty except for insanity Wednesday by Multnomah County Circuit Judge R. William Riggs in the death of her daughter, Brittany Jo Cole, on March 20. Riggs ruled that Cole's insanity made her unable to form criminal intent in the death.

Cole drove from Seattle with her daughter on March 20 and checked into the Ramada Inn, 10 N. Weidler St. Once there, she put Brittany into the bathtub and drowned her. Police later found the girl's body on a motel bed.

Mental health reports ordered by the court on Janet Cole described her as severely disturbed and tormented, apparently the result of her involvement with the Community Chapel and Bible Training Center in Burien, Wash.

The church is a \$9 million complex south of Seattle that started in the 1960s as a small fundamentalist parish and is now run by Pastor Donald Lee Barnett, 56, a former Assembly of God minister.

Among Barnett's teachings is the belief that some persons, including children, are possessed by demons. Followers also believe that children who are possessed still will be admitted to heaven if they die before they reach the age of reason, thought to be about 6 or 7.

One report on Cole that is part of the court record in the case said she believed she could protect her daughter — who had not yet reached this "age of reason" — from evil forces by killing her.

Reports also showed that Cole planned to commit suicide by taking an overdose of over-the-counter sleeping pills at the same time she killed her daughter.

Her attorney, Wendell Birkland, told the court Wednesday that Cole was "extremely suicidal" at the time she drowned her daughter.

It was Cole who called police about her daughter's death, police reports about the incident said.

Before the court hearing Wednesday, Cole was under 24-hour psychiatric care at the Oregon Health Sciences University, according to a Multnomah County deputy district attorney, Robert Leineweber.

Cole is being sent by the court to a mental hospital in Maryland for treatment. Birkland told the court that Cole was still considered a suicide risk.

Cole was active at the Burien parish and taught a course on "reverencing your husband."

According to recent reports about the church in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer and The Seattle Times, church members say Barnett also teaches that parishioners should establish spiritual "connections" with church members other than their spouses.

These "connections," called the "move of God," often are formed between members of the opposite sex by staring intensely into each others' eyes, hugging, kissing and embracing.

Barnett teaches, however, that the spiritual connections shouldn't become carnal, because to do so would violate God's laws against adultery, church members told the newspapers.

"God has told us to love one another fervently," Barnett said in one tape-recorded sermon. "That's what we are trying to do. We're trying to obey God's word."

The Community Chapel parish currently has satellite churches in Kirkland, Wash., and Tacoma, but none in Oregon or Southwest Washington.

Several members reportedly have left the 3,500-member parish, and a satellite church in Olympia broke off its association with the Community Chapel in January.

Also, three members have committed suicide in the past six months, the Post-Intelligencer reported.

County budget down, but tax demands are up

First page, second section

Portland Press Herald

Portland Press Herald (USPS 439 300)
Portland, Maine 04104
Second Class Postage Paid

* * * 34 Pages

Vol. 124, No. 132

30 Cen

Portland, Maine, Saturday, November 23, 1985



Judge hands Lane life sentence

By CHRISTINE KUKKA

Staff Writer

BANGOR — "I hope God has mercy on you because I simply cannot," Superior Court Justice Bruce Chandler told John A. Lane after sentencing the convicted murderer to life imprisonment for burning 4-year-old Angela Palmer to death in an oven.

"I have tried and tried to find some mitigating factor, some reason that would allow me to impose a sentence less than the maximum on you," Chandler told Lane, 37, during sentencing in Penobscot County Superior Court Friday. But Chandler found no reason to reduce Lane's prison term. Lane is convicted of burning his girlfriend's daughter to death in their Auburn apartment oven on Oct. 27, 1984. He faces a life in a prison within a prison, con-

faced a minimum 25 years to life imprisonment for the murder.

"I'm philosophically opposed to the death penalty," Chandler told the pale, slender man, "but I am grateful that Maine does not have it because your crime tests the very outermost limits of my belief that the death penalty is not a correct one."

Lane stood emotionless during the sentencing and showed no response when Chandler announced the life sentence. When asked if he had anything to say before sentencing, Lane told Chandler, "It doesn't matter what sentence you give me, I've already prepared for my own death. It won't take much, I'll be going."

Lane, who plans to appeal his conviction,

stably segregated from other prisoners for his own safety because of the nature of his crime.

Maine law provides no probation or "good time" for those sentenced to life imprisonment. Chandler found the death of Angela Palmer to be premeditated and carried out in a cruel and inhuman manner — two criteria required to impose a life sentence.

"The most important finding I have made is that the murder of this child was carried out in the most cruel and inhuman manner that can be imagined," Chandler said. "The total terror and intensity of her pain and suffering is beyond my capacity to imagine."

During his trial, which ended with his conviction Tuesday, Lane claimed that he was insane and thought he was burning Lucifer in the oven during an exorcism exercise.

Doctors testified that Angela was beaten and placed in the oven while still alive.

Her mother, Cynthia Palmer, is on trial for manslaughter, a lesser charge than murder, for failing to intercede on behalf of her daughter. On Friday, Chandler suspended final arguments and a verdict on Palmer until Monday.

Lane's highly publicized trial was the first murder trial Chandler had presided over as a Superior Court justice. He was appointed to the bench 14 months ago. During Lane's trial, a bevy of psychiatrists produced conflicting testimony on whether Lane was psychotic or insane at the time of Angela's death. Lane invoked an insanity plea.

See LANE
Back page this section

Lane

PORTLAND PRESS HERALD

Portland, Maine, Press Herald, Thursday, November 21, 1985

Jacobsohn, clinical director at the Augusta Mental Health Institute, suggested Palmer was reduced to a trance-like state when Lane conducted an exorcism to "push back" her bad personality when Angela was killed.

During the exorcism, young Angela refused to cooperate and Lane attacked the child, beating her by swinging her by her heels against the wall and floor and eventually shutting her in the oven. Lane told police he thought he was placing Lucifer — not

Angela — in the oven. Jacobsohn says Palmer was not aware of what was happening to her child and used psychological defense mechanisms to obliterate any awareness of what was happening to Angela.

Palmer has a history of sexual and physical abuse, doctors said, and was reportedly beaten and sexually assaulted by her father and her former husband. Jacobsohn also suggested that Palmer was reacting to the situation with passive acceptance — though she knew what was happening — because of her life-long pattern of domination by men.

In his psychiatric evaluation, Jacobsohn did not

suggest that Palmer was aware of social standards when Angela was killed. In contrast, the AMHI doctor said Lane retained an awareness of social standards and expectations the day Angela died. Chandler seized on that evaluation when he found Lane guilty. Palmer, Jacobsohn said, has a lengthy involvement with mental health agencies. "It is apparent that whenever a new stress came along in her life, she needed the support of others," he said.

Those "others" include doctors, therapists, nurses, emergency room personnel and counselors. "It's an endless parade of individuals called in to play to help her cope with life on a daily basis," he said.

Jacobsohn suggested that Palmer had seen a doctor

or counselor at least once every two weeks since she was age 5.

At age 5, Cynthia Palmer was among the youngest children in Maine history to come down with a peptic ulcer, which apparently accompanied her personality disorder. Ulcers are more common among adults. About the time that Palmer met John Lane, she was experiencing panic disorders, similar to extreme anxiety attacks. She had been given Zanax and Nardil to relax her.

The panic disorders whittled away what little confidence Palmer had. "It undermines her feeling of being in charge of her life," Jacobsohn told the court, and it made her vulnerable to Lane's dominance.

Palmer's consumption of Nardil, her recent car accident that left her handicapped and the stress of

Lane's violence could have combined to push her into a trance-like state, Stone said.

Doctors are stymied because they have been

Dissociation, a psychological mechanism to separate the mind from what is happening to the body, could have occurred, Jacobsohn said. Dissociation could explain why Lane and Palmer were seen holding hands and kissing shortly after police arrived at their smoke-filled apartment on Oct. 27.

That inappropriate interaction between Lane and Palmer shortly after Angela's death lessens the possibility that Palmer was knocked unconscious or fell asleep and awoke to her daughter's death, Jacobsohn said.

He noted that when police videotaped an interview with Palmer shortly after her arrest, it was obvious that she was trying to deny and "keep from consciousness" the horror of the events that had just occurred.

Doctors are stymied because they have been

unable to learn exactly what Palmer did during

Lane's violent rampage.

She has told them an assortment of stories. In one

rendition, she said Lane left the apartment to go shopping and an old boyfriend of hers, named Michael, came in and beat Angela against the wall. He attacked her and when she woke up the apartment was filled with smoke, she said. When arrested, John

Lane said he was named Michael.

"We were never satisfied with the chronology of events," Jacobsohn told the court. "The most difficult part is (figuring out) when certain events took place."

"I think during the homicide she was removed from the situation, either by dissociation, sleep or being knocked out, and for some reason that hiatus in her memory is not accounted for," Jacobsohn said.

Her trial continues today and a verdict is expected early next week.

Lane to get special protection during prison term

BANGOR — When John A. Lane arrives at the Maine State Prison in Thomaston, society will be protected from Lane and Lane will be protected from his fellow prisoners.

His heinous crime — burning a 4-year-old child to death in an oven — will make him a marked man in prison, according to the Maine Department of Corrections Commissioner Donald L. Allen.

Lane will be placed in a special segregation cell for his own safety.

Allen predicts Lane will be housed in a special protected area for informers and child molesters. Within

the prison world, these prisoners are viewed with the

most loathing by their fellow inmates. Inmates do not leave the special protected area without a guard escort. Otherwise, Allen said, they are

always threatened with bodily harm. Lane will spend the next few decades locked next to inmates with a similar ignoble status.

"Ninety-nine percent of his time will be spent in this cell block," Allen said. Meals, showers and exercise all occur within this corridor. Allen calls it a prison within a prison.

During a recent prison uprising in New Mexico, Allen said the prisoners obtained keys to the prison's segregated cells where the informants and child abusers were housed.

The rioting prisoners ruthlessly attacked the segregated prisoners with acetylene torches. "My guess is that Lane will not be a popular addition to the prison population," Allen said.

that Lane was not psychotic or insane when Angela was killed, testified for Palmer's defense Wednesday.

AP

See TRAIL

Page 20

team of deputy sheriffs escorts Cynthia Palmer, center, to the courtroom.



Portland Press Herald
Portland, Maine

Portland Press Herald (SPS 439 300)
Portland, Maine 04104
Second Class Postage Paid

30 Cents

Portland, Maine, Wednesday, November 20, 1985

Maine

*** 62 Pages



AP

Judge convicts Lane of killing girl, 4, in oven

By CHRISTINE KUKKA
Staff Writer

BANGOR — Superior Court Justice Bruce Chandler deliberated for only an hour before finding John A. Lane guilty of murdering 4-year-old Angela Palmer by burning her to death in an oven.

Chandler rejected Lane's plea of innocent by reason of insanity and scheduled sentencing for 1 p.m. Friday in Penobscot County Superior Court. Lane, 37, faces a minimum of 25 years to life imprisonment.

In final arguments Tuesday afternoon, the prosecution claimed the murder was a grisly case of child abuse — not the act of an insane man.

Despite defense attorney E. James Burke's three-hour closing argument and the viewing of a videotape made of Lane shortly after his arrest on Oct. 27, 1984, Justice Chandler ruled that Lane was sane. Chandler heard the case without a jury.

Cynthia Palmer, the 30-year-old mother of Angela, is scheduled to go on trial for murder today. Prosecutor Thomas Goodwin argued that Lane killed Angela "in a coherent way."

"She was beaten, carried into her bedroom, placed in the oven, the door was shut and wedged closed with a chair, another deliberate act," Goodwin said, "and the oven was set at the highest setting with two control knobs."

In a 30-minute closing statement, Goodwin said

that Lane could appreciate social standards despite mental illness.

"He doesn't argue that he's normal," Goodwin said. "His whole history of mental illness and abuse proves he is not. He was frustrated, angry, depressed and clearly exhibited psychotic-like symptoms."

"Whether Lane was psychotic is not the exact question you must decide," Goodwin told Chandler.

"There is no suggestion that psychosis implies a lack of responsibility."

Goodwin also cautioned that psychiatrists "often find what they are looking for," referring to testimony by psychiatrists who claimed Lane was brain damaged.

In closing arguments, Burke repeated Lane's personal history of childhood abuse, alienation from his family, incarceration at the Maine Youth Center, stint in the Marine Corps and his inability to deal with anger.

Burke said Lane was heading for a mental breakdown during 1983 and 1984. Lane attempted suicide in early 1984 and began developing multiple personality traits in 1984. Lane apparently assigned aspects of himself that he didn't like to his multiple personalities to divest himself of responsibility for his negative emotions.

On Oct. 27 last year, Lane attempted to exorcise

See LANE
Back page this section

John Lane is escorted to Penobscot County Superior Court Tuesday before being found guilty of murdering 4-year-old Angela Palmer.

Lane

FROM PAGE 1

Lane never testified but several doctors read the results of their interviews with him in court.

"When psychiatrists have conflicting opinions, you need to go to the evidence," Chandler said in an interview after the sentencing. It was Lane's own statements to psychiatrists that were most damaging to Lane's defense, Chandler explained.

"On many occasions, Lane said he put Angela in the oven, then he would go back to saying he put her in the oven," Chandler said. A jail matron at the Androscoggin County Jail also testified that she heard Lane shout to Palmer through an air vent that he had put Angela in the oven, Chandler added.

"My overall impression all led me to feel that (Dr. Ulrich) Jacobson's diagnosis was nearer the point," Chandler said. Jacobson said Lane suffered from mental defects but could appreciate social standards when Angela was killed.

The trial has taken its toll on lawyers and court officials. Particularly painful was the presentation of evidence, including pictures of the girl's charred body and the oven, to the court.

Palmer and Lane were absent when the oven was reviewed by Chandler, who heard the case without a jury.

Security inside the courtroom was heavy Friday when Chandler read his sentence. A large crowd gathered outside the courtroom but only reporters, county employees and a handful of observers who

had sat through the three-week trial were allowed in the courtroom during sentencing.

Ten deputies stood inside the courtroom and formed a cordon around Lane when he was escorted from the courtroom.

County officials predicted that Lane would be transferred to the Maine State Prison in Thomaston this weekend.

When Lane was found guilty of murder on Tuesday, his fellow inmates in the county jail cheered and applauded the verdict according to county officials. There was no immediate reaction in the jail Friday afternoon. "But just wait until the word gets around the jail," a Penobscot County deputy sheriff said.

According to defense attorney E. James Burke, Lane wants to appeal his conviction.

During sentencing, Burke asked Chandler to give Lane a reduced sentence. "If you give John Lane the maximum sentence, what is left for people who consciously set out to do an evil act, such as kill or contract?" he said.

Burke had argued that Lane was a sick man who should not be held responsible for his actions.

Burke said he was disappointed with the sentence. "But it comes as no great surprise," he said. "To me, this is the hardest case I've ever handled," the Lewiston attorney said.

Burke said he will not handle Lane's appeal. "I'm too burned out," he said.

BANGOR (AP) — John A. Lane, who was sentenced to life in prison for the burning death of a 4-year-old child in an oven, said God has punished and forgiven him for what he has done.

The 37-year-old Lane, found guilty of murder in a jury-waived trial, also said he thinks his death is near, saying he thinks somebody "will bash me good in the head," probably at the Maine State Prison in Thomaston.

In an interview with the newspaper Sunday of Lewiston-Auburn, Lane said he had no fear of death. "That's only this life," he told the newspaper. "This ain't the life that I'm going for. I'm going for the eternal life."

Asked about people who were horrified about what he did and who want to see him harmed, Lane said, "I say do it quick, because I'm going to get out of this world because I know what's coming down." Lane said he believes the end of the world is near.

Saying he has "suffered months after months" for Angela Palmer's murder, Lane said "I already know" that God has forgiven him for the child's death. "If He loves you that much, you know where you're going. You can rejoice."

Lane's co-defendant in the case, Cynthia Palmer, 30, the mother of the victim, faces a verdict Monday by Superior Court Justice Bruce Chandler. Her murder charge was reduced to manslaughter. Lane and Palmer lived in an Auburn apartment with Palmer's two daughters when the grisly murder took place on Oct. 27, 1984.

Both defendants pleaded innocent reason of insanity.

At Lane's sentencing Friday, Chandler told Lane hoped "God may have mercy on you, because I sin. I cannot."

Mental illness was a central theme in the defense. Angela Palmer's death culminated a self-styled exorcism rite Lane had performed, according to testimony, had abused her as a child.

"The idea is that she could get this image of her father out of her, tell him to go away, get out, that she'll be all right," said Lane. "You see, it was all designed to help her get over her father."

But Lane said that the exorcism went bad when Palmer gave him what he believed was drugged mill

The drug Xanax, is prescribed for mentally ill people. Lane said he was "insane" and "completely terrorized" when he put Angela into the oven, and was convinced she was "Lucifer," the devil.

"I remember putting a creature in, not a child," was so scared of that creature! said Lane, who was accompanied at the interview by his lawyer, E. Jamie Burke.

Lane said he did not realize what had actually happened until he was told about it later.

"I really think it was a damn shame that nobody came

to help" while the incident was taking place, said Lane.

"I (had) to deal with this creature 'cause that's the way I saw it at that time. But I know it's Angela now. I feel

really bad about it. I called for help and screamed for

help and nobody came."



Lane: 'I already know' of God's forgiveness

Liz Taylor has marriage in