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## Clayton man ID'd in girl's diary found guilty in her death

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By Marcus K. Gamer

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

A Clayton County jury on Friday convicted a murderer whom police identified from his victim's diary.

Marshae O'Brian Hickman was found guilty on 12 charges, including malice murder and criminal attempted rape, from two separate incidents connected with the 2010 death of 16-year-old Candice Parchment.

Hickman, 21, killed Parchment on the night of April 28, 2010 then hid her body beneath a mattress in a wooded area near their Forest Park homes for seven months.

"I'm glad about the verdict," Parchment's mother, Caffian Hyatt told the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. "At least the jury saw him for what he was."

In addition to murder and attempted rape, the jury also found Hickman guilty of involuntary manslaughter, four counts of aggravated assault – two for each incident – aggravated battery, false imprisonment, felony murder and concealing a death.

In her diary, Parchment wrote that Hickman and Jermaine Robinson tried to rape her in an abandoned home in their neighborhood in January that year, according to police records.

"She convicted him in her own words," Hyatt said of her daughter's writing. "After they tried to rape her, I told her to write down their names. I didn't think she would."

But the details from that January night matched what both Hickman and Robinson told police.

"It's like she was inside that courtroom," Hyatt said.

Robinson was initially charged with criminal attempted rape, false imprisonment, two counts of aggravated assault and aggravated battery, but pleaded guilty only to an aggravated assault charge.

He remains in the Clayton County jail with a more than \$1 million bond.

Prosecutors say Hickman tried to kill her to keep her from reporting the rape attempt.

"Please let me go, I said. My pants were unzipped. I was scared," Clayton County Assistant District Attorney Michael Thurston said in court, reading from Parchment's diary about the January incident.

Parchment wrote that Robinson hit her on the head with a rake and Hickman blocked the door to keep her from leaving and tried to take her phone.

"I put up a fight. They couldn't get it. I told my mom where I was at," she wrote.

Prosecutors say Hickman confessed to killing Parchment and used a doll during his interview to demonstrate how he strangled her to death.

But Hickman's attorney Ashley Palmer insisted that he was intimidated into giving a confession.

"When someone is interrogated for six to seven hours over the course of two days, they will comply just to get it over with," she said.

Robinson testified for the prosecution in the trial, painting his friend, the much larger Hickman, as intimidating and menacing.

Thurston pointed to a letter Hickman wrote apologizing to Parchment's mother as his admission of guilt.

"It's times that I think back and wish I could rewind time back so this would have never happened," Thurston said, reading Hickman's letter. "I pray every night that you and everybody can forgive me. I just don't know what came over me at the time."

And he said Hickman's unprompted words when detectives were out of the interrogation room likely convinced the jury of his guilt.

"He was left in the room all by himself, and he was praying for God's forgiveness for strangling her and hiding her body under the mattress," Thurston said.

In an unusual move, Clayton County Chief Superior Court Judge Deborah Benefield accepted a combination of verdicts from the jury that should only have been one or the other.

Jurors found Hickman guilty of both malice murder and the lesser-included charge of involuntary manslaughter, which Palmer asked Benefield to include as an alternative choice over murder.

Palmer said jurors told her after the trial that they felt both charges were fitting.

"They said there was some belief that the way he put his arms around her, he may have accidentally killed Candice," Palmer said. "But based on the facts of the case, they told me there was enough there to show some intent, as well."

Hickman faces multiple life sentences. A sentencing hearing will be held on April 26 at 8:30 a.m.

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