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Court told of Maria Wong's struggle with suspect

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who in turn found Chris Ortiz and Norman Figueroa for the job, court had heard.

All four face charges of first degree murder and conspiracy to commit murder. Mr. Pierce made a deal with the Crown, testifying against the others in return for murder charges being dropped and a lesser sentence on the

conspiracy charge. He is serving a 16-year term.

Mr. Pierce testified he and his girlfriend Lisa Bateman drove Mr. Ortiz, Mr. Figueroa and another man who can't be identified because of a publication ban, to Markham from Toronto that day because they couldn't get a ride.

They were already frustrated with their previous failed attempts on Mrs. Wong's life and told him if they didn't get

the job done that day, they weren't going to come to Markham again.

Court heard there was no plan in place, just that Mr. Jones had given instructions that nothing was to be done at the house. Mr. Pierce dropped off the three men near the house somewhere around 8 p.m. Mrs. Wong left to pick up Chinese food and the men were awaiting her return, grumbling about the cold, in more than 20 cell phone calls made that night.

(Mr. Ortiz and the other man) came up with the idea they could overpower her, take the car," Mr. Pierce said. Norman went up the street to watch for people and police. The next thing he knew (the other man) took off and Chris was in there by himself. He opened the (car) door, she told him to take money to take whatever. He said she was scared.

"He was telling her he wanted the keys but she wasn't understanding and (it) was starting to get louder. He pulled her out of the car, took the knife and said he thought he stabbed her but wasn't sure. She started to yell a little louder. Then he said he made a large sweep across her neck. He wasn't sure if she was dead. He said she started making these gurgling sounds and that he could hear her breath as if the sound was coming from her throat. He tried to imitate the sound. He let her go and she fell on the floor and he thought she hit her



MARIA WONG: Died in garage of her home near Markville Shopping Centre.

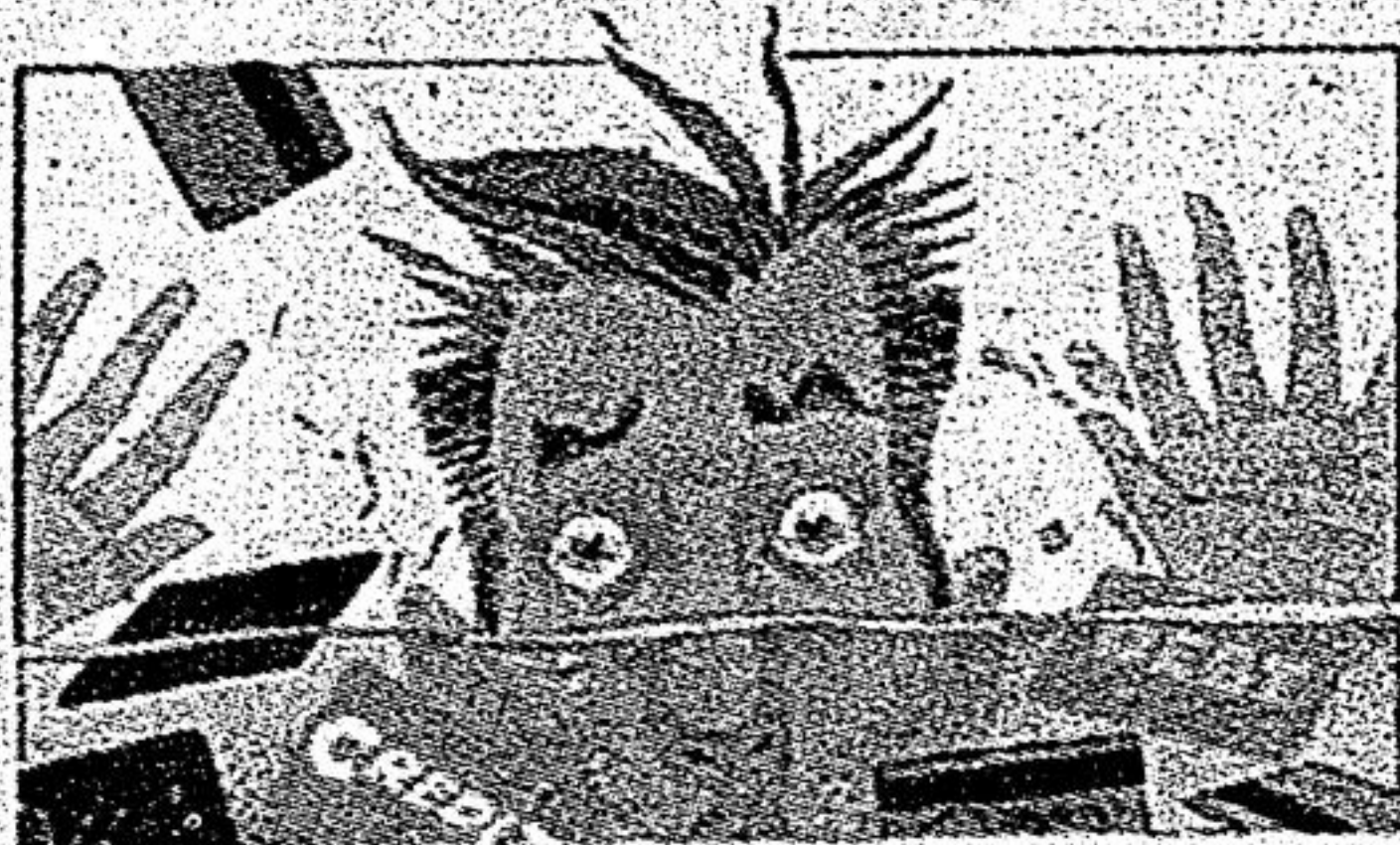
head when she fell."

Mr. Ortiz then drove off in Mrs. Wong's Honda CRV, dumping it in the McDonald's plaza at Hwy. 7 and McCowan Road. Mr. Pierce picked up each man separately. Mr. Ortiz was waiting at the church just south of the plaza.

"I said 'exactly what did you do?' He said: 'I cut the bitch.'"
The trial continues.

"She started to yell a little louder. Then he said he made a large sweep across her neck. He wasn't sure if she was dead."

— James Pierce, describing the murder of Maria Wong



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Above, Markham Deputy Mayor Frank Scarpitti joins in the celebration with The Bay Store Manager Donna Reeves and her enthusiastic staff.

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