

1 J O Y C E M O K O N E, sworn.

2 EXAMINATION BY

3 MRS. MUNKACSI:

4 Q Mrs. Mokone, it is pronounced Mokone?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Mrs. Mokone, thank you very much for
7 coming in this morning. Would you please tell us where
8 you are living at the present time?

9 A I'm living at the present time at 27
10 Woodlake Drive, Piscataway, New Jersey.

11 Q And with whom are you living there now?

12 A I'm living with Mr. and Mrs. Pitter.

13 Q And they're friends of yours?

14 A Friends of mine.

15 Q And you're living with your daughter
16 Tondie, is that correct?

17 A Yes.

18 Q What's your profession or occupation?

19 A I am a Director of Nursing at Gracie
20 Square Hospital.

21 Q And you're presently on a leave of
22 absence, is that correct?

23 A Correct.

24 Q During the time when you were actively
25 working at Gracie Square Hospital did you live in

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1 Piscataway or did you live in New York City?

2 A I lived in New York City.

3 Q Now, are you related to the defendant
4 Stephen Mokone?

5 A Yes. He's my husband.

6 Q How long has he been your husband?

7 A We were married July 21, 1961 in London,
8 England.

9 Q And what is Mr. Mokone's occupation?

10 A He's a psychiatric-social worker at
11 Rutgers Mental Health Center in Piscataway, New Jersey.

12 Q Mr. Mokone is a South African by birth,
13 is that correct?

14 A Correct.

15 Q As are you?

16 A I'm South African by birth also.

17 Q Did you come to this country originally
18 with your husband?

19 A Yes, I did.

20 Q What year was that?

21 A It was in 1965 we landed in Rochester
22 where we stayed for four years. Then we moved on to
23 Philadelphia and lived there for one year while he
24 pursued graduate school at the University of Pennsylvania
25 and then we moved on to Davidson Road in Piscataway

1 while he was going to school at Rutgers University.

2 Q Does Mr. Mokone still retain South
3 African nationality or has he become a U.S. Citizen?

4 A No. I believe in 1960 he became
5 naturalized as a British Citizen and I did too in 1962
6 so both of us are really British at the present time.

7 Q I see. You and your husband are
8 presently engaged in a divorce and custody proceeding,
9 is that correct?

10 A That is correct.

11 Q When was that action commenced?

12 A It was commenced in November of 1976.

13 Q Now, you mentioned a daughter Tondie;
14 how old is Tondie?

15 A Tondie is 11 years old.

16 Q And you mentioned she is presently
17 living with you?

18 A She's presently living with me, yes.

19 Q That's only been for a very short period,
20 is that correct?

21 A Yes. I picked Tondie up, I believe, it
22 was on the 19th of December when my husband was
23 arrested.

24 Q And prior to that Tondie was living with
25 her father; did you have visitation rights?

1 A Yes. I had visitation rights of every
2 other weekend.

3 Q And now the custody suit that was then
4 pending in Domestic Relations Court they were to
5 determine with whom Tondie was actually to live
6 permanently?

7 A That is correct.

8 Q Now, could you very briefly describe for
9 the Grand Jury what your relationship was with your
10 husband and by that I mean was your relationship a
11 friendly one?

12 A My relationship with my husband was a
13 very, very unfriendly one.

14 Q Would it be fair to describe it as an
15 acrimonious one?

16 A Yes. Yes, very, very strained.

17 Q Had your husband ever threatened your
18 personal safety at any time?

19 A Yes, many, many a time while I was
20 married to him. In fact, I was beaten up to the point
21 where I had to seek medical attention in 1974 for both
22 my eyes that he had beaten up and he had threatened me
23 many a times. Actually I would have left my husband
24 a long time ago but I was really afraid. He told me
25 at one time he would blind me so that no other man

1 would see me or really get to me.

2 Q Now, directing your attention to Friday,
3 November the 18th, on that day did you exercise your
4 visitation rights and pick Tondie up?

5 A Yes. I picked up Tondie promptly at
6 six o'clock. I say promptly because if I did not get
7 to my husband's place on time I would not get Tondie.
8 My husband always made sure I was on time.

9 Q Your husband was living at 5 Lake Drive
10 in East Brunswick, was he?

11 A No. He was living at Building 2,
12 Apartment 2A. He had moved from Building 5, Apartment
13 1A, Lake Avenue in East Brunswick.

14 Q So you picked Tondie up at six o'clock,
15 is that correct?

16 A Correct.

17 Q Did you see your husband at that time?

18 A No. As a matter of fact, that weekend
19 was kind of unusual for me in that every time I picked
20 up Tondie her father was always around either to tell
21 me I was too early or a little late. So, this weekend
22 was unusual because it was very quiet. I picked up
23 Tondie peacefully; nobody came out and on my way to
24 the car I said to Tondie, "My goodness, where is your
25 father today? Why didn't he come out today," and

1 Tondie said, "Oh, daddy had to go to South Africa
2 because his sister died."

3 Q So, your husband was presumably in South
4 Africa attending the funeral?

5 A My daughter told me her father had gone
6 to South Africa, that he actually said good-bye to her
7 and had some clothes carrying and wanted to know what
8 to say to granny when he got home.

9 Q What was your feelings in hearing that
10 your husband was in South Africa?

11 A I asked Tondie as to when he left and
12 when he was to come back and Tondie told me that he
13 left on Friday and that he was to return on Monday
14 because I had another case on Tuesday where my husband
15 had filed a complaint saying that I had assaulted him
16 so I told Tondie, "I have another hearing on Tuesday.
17 I wonder if daddy will be there," and Tondie said,
18 "Yes, daddy will be back. He'll be back on Monday."

19 I found that unusual. To go to South
20 Africa takes 17 hours but Tondie told me her father
21 assured her he would be back.

22 Q Tondie was going to be with you for the
23 weekend?

24 A Tondie was going to be with me for the
25 weekend, yes.

1 Q Eventually did you return her to Lake
2 Avenue?

3 A Yes. I returned her on Sunday, November
4 the 20th at six o'clock.

5 Q And did you actually see her into the
6 house?

7 A Usually and I let her out of the car
8 because of my fear for really being in any contact
9 with my husband. I usually just lock up my car and
10 wait in my car to see if she gets into the home. I
11 parked my car in a position where I can see that she
12 actually gets in the house and I always tell her that
13 I'll wait for five minutes that if she does not find
14 anyone I will always be waiting for her so that she
15 could come back to the car. I did just that that
16 evening. I waited for five minutes. I saw her get
17 into the house. She did not come out and I drove off.

18 Q Assuming your husband was in South
19 Africa who was there to take care of Tondie?

20 A I did not know. In fact, I got a little
21 concerned knowing that my husband was not there. I
22 drove around to find out who was actually home. In
23 other words, I was trying to see whose car was home.
24 My husband has a Mercedes car and his son has a Fiat
25 car and I was just looking to see that there was a car

1 to assure me that my daughter was okay. I drove
2 around and that was the time I noticed his Mercedes
3 car parked outside on the other parking lot. I
4 noticed also that his son's car was in the driveway
5 so I assumed that either my husband was home or he
6 had someone drive him to the airport and that's why
7 his car was there. I noticed his son's car there. I
8 also assumed that his son must be home so I felt
9 content that at least there was someone at home.

10 Q You mentioned your husband's son. Was
11 this son by a former marriage?

12 A His son is a son out of wedlock. There
13 was no marriage.

14 Q Is his name Ronnie Sello?

15 A His name is Ronnie Sello, S-E-L-L-O.

16 Q How old was Ronnie?

17 A Ronnie is 22 years old.

18 Q Were you aware that Ronnie would sometimes
19 take care of Tondie when your husband was away?

20 A That is correct.

21 Q Now, after you left the area of your
22 husband's apartment where did you go to?

23 A When I left the area I proceeded to go
24 back to 27 Woodlake Drive where I would always go back
25 after dropping Tondie.

1 Q Did I ask you what sort of vehicle you
2 were driving at that time?

3 A No, you didn't.

4 Q What sort of a vehicle were you driving?

5 A I was driving a VW, a blue VW, license
6 plate 309-CTB.

7 Q If you'll forgive my saying so you seem
8 to have an obsession with license plate numbers, is
9 that true?

10 A Yes. I have been followed by cars when
11 I have left my husband's home so I kind of do have
12 that, yes.

13 Q On your way back to Piscataway did
14 anything unusual happen?

15 A On my way back to Piscataway I drove
16 around the Sheraton Hotel that is at the back. I was
17 was trying to make a U-turn into Route 18 West. I
18 came to -- there's a stop sign just before you get into
19 Route 18 West. I naturally stopped at a stop sign.
20 I always look back to see if anyone is following me.
21 I don't know why. When I'm at the stop sign I noticed
22 a light-colored car behind me. I took no notice of
23 it. The road was clear. I proceeded to get into Route
24 18 West and, of course, proceeded onto Route 18 West.
25 I was on my way, of course, to Piscataway. I got into

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*Route 5th Street
Rayclay Street
Route 18 West*

1 Metlars Lane and onto Woodlake Drive.

2 Q Did you again have occasion to note that
3 light-colored car behind you?

4 A No, I did not actually look back at all
5 after that. I was so relaxed assuming that my husband
6 was gone. Usually if I knew that my husband is home
7 I'm very, very vigilant. I always look to see who's
8 following me or what is going to happen to me.

9 Q You have been followed on previous
10 occasions, have you not?

11 A Yes, I have been.

12 Q Mrs. Mokone, before you actually got
13 to the Pitter's house while you were on Woodlake Drive
14 did anything unusual happen?

15 A Very unusual. I was nearing the Pitter's
16 home when all of a sudden just out of the blue a car
17 bumped my car.

18 Q From the rear?

19 A From the rear. It was a sort of bump
20 that you knew it was not an error; it was a deliberate
21 bump. I was very, very fearful. I speeded up and I
22 was bumped again and before I knew what was going on
23 I noticed the car, a light-colored car drive into the
24 driveway of the neighbors to the Pitter's home.

25 Q You say you were bumped, once or twice?

1 A Twice.

2 Q Did you actually pull into the driveway
3 at the Pitter's?

4 A No. When I noticed the car to pull next
5 to the Pitter's home I was so confused, so fearful, I
6 just got a feeling that my life was in danger. It was
7 like I was going to be killed that day. In my
8 confused state instead of driving into the Pitter's
9 driveway I just parked like sideways; I didn't even
10 park straight.

11 I got -- jumped out of the car. At
12 first I thought well, this guy's getting into the
13 neighbor's home so comfortably maybe the man or the
14 person driving -- I mean the car is really safe and
15 maybe the car belongs on the neighbor's driveway. So,
16 I thought maybe I should get out, just find out what
17 is going on. I got out of my car and the first thing,
18 of course, that I was looking at was the license plate
19 numbers. I looked at the license plate number. I
20 took them -- I memorized them. Then I decided I
21 wasn't too sure. I thought I'll go back again to be
22 sure. I went back. I read them again. At that time
23 I saw that there was a man in front of the car, that
24 the man had gotten out of this car, this light-colored
25 car, that the man had been kneeling down as if doing

1 something in front of the car.

2 When I went back for the second time
3 then I saw a man who seemed to have something. I
4 believe it was the left -- I cannot be sure right now --
5 but it seemed like the left arm he had something in
6 his arm which he seemed to have at the back. At that
7 time as I was reading and he saw that I was reading
8 the license plate numbers he gave the impression that
9 he was angry. Before I knew what was going on I tried
10 to look at the face to really study it. It seemed to
11 have a very clear, thin mask but things happened so
12 fast. Before I knew what was going on seeing him
13 really getting angry and jutting towards me I decided
14 I better scream for help. I screamed for help and I
15 heard myself say "Stephen." My mind just saw nothing
16 but the body of a man that I have known for 15 years
17 and to me that stature was my husband's stature.

18 Q Mrs. Mokone, what were the lighting
19 conditions at that time? We're talking about
20 approximately 6:15 in the evening?

21 A It was about 6:30 and it's very dark,
22 very dark. It was when there had been a change.

23 Q How close did you have to get to the car
24 to see the license plate number?

25 A Not too close but with the license plate

1 number I was helped by flood lights really coming from
2 the Pitter's home. You could see the license plate
3 numbers but even then you had to get a little close
4 but I didn't get too close and that's why I had to come
5 the second time because I wasn't sure that I had gotten
6 them too right the first time but as to the man he was
7 standing in a very obscured position, in other words,
8 dark position.

9 Q Now --

10 A With very little lighting coming in.

11 Q You indicated, did you not, that you
12 started to run?

13 A Yes.

14 Q What happened at that point?

15 A I ran. I ran like mad. I decided to
16 take my shoes off because they seemed to really impede
17 my running. I took them off as I was running, just
18 got them off, and before I knew what was going on I
19 knew I fell, then I fell. The man was running after
20 me, no doubt, really hard. I fell. I believe I
21 really became unconscious momentarily because at that
22 time I really don't know what happened to me. I know
23 that I got up and when I got up I was just hot. My
24 back, my eye, my face was burning. I just felt burns.
25 At that time I knew that I was in trouble. I had in

1 the back of my mind my lawyer who had always warned me
2 that, "Joyce, I have been burned with acid. Whatever
3 you do if you ever should get into my situation run
4 for water." So when I felt burns I knew that I was
5 burnt. I ran into the Pitter's home. I knocked. Mr.
6 Pitter had already started getting to the door. He
7 opened the door and the next thing I had in my mind was
8 to get into the water. There's a bathroom right in the
9 foyer as you enter his home. I went into the bathroom
10 and started pouring water onto my face, just pouring
11 water and water and water in my face.

12 Q Mrs. Mokone, eventually you gave the
13 police a description of a light-colored car, is that
14 correct?

15 A I did.

16 Q And also a license plate number that was
17 485-FXH or some transposition thereof?

18 A Yes, I did. As I was putting water on
19 me I didn't want the water to get out. I knew that I
20 tried so hard even though I did become unconscious I
21 had some numbers in me I really tried to cram them.

22 Q Were you sure of those letters FXH?

23 A I tried. I really don't know. I said
24 what came to my mind that I felt that I had tried to
25 cram and even in the state of confusion, fear, and

1 having fallen unconscious I just felt they were numbers
2 that I got. Whether they really sequentially fitted
3 in I knew that I got the letters.

4 Q Now, Mrs. Mokone, you were taken to the
5 hospital very shortly thereafter, is that correct?

6 A Yes, I was.

7 Q That was St. Peter's Hospital in New
8 Brunswick?

9 A That's correct.

10 Q Could you describe for us just briefly
11 what your injuries were at that time?

12 A At the time I had injuries of -- very
13 bad injuries to both my eyes. I had dizziness which
14 apparently came from my middle ear because apparently
15 the solution came into my middle ear. I had a bad
16 laceration on my chin. I had to have, I believe, three
17 or four stitches.

18 Q Let me interrupt you. What was that
19 laceration from? Was that from your fall?

20 A That's when I knew I fell. It was from
21 a fall and then I had a bump on my head that I also
22 sustained. As I was laying on the bed my head just --
23 hair just fell right off on my side.

24 Q Your hair fell off?

25 A My hair has fallen off. I have to have

1 a wig right now as if you've shaved my head on my left
2 side. I have scars on my back. At the time, of course,
3 they were just burning. I got burns on my hand which
4 are healing nicely I think right now. I still have
5 some scars on my right arm right now.

6 Q What are the condition of your eyes at
7 the present time? Have you regained complete sight?

8 A I was seen by the doctor on Monday this
9 very week and I still do not have vision on my left
10 eye.

11 Q Was it your left eye that received the
12 greater amount of the caustic substance?

13 A Correct. Initially my right eye also
14 was kind of out but that eye regained sight I believe
15 in one or two days while I was at St. Peter's. My
16 left eye is the one that really got it.

17 Q What is the prognosis for a complete
18 recovery of sight in your left eye?

19 A When I talked to the doctor he was
20 surprised on Monday that I still didn't have vision.
21 All he says was it's coming along but very, very slowly.

22 Q Mrs. Mokone, I ask you now since you
23 indicated that the man who assaulted you was in a dark
24 area and that he may have had a very thin mask over
25 his face, are you absolutely sure it was your husband

1 who threw a caustic substance on you on November the
2 20th?

3 A I'm absolutely sure it was my husband.

4 MRS. MUNKACSI: I have no further
5 questions. I think you may be excused.

6

7 D E T E C T I V E J A M E S M E G G I S O N,

8 sworn.

9 EXAMINATION BY

10 MRS. MUNKACSI:

11 Q Detective Meggison, by whom are you
12 employed, sir?

13 A Piscataway Township Police Department.

14 Q Now, sir, for how many years may I ask?

15 A Eight years.

16 Q Sir, were you assigned to investigate
17 a complaint that one Joyce Mokone was assaulted in
18 Piscataway on November the 20th of last year, 1977?

19 A Yes, ma'am, I was.

20 Q You in effect were the Detective, the
21 main Detective on the case along with one Detective
22 Gary Eberle, is that correct?

23 A Yes, ma'am.

24 Q When exactly did you enter the case?

25 A The case was assigned to me on the