

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

HAMPSHIRE, s.s.

JUVENILE COURT
DEPARTMENT OF THE
TRIAL COURT
NO. YO10H001

COMMONWEALTH

v.

ASHLEY LONGE

COMMONWEALTH'S MEMORANDUM OF LAW
IN SUPPORT OF ITS MOTION FOR JOINDER OF
YOUTHFUL OFFENDER INDICTMENT AND DELINQUENCY COMPLAINTS
PURSUANT TO *MASS.R. CRIM.P. 9(a)(3)* AND *G.L. C. 119, Section 54*

Now comes the Commonwealth in the above-captioned matter and respectfully files its memorandum of law in support of its motion to join, pursuant to *Mass.R.Crim.P. 9(a)(3)* and *G.L. c. 119, section 54*, the defendant's youthful offender indictment and four (4) delinquency complaints for trial. As grounds for its motion the Commonwealth submits the following:

ISSUE PRESENTED

WHETHER THE YOUTHFUL OFFENDER INDICTMENT CHARGING THE DEFENDANT WITH AN OFFENSE STEMMING FROM ACTIVITY ON THE GROUNDS OF SOUTH HADLEY HIGH SCHOOL, OR PROPERTY ADJACENT THERETO, ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 14, 2010, HAS A SUFFICIENT TEMPORAL AND SCHEMATIC NEXUS OR SHOWS A COMMON COURSE OF CONDUCT OR SERIES OF CRIMINAL EPISODES CONNECTED TOGETHER SO AS TO RENDER JOINDER OF THIS YOUTHFUL OFFENDER INDICTMENT WITH THE DELINQUENCY COMPLAINTS CHARGING HER WITH DISTURBANCE OF A SCHOOL ASSEMBLY, CRIMINAL HARASSMENT, ASSAULT WITH A DANGEROUS WEAPON AND VIOLATION OF CIVIL RIGHTS WITH BODILY INJURY RESULTING PROPER?

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

On March 26, 2010, the defendant, Ashley Longe, was indicted, as a youthful offender, by the March sitting of the Hampshire County Grand Jury upon a single charge of violation of civil rights (with bodily injury resulting) in violation of the law as defined by *G.L. c. 265, section 37*. Hampshire County Indictment #010-053. Specifically, the youthful offender indictment alleges that the defendant did, by force or threat of force, willfully injure, intimidate or interfere with, or attempt to injure, intimidate or interfere with, or oppress or threaten Phoebe Prince in the free exercise or enjoyment of any right(s) or privilege(s) secured to her by the constitution or laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or by the constitution or laws of the United States, and bodily injury resulted to her. The case was transferred to the Hampshire Division of the Juvenile Court, per Order of the Court, Carhart, J., on the date the youthful offender indictment was returned. *G.L. c. 264, section 4*. The defendant is scheduled to be arraigned upon that charge, #YO10H0001, in the Franklin/Hampshire Juvenile Court, Hadley sitting, on April 8, 2010.

Previously, on March 24, 2010, detectives from the Massachusetts State Police Detective Unit attached to the Northwestern District Attorney's Office sought and received delinquency complaints naming the defendant and charging her with one charge each of violation of civil rights, with bodily injury resulting in violation of *G.L. c. 265, section 37*, criminal harassment in violation of *G.L. c. 265, section 43(a)* and disturbance of a school assembly in violation of *G.L. c. 272, section 40*, assault by means of a dangerous weapon in violation of *G.L. c. 265, section 15B*. DL10H0055- DL10H0058. Specifically, the delinquency complaints allege, in seriatim, that the defendant did, by

force or threat of force, willfully injure, intimidate or interfere with, or attempt to injure, intimidate or interfere with, or oppress or threaten Phoebe Prince in the free exercise or enjoyment of any right(s) or privilege(s) secured to her by the constitution or laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or by the constitution or laws of the United States, and bodily injury resulted to her; did willfully and maliciously engage in a knowing pattern of conduct over a period of time directed at Phoebe Prince, which seriously alarmed her and would cause a reasonable person to suffer emotional distress; did willfully interrupt or disturb a school or other assembly of people met for a lawful purpose; and, did assault Phoebe Prince by means of a dangerous weapon, to wit: a bottle, can, or similar non-alcoholic beverage container. The defendant is scheduled to be arraigned upon these delinquency complaints on April 8, 2010.¹

The time frame alleged for both the youthful offender indictment and the delinquency complaints is on or before January 14, 2010; the location of the offenses is South Hadley High School in South Hadley, Massachusetts, or upon adjacent property thereto. The Commonwealth has filed a motion to join the defendant's youthful offender indictment with the defendant's four (4) delinquency complaints.

STATEMENT OF THE FACTS

Based upon information known to the Commonwealth (and contained in the probable cause statement submitted with the application for delinquency complaints in this matter), the following information has been collected through witness interviews and/or first-hand observation(s) of investigators: On Thursday, January 14, 2010, at

¹ An additional delinquency complaint was sought and obtained by investigators charging this defendant with a single charge of assault and battery and disturbance of a school assembly, DL10H0059-60. This complaint is not at issue in the instant motion.

approximately 4:55 p.m., the Massachusetts State Police Detective Unit, attached to the Northwestern District Attorney's Office, was contacted regarding an alleged suicide by hanging at 356 Newton Street, 2nd floor, South Hadley, Massachusetts. At approximately 5:17 p.m., investigators attached to the Northwestern District Attorney's Office arrived on scene, met with, and were briefed by Detective Mark Dominick of the South Hadley Police Department. Responding personnel discovered the lifeless body of a white female, hanging in the rear stairwell of the apartment. At that time, the decedent was identified as Phoebe Prince, a resident of the home.

Subsequently, on January 15, 2010, Dr. Andrew W. Sexton, a forensic pathologist with the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Western Division, located in Holyoke, Massachusetts, performed a postmortem examination on the body of Phoebe Prince. Dr. Sexton observed a ligature mark about the neck of Ms. Prince. At the conclusion of the examination, Dr. Sexton opined the cause of death was asphyxia due to hanging and the manner of death was suicide.

In an initial interview with the decedent's mother, investigators learned that Ms. Prince, who had enrolled at the High School in September 2009, was "getting bullied" by other students at South Hadley High School. According to the published school calendar for the South Hadley Public Schools, the first day of school for the 2009-2010 school calendar year was September 1, 2009.

Additional investigation later revealed that, sometime in November 2009, Sean Mulveyhill, a South Hadley High School senior, had ended a dating relationship with Ms. Prince, a South Hadley High School freshman. Thereafter, Sean Mulveyhill resumed a dating relationship with his girlfriend, South Hadley High School junior, Kayla Narey.

The defendant, Ashley Longe, a South Hadley High School junior, had known Sean Mulveyhill for years and the pair were close platonic friends. She (the defendant) became acquainted with Kayla Narey through her friendship with Sean Mulveyhill. At diverse dates and times during the school year, Kayla Narey voiced her dislike for Phoebe Prince to her (Ms. Prine), Ms. Narey's friends and acquaintances, and other high school classmates. Sean Mulveyhill and the defendant, individually or in conjunction with each other, and Kayla Narey also voiced their dislike of Ms. Prince's relationship with Sean Mulveyhill to Ms. Prince, their respective friends and acquaintances, and other high school classmates. One witness told investigators, in a written statement, that Ms. Prince was not an aggressive person, and stated that:

She (Ms. Prince) definitely didn't want to fight with the girls in the school. She just wanted to keep to herself and keep things the way they were. She wanted people to stop picking on her, to stop being bullied. She wanted people to leave her alone. She wanted people to stop spreading rumors and stop the girls from talking about her.

On Wednesday, January 13, 2010, Mrs. Prince told a confidant that she was accused by other girls at school of "taking away" another girl's boyfriend; that she (Ms. Prince) was being targeted by peers and that accusations at school escalated to making threats of harming her. On January 13th, Ms. Prince explained school "has been close to intolerable lately".

An initial examination of Ms. Prince's cellular telephone was conducted by investigators who were able to determine that several text messages were exchanged between Ms. Prince and an identified telephone number approximately two (2) hours prior to her death. Investigators subsequently learned, through witness interviews, that Ms. Prince had exchanged text messages with a friend during the afternoon hours of her

death. The texts focused around the verbally abusive incidents Ms. Prince had been subjected to by Sean Mulveyhill, Kayla Narey and the defendant earlier on the date of her death and her despair at the on-going taunting to which she was subjected. Following the last outgoing message, documented at 2:48 pm on January 14th, there were no further outgoing texts recovered from Ms. Prince's cellular telephone, although a forensic search of the telephone revealed two (2) additional messages in the "inbox" that went unanswered by Ms. Prince.

From the date of Ms. Prince's death on January 14th to the present, investigators from the Massachusetts State Police Detective Unit attached to the Northwestern District Attorney's Office and the South Hadley Police Department have interviewed and obtained statements from multiple witnesses, that reveal a pattern of assaultive conduct, through an act or series of acts, directed toward Phoebe Prince by the defendant occurring on or before January 14, 2010 on the grounds of South Hadley High School, located at 356 Newton Street, South Hadley, Massachusetts, or the grounds adjacent thereto, based upon the defendant's hostility of Ms. Prince's relationship with her (the defendant's) male friend, Sean Mulveyhill. Specifically, witnesses have reported that Phoebe Prince was in the library with friends on January 14, 2010. Sean Mulveyhill, Kayla Narey, and the defendant were in the library at the same time. According to witnesses, the defendant made reference to Ms. Prince on multiple occasions while in the library. The first time, the defendant yelled something to the effect of "close your legs" and "I hate stupid sluts." Others in the library heard what was said, and attempted to divert Ms. Prince's attention so she would not hear it. Another time occurred at the end of the same period. As the bell rang, students got up to leave the library. The defendant walked by Ms. Prince's

table and said something to the effect that she (the defendant) hated sluts. According to witnesses the defendant said it loud enough so that Ms. Prince could hear it; and she did. According to one student, the defendant "was standing next to another table screaming at [Ms. Prince] from across the library." This student told investigators that he definitely heard the defendant call Ms. Prince an "Irish whore". This student described the defendant as "taunting" Ms. Prince, or saying things to her from across the library, on and off for the five minutes that he and another male student were in the library. The defendant intentionally directed comments toward Ms. Prince, so as to malign, among other things, Ms. Prince's national origin; specifically, Ms. Prince's Irish heritage. Multiple witnesses informed investigators that the defendant referred to Ms. Prince using such words as "stupid sluts" and "Irish whore" while Ms. Prince attempted to study in the school's library. The defendant's comments to Ms. Prince were loud enough that they were overheard by other students in the library. Sean Mulveyhill and Kayla Narey were present throughout these incidents and investigation revealed that they partook, with the defendant, in penning similar derogatory comments about Ms. Prince [Irish bitch...Is a Cunt] on the library sign in sheet, as well as visibly displaying affection toward each other in Ms. Prince's line of sight as the defendant taunted her (Ms. Prince).

Thereafter, at the end of the school day on January 14th, at approximately 2PM, students were congregating in the auditorium area of the high school. The defendant was in this area, in the presence of Sean Mulveyhill and Kayla Narey, as various other students passed by the trio. Multiple witnesses have reported to investigators that the defendant again partook in a verbal assault of Ms. Prince as she (Ms. Prince) made her way past the group, en route to the main doors of the building. The defendant started

yelling at Ms. Prince. According to one witness, the defendant called Ms. Prince a “whore” and also stated, “...why don’t you just open your legs.” According to this witness, the defendant was “calling” Ms. Prince “out” and Ms. Prince “just kept walking.” This incident occurred just after the witness heard Sean Mulveyhill and the defendant talking about Ms. Prince and calling her names. The witness heard both Sean Mulveyhill and the defendant call Ms. Prince a “whore”. As the defendant spoke, the witness said the other students stopped, “Everyone was silent”. The witness observed that Sean Mulveyhill encouraged the defendant’s behavior. Another witness heard Sean Mulveyhill prompt the defendant by saying, “Here she comes,” just prior to Ms. Prince walking by the trio. Immediately thereafter, the defendant called Ms. Prince a “slut” and talked about her (Ms. Prince) opening her legs for some guy. Investigators learned that Kayla Narey was sitting next to the defendant at the time that the defendant was yelling at Ms. Prince and Kayla Narey was laughing.

Investigators also have learned about a third incident that occurred just minutes after the incident in the auditorium area involving the defendant and Phoebe Prince. A witness reported that, upon leaving school, the defendant left the school parking lot in a friend’s car. Ms. Prince had already left school grounds and was walking home on Newton Street, on the same side of the road as the high school. As the vehicle in which the defendant was riding passed Ms. Prince, the defendant took an empty energy drink can, called Monster Drink, that was inside the vehicle and threw it at Ms. Prince. According to the witness, she remembered hearing the can hit the ground, but did not know if it hit Ms. Prince. The witness reported that as the defendant threw the can at

Phoebe, that she (the defendant) said something degrading to her like "Whore." The defendant started laughing and reported that Ms. Prince was crying as she walked home.

Witnesses stated that Ms. Prince's reactions to the actions previously described incidents varied from fear and apprehension to crying; and that, at various times, these actions interfered with her school environment.

ARGUMENT

THE DELINQUENCY COMPLAINTS CHARGING THE DEFENDANT WITH OFFENSES STEMMING FROM HER ACTIONS TOWARD PHOEBE PRINCE AT SOUTH HADLEY HIGH SCHOOL, OR ITS ADJACENT PROPERTY, ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 14TH HAVE A SUFFICIENT TEMPORAL AND SCHEMATIC NEXUS OR SHOW A COMMON COURSE OF CONDUCT OR SERIES OF CRIMINAL EPISODES CONNECTED TOGETHER SO AS TO RENDER JOINDER OF THE CHARGED DELINQUENCY COMPLAINTS WITH THE YOUTHFUL OFFENDER INDICTMENT CHARGING HER WITH A VIOLATION OF CIVIL RIGHTS WITH BODILY INJURY RESULTING TO PHOEBE PRINCE PROPER.

Joinder of the defendant's youthful offender indictment with her delinquency complaints is proper. The crimes with which the defendant is charged are "related offenses" as that term is defined by *Rule 9*. In addition, joinder is in the best interests of justice. One trial will conserve judicial resources. The crimes with which the defendant is charged are factually interconnected, leaving many of the same witnesses to testify in each case. Lastly, prejudice is unlikely because evidence of each crime should be admissible in separate trials as evidence of the defendant's common scheme, intent, identity or motive.

The propriety of joinder of indictments for trial is a matter within the sound discretion of the trial judge. *Commonwealth v. Gaynor*, 443 Mass. at 260, citing *Commonwealth v. Montanez*, 410 Mass. 290, 303 (1991); *Commonwealth v. Walker*, 442

Mass. 185, 199 (2004); *Commonwealth v. Wilson*, 427 Mass. 336, 345-346 (1998).

Joinder is governed by *Mass.R.Crim.P. 9*, which provides that the trial judge shall join two or more related offenses for trial unless it is not in the best interests of justice.

Mass.R.Crim.P. 9 (a) (3). Thus, joinder requires first that the offenses are related, and second that joinder be in the best interests of justice

a. The defendant's youthful offender indictment and four delinquency complaints are "related" as that term is defined under Mass.R.Crim.P. 9.

Where the offenses "are based on the same criminal conduct or episode or arise out of a course of criminal conduct or series of criminal episodes connected together or constituting parts of a single scheme or plan," the offenses are related. *Commonwealth v. Mamay*, 407 Mass. 412, 416 (1990). Time and space play an important role in determining whether offenses are related for the purposes of joinder. *Commonwealth v. Zemtsov*, 443 Mass. 36, 44 (2004). See *Commonwealth v. Gaynor*, 443 Mass. 245, 260-263 (2005); *Commonwealth v. Delaney*, 425 Mass. 587, 594 (1997), cert. denied, 522 U.S. 1058 (1998). Factual similarities between the criminal episodes also play a role. See *Commonwealth v. Ferraro*, 424 Mass. 87 (1997). Here, the circumstances of the crimes charged demonstrate the defendant's participation in a series of criminal episodes that are sufficiently connected to support joinder of her youthful offender indictment and delinquency complaints for trial. *Commonwealth v. Walker*, 442 Mass. at 200; *Commonwealth v. Zemtsov*, 443 Mass. at 44-45. All of the alleged criminal activity occurs in the same geographical area: the South Hadley High School or property adjacent to it. *Commonwealth v. Montez*, 450 Mass. 736, 746 (2008) (four criminal episodes of breaking and enterings, with the murder of one, a female occupant, all occurred within

close proximity of each other and the defendant's apartment). It also is temporally connected; having occurred on or before January 14th.

b. Joinder of the defendant's indictments for trial is in the best interests of justice.

Joinder of the defendant's indictments for trial also is in the best interests of justice. First, it serves the interests of judicial economy. Many of the same witnesses were involved in all or most of the cases and would be called to testify at the separate trials. *Commonwealth v. Gaynor*, 443 Mass. 245, 259-263 (2005) citing *Commonwealth v. Hoppin*, 387 Mass. 25, 32 (1982).

Next, the defendant would not be prejudiced by joinder. When, as it must, this Court considers the question of joinder by deciding it "in the context of the guarantee of a fair trial," for the defendant, the question turns, in large measure, on "whether evidence of the other . . . offenses would have been admissible at a separate trial on each indictment," *Mamay*, 407 Mass. at 417 (quoting *Commonwealth v. Sylvester*, 388 Mass. 749, 758 (1983)); *Commonwealth v. Gallison*, 383 Mass. 659, 672 (1981). See *Commonwealth v. Wilson*, 427 Mass. at 346. While evidence of other criminal conduct is not admissible to prove the propensity of the defendant to commit the indicted offense, *Commonwealth v. Gallison*, 383 Mass. at 672, for purposes of joinder, it may be used to show a common scheme or pattern of operation. *Commonwealth v. Feijoo*, 419 Mass. at 494-495; *Commonwealth v. Gaynor*, 443 Mass. at 260.


Since each of the prerequisites to joinder are present here, "as a matter of law" the cases should be joined for trial. See *Ferraro*, 424 Mass. at 91 (court found that "as a matter of law" the relatedness of the offenses required that they be joined for trial where defendant's sexual assaults on young boys all committed in similar fashion and in close

geographic proximity were followed by anniversary telephone calls from the defendant to his victims which court found to be a "signature" modus operandi); *Commonwealth v. Sylvester*, 13 Mass. App. Ct. 360, 361-362 (1982)(court upheld joinder decision where it was not persuaded by defendant's argument that joinder of inherently odious sexual offenses against minor children would so disgust the jury that joinder was inherently prejudicial).

CONCLUSION

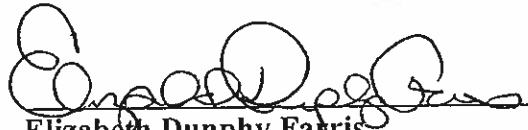
For the foregoing reasons, the Commonwealth's Motion for Joinder of Youthful Offender Indictment and Delinquency Complaints Pursuant to *Mass.R.Crim.P. 9 (a)(3)* and *G.L. c. 119, section 54* should be ALLOWED.

Respectfully Submitted,
THE COMMONWEALTH

By 
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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT ONE (1) COPY OF THE COMMONWEALTH'S MEMORANDUM OF LAW IN SUPPORT OF ITS MOTION FOR JOINDER OF YOUTHFUL OFFENDER INDICTMENT AND DELINQUENCY COMPLAINTS PURSUANT TO *MASS.R.CRIM.P. 9(a)(3)* AND *G.L. C. 119, SECTION 54* HAS BEEN DELIVERED, FIRST CLASS POSTAGE PREPAID, TO A.J. O'DONALD, 1859 NORTHAMPTON STREET, HOLYOKE, MA, 01040, ATTORNEY FOR THE DEFENDANT, ASHLEY LONGE, THIS 8TH DAY OF APRIL 2010.



Elizabeth Dunphy Farris
Deputy First Assistant District Attorney
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