



# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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## *Press Release*

### Murder conviction in 2009 Braintree Axe attack

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A Norfolk Superior Court jury has convicted Lucas E. Walters of first-degree murder for killing a neighbor with repeated axe blows when the neighbor refused to lend him money.

"This was a terrible crime, and a horrible burden for the family of Jeffrey Phillips to bear," Norfolk District Attorney Michael W. Morrissey said after the verdict was read. "We thank the jury for their work, their diligence and their just conclusion. It is our hope that today's verdict provides Jeffrey's family whatever modicum of solace the criminal justice system can provide."

Walters, age 32, of 391 Middle St., Apt. 1, Braintree, told police that he had asked Jeffrey Phillips, who lived in Apt. 3 of the same building, to borrow money. But Phillips had refused, in part because Walters was already in his debt.

That July 24, 2009 conversation became a confrontation that ended with Walters repeatedly striking Phillips with an axe in the area of a shed/carport in the yard of the multi-family home where they both lived.

Phillips' parents came to the Braintree Police Station to file a missing persons report at 5:40 p.m. July 27. Braintree police began an investigation into his disappearance. By July 28, they had ascertained that his cell phone had not been used in days, and was either turned off or destroyed. He had not called or attended his job at Vater Percussions in Holbrook, which co-workers said was out of character. Phillips' sister reported that valuable electronics and other items were missing from her brother's apartment.

At roughly 8 p.m. on July 29, 2009, Walters arrived at the Braintree Police station asking to talk to officers. He met with Braintree detectives and a State Police homicide detective attached to the Norfolk District Attorney's Office. After being read his rights, Walters described the altercation with Phillips, claiming that he had been stuck first, and described killing his neighbor with an axe, then securing his body in the shed for two days. Walters relayed how he then wrapped the remains in a blue tarp and drove them to the Southwick, Massachusetts area, where Walters had previously lived, on Sunday, July 26, 2009. He stated that he used Phillips credit card to buy gasoline and cigarettes before the trip.

That night, Walters led police to an area in Suffield, Conn., adjacent to Southwick, where the body was located in a wooded area near 461 Babbs Road in Suffield.

"We were very fortunate to have a strong prosecution team of Assistant District Attorney Brian Wilson, Appeals attorney Pamela Alford and Victim Advocate Beth Avola," District Attorney Morrissey said. "The Braintree Police Department and State Police from our office put together a solid case, substantiated Walters' disclosures and gave us the information that convinced this jury."

Walters was also convicted of breaking and entering in the day time and larceny from a building. The jury delivered its verdict on what would have been Phillips' 35th birthday.

Walters will be sentenced by Judge Kenneth Fishman tomorrow (June 20, 2013) at 10 a.m.