Preppy wanted dates in drag, cops say

By SEAN FLYNN and JASON B. JOHNSON

A Watertown computer manager fond of the gender-bent Combat Zone tried to talk twin transsexuals into a three-way tryst only hours before he strangled the one who went home with him, prosecutors and other sources charged yesterday.

"Yes!" Gabriel Pickett — aka Gabrielle — cheered as a judge ordered William C. Palmer, 34, held without bail for allegedly killing Pickett's identical brother.

Roman Pickett, 23, a pre-operative transsexual who preferred to be called Chanel, was found dead in Palmer's Watertown home about 1 p.m. Monday, roughly eight hours after

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he was choked to death, officials said.

Prosecutors Tuesday said Palmer killed Pickett in a rage after discovering a man beneath a feminine costume of tight jeans and lacy top, replete with a wig and hormone-enhanced breasts.

But other sources — including a transvestite friend of the Pickett twins — insisted Palmer should have known what he brought home early Monday.

"That guy knows what was going on, what she (Chanel Pickett) was about," said the friend, who asked not to be named. "I've talked to that guy — I *know* he knows what's going on.

"He had approached me one time. He asked me if I had breasts, and I said no because I'm not a pre-op. That's when he seemed to lose interest."

Defense attorney Walter B. Prince said he "absolutely" will consider building a self-defense case for Palmer.

"There clearly was a horrendous fight that occurred, and my client received multiple bruises and bites from this assailant," Prince said.

From across the first session courtroom of Watertown District Court — where Palmer appeared nervous yet neatly dressed in a dark suit and tie — no wounds were visible on his face.

Palmer, a manager at Unisys in Somerville who neighbors described as a polite and friendly preppy, allegedly picked up Gabrielle and Chanel Pickett at the Playland Cafe in the Combat Zone late Sunday, prosecutors said.

Palmer eventually drove the twins to their Chelsea apartment in his steel-blue Nissan Pathfinder, then stayed about 90 minutes to drink and snort the cocaine he purchased near the Playland, Middlesex County Assistant District Attorney Adrienne Lynch said.

Both Picketts were invited to Palmer's [redacted] home, which he shares with three other people, Lynch said. Only Chanel accepted.

Once there, Palmer and Pickett argued so loudly that two housemates rushed to Palmer's bedroom door.

The housemates — who were not home yesterday — told investigators they heard Palmer arguing with a man, Lynch said. But Palmer shouted through his bedroom door: "I've got a crazy bitch in here."

Prince said he will argue for a reduction in Palmer's no-bail status in Middlesex Superior Court tomorrow.

Pickett has been charged in the past with several criminal offenses, including assault and street fighting.

VIOLENT END: William C. Palmer, top photo, was charged yesterday with killing Ramon Pickett, 23, a pre-operative transsexual. In the above photo are Ramon Pickett, right, and his twin, Gabrielle. Gabrielle Pickett cheered as a judge ordered Palmer held without bail yesterday.