

THE MURDER OF PAMELA MASTROPIETRO

Italy



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This document was funded by the European Union's Justice Programme (2014-2020)

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Key facts of the case

In the night between January 30 and 31, 2018, was reported to the local company of Carabinieri the presence of two trolleys abandoned in a ditch along a road connecting the locality Casette Verdini and Pollenza, near the town of Macerata. The next morning law enforcement discovered the contents of them: the mutilated body of 18-year-old Pamela Mastropietro (from here on PM). The girl had recently moved away from the recovery community for drug addicts in which she was. Cameras from a local drugstore caught her being followed by a man.

On the evening of January 31, the local Carabinieri stopped Innocent Oseghale (from here on IO), of Nigerian nationality with a regular (but expired) residence permit, with criminal record for drug dealing.

Here is the criminal trial's reconstruction of the evening: PM asked IO for heroin, which he does not have but he said he could find. Then, he called a compatriot, Desmond Lucky (from here on DL), who procured it. Before going to IO's house, they stopped at the drugstore to buy a syringe. After PM injected herself with heroin, she was sexually approached by DM, whom she rejected.

She was hit by a slap and passed out. Lucky walked away, leaving her only with Oseghale. He tried to wake her up with water and he raped her. Following the rape, PM wanted to leave and return to her home. But she got assaulted by IO, who hit her at least twice with an edged weapon. After that, he began to dismember the body. He finished the job washing the body parts with bleach, to remove every trace. He then locked the body in the victim's trolleys and abandoned them along the road.

She got into a fight with IO, who hit her at least twice with an edged weapon. After that, he began the dismemberment of the corpse, which ended with washing the body parts with a chlorine solution to remove every trace. He then locked the corpse in trolleys belonging to the victim and

abandoned them along the road.

Applicable law

IO is convicted to life sentence for:

- Voluntary homicide (ex art.575 Penal Code (CP)) aggravated by sexual assault.
- Contempt of a corpse (ex art.410 CP): Whoever commits acts of vilification over a corpse, or its ashes shall be punished by imprisonment from one to three years. If the offender disfigures or mutilates the corpse, or commits, in any case, acts of brutality or obscenity on the corpse, he shall be punished by imprisonment from three to six years.
- Concealment of a corpse (ex art.412 CP): anyone who conceals a corpse, or part of a corpse, or hides the ashes of a corpse, shall be punished by imprisonment of up to three years.

For the same fact DL and Lucky Awelima (from here on LA) were also investigated, later acquitted of the charge of complicity in the abovementioned crimes but convicted for:

- Production, trafficking, and illicit possession of narcotic or psychotropic substances (ex art.73 D.P.R. no. 309 of October 9, 1990)

Criminal proceedings

Around 7 p.m. on January 31, following investigations launched by the military of the Macerata Carabinieri Provincial Command and the R.O.S. (Special Operations Group), under the guidance of the prosecutor Stefania Ciccioli, IO was stopped on the stairs of his building in Via Spalato. He was taken to the police station, and

interrogated the same night, in the presence of his lawyer and an interpreter, and then arrested. Two days later, on February 3, Giovanni Manzoni, the judge for the preliminary investigation (GIP) of Macerata, validated the arrest and ordered precautionary detention in prison. At first it seems that IO was accused of murder, contempt and concealment of a corpse. At that date, the autopsy had not yet clarified the cause of PM's death. Later, on February 6, it was made known that the validation of the arrest excludes the charge of murder. The case immediately gained wide media coverage. On February 10, the Chief Prosecutor of Macerata, Giovanni Giorgio, told the press that following the arrests of DL e LA he considered "the investigation concluded", alleging the crimes of murder, contempt, and concealment of a corpse and drug dealing. The following day, the same prosecutor stated in a note how the investigations "cannot be considered concluded" and how the Prosecutor's Office of Macerata does not intend "to follow or consent to summary justice procedures". On February 14, the same GIP Giovanni Manzoni validates the arrest of DL and LA. On March 12, the Court that carries out the judicial review of a person's deprivation of liberty denied the request for release for DL e LA. On April 23, IO received a new precautionary detention order for facts unrelated to the murder of PM. On May 4, the Prosecutor's Office asks and obtains from the GIP a pre-trial detention order for murder. However, the GIP excludes the existence of serious evidence of guilt for the charge of rape. On June 1, DL and LA's attorneys petitioned the Macerata Prosecutor's Office for immediate trial for the crime of possession and distribution of drugs. On June 6, the Court that carries out the judicial review rejects the appeal of the Macerata Prosecutor's Office, which requested that IO be kept in prison also for the charge of sexual assault. On the same days, the GIP of Macerata, Giovanni Manzoni, revokes pre-trial detention on charges of murder, contempt, destruction and concealment of a corpse against LA and DL. On June 12, the Prosecutor's Office closed the investigation against IO. He is charged with the crimes of voluntary murder aggravated by sexual assault, contempt and concealment of corpse, sexual assault against a person in conditions of mental or physical inferiority.

On July 31, during a prison interrogation, IO confesses to have cut PM's body into pieces, but he claims he did not kill her. On September 18, a collaborator of justice (collaboratore di giustizia), and former cellmate of IO, accuses him of confessing to the commission of the murder; IO denies. On September 26, all three are indicted for possession and distribution of drugs by the GUP (judge for the pre-trial hearings) of the Court of Macerata, Andrea Bonifazi. On October 17, DL e LA are sentenced for drug dealing, respectively to 6 and 8 years of prison; for the trial concerning the murder of PM, IO remains the only defendant. On the same day, the Prosecutor of Macerata, Giovanni Giorgio, submit the indictment request for IO. On November 26, the pre-trial hearing took place in front of the GUP, Claudio Bonifazi; the defendant's lawyers ask for the abbreviated trial, that is not accepted. On February 13, 2019, the first hearing against IO takes place before the Court of Macerata. The Municipality of Macerata is a plaintiff in civil proceedings. On May 8, the Prosecutor's Office of Macerata asks to the Macerata Court for life sentence for IO. In addition to life imprisonment, prosecutor Giovanni Giorgio urged an aggravated sentence of nine years and three months for the concealment of the corpse, the application of solitary confinement for 18 months and expulsion from the national territory after the expiration of the sentence. IO's lawyers maintains his innocence of the crimes of murder and sexual assault, requesting an acquittal. They ask for the minimum sentence to be applied for the charges of contempt and concealment of a corpse. They also highlight the unreliability of the declarations of the collaborator of justice, on which part of the prosecutor's theory is based. On May 29, the Court of Macerata issues a life sentence with daytime isolation for 18 months for IO, convicting him of murder and concealment of a corpse - while sexual assault is absorbed by the aggravating factors. On September 16, 2020, start the appeal process. On October 14, the Prosecutor of Ancona, Sergio Sottani, requests confirmation of life sentence with daytime isolation, without mitigation for IO. The defense continues to argue IO's innocence of the charge of murder. On October 16, the Appeal Court of Ancona confirms the life sentence with daytime isolation for 18 months for IO. The charges

remain of voluntary murder aggravated by sexual assault, contempt, and concealment of a corpse.

Disclosure of information

Overview on investigation secrecy and communication

It can be affirmed that the right to judicial reporting in the Italian legal system has a double constitutional anchorage: to ex art. 21 and ex art. 101. The former guarantees freedom of the press and of thought, while the latter establishes that justice is administered on behalf of the people.

It follows from their combined provisions that society has the right to be informed both ways in which justice is administered and of facts that might disturb the quiet continuation of community life.

However, this right is subject to a conflict: between it and the postulate of paragraph two of ex art. 27 Cost. It states that "The defendant shall not be considered guilty until final conviction".

Given this juxtaposition of constitutionally guaranteed rights, a balance seems both necessary and dutiful. Thus, precise limits have been identified to the publicity of a court document and, consequently, to the right of judicial reporting.

Two rules establish precise provisions on the secrecy of penal documents: ex art. 114 and ex art. 329 of the Penal Procedure Code (CPP).

Article 329 CPP provides that "acts of investigation carried out by the Prosecutor and the judicial police, requests done by the Prosecutor for authorization to carry out investigative acts and the acts of the judge ruling on such requests shall be covered by the obligation of secrecy until the accused becomes aware of it and, in any event, no later than the close of the pre-trial investigation".

There are certain exceptions, both regarding the publication of secret documents and to the secrecy of public documents.

Article 144 CPP establishes the prohibition of "publication, even in part or in summary, in the press or by other medium, of the documents covered by the obligation of secrecy or even of their content"; the scope of the case is broadened by the second paragraph, that concerns the publishability of the documents not covered by investigation secrecy, until the end of the pre-trial investigation or the preliminary hearing. However, the disclosure of the contents in summary form is not prohibited.

The cases in which secrecy remains during the hearing are included in the third, fourth and fifth paragraph. The sixth paragraph prohibits to "publish the names and images of minors, persons harmed by the offence until they have come of age".

The paragraph 6-bis prohibits to "publish the image of a person deprived of his liberty taken while being handcuffed or subjected to other means of physical coercion". The publishability of document not covered by secret is always permitted, as specified by the seventh paragraph. Article 684 CP sanctions the violations of the above-mentioned article, establishing that "anyone who publishes [addressing an indeterminate number of persons, ndr], in whole or in part, even in summary form, acts or documents of criminal proceedings, the publication of which is prohibited by law, shall be punished with imprisonment of up to 30 days or with a fine ranging from € 51 to € 258".

In addition to this sanction, there is the possibility of disciplinary sanctions by the holder of the disciplinary power against the professional figure involved (ex art. 115 CPP).

Regarding the disclosure of information, the relevant rules have a threefold rationale: in the preliminary phase and from the prosecutors' point of view, the legislator ought to ensure investigative secrecy, and aspire to avoid that some leak could jeopardize a good investigation performance. On the suspect's side, the legislator wants to guarantee the individual's right to privacy, understood as his right to control his personal information projected to the outside world.

During the hearing, the legislator intends to safeguard the serenity of the judge, free as far as possible from external influences, to allow the full operation of the principle of equality in the parties' adversarial.

Investigative secrecy lapses the moment the prosecutor notifies the accusation. Therefore, from the moment the suspect becomes aware of the proceedings against him, the act is no longer secret and can be disclosed to the public.

It is not an infringement to publish warrant notice, interrogation reports and search orders at the time when the suspect has knowledge of them. However, violations can be found in the preceding phase, i.e. the strictly investigative phase, especially regarding cases of considerable public interest. At this stage, a lot of space is often - and improperly - given by the media to information still covered by secrecy.

The current legal system makes a distinction between the act as such and its content: on one hand, it allows the communication of content in a summarized form and, on the other hand, it recognizes that the investigation is sometimes, by its very nature, perceptible to the community. The prohibition does not, therefore, cover information on the conduct of procedural activities visible to the outside world and documents of extra-trial provenance, such as those originating from factual events outside the trial. Given the various constitutionally guaranteed interests at stake and the sensitivity of the information resulting from a criminal action, the legislator considered that it was necessary to formalize the communication methods of the judicial offices. An example of that could be found in article 5 of decree 106/2006, which establishes that "the Chief Prosecutor is the sole holder of relations with the media unless he has been expressly delegated others to do so". The aim is to put a stop to the practice of preferential channels between reporters and prosecutors. A further purpose is to avoid the personalization of investigations through impersonal communication, shifting responsibility for one prosecutor to the office. This theme has often been subject to a debate inside the National Magistrates Association (ANM) and the self-government body of the magistrates (CSM). The

latter has recently set out guidelines regarding the communication, recommending the creation of a Court's or Prosecutor's Office press office. They also advise to pursue information's objectiveness, impartiality (with particular regards when referring the content of a charge to the media), fairness and balance.

The communication in Mastropietro's case

Several of the abovementioned rules have been violated in the present case. Following the murder, no official statement was issued by any law enforcement agency. However, the day before the family was scheduled to recognize the corpse, that should have happened on February first, there was already some press news that links the body to Pamela Mastropietro.

On February first, 24 hours later IO's arrest, on Carabinieri's social media platform appears the message: "#1febbraio, Carabinieri provincial command of Macerata and #ROS, by collecting testimonies and video images, were able to identify the last person 18-year-old Pamela #Mastropietro, who disappeared on 29 January, had contact with". The news is therefore given in an aseptic and impartial manner, respecting the rights of the accused.

On May 3, 2018, a press conference took place. All Chief Prosecutor of Macerata, Giovanni Giorgio, Carabinieri's provincial commander, Michele Roberti and ROS' commander, Walter Fava were present. The room was presented in an aseptic manner, no images of the suspects were projected. In accordance with the legal provisions, the conference was led exclusively by Chief Prosecutor Giorgio; he consistently used the conditional in assigning conduct to suspects, respecting the presumption of innocence.



Only on two occasions he appeals to a suspect with ethnic qualifications, specifically: "this Nigerian". After an overview of the investigations carried out up to that point, he acknowledged and condemned the fact that there had been leaks to the press, claiming that information that had been passed was not even in his possession at that time. The prosecutor states that he reserves the right to "ask for some explanations from those in charge". After accepting as physiological a divergence of views with the GIP, he described IO's house as a "seaport", i.e. in other words, a place of transit for various subjects, again affirming that they belonged to the Nigerian community, who had left Macerata after the events. However, the prosecutor did not name them. He ends the press conference stating that: "at the end of these activities we will draw the final conclusions. We are not looking for scapegoats, we are not going to prosecute someone just because they are black or Nigerian. We will request the indictment only of those whom we believe to be objectively involved in the murder and in what was done afterwards on Pamela's body".

The then Ministry of Justice, Andrea Orlando, in the days following the events, visited the President of the Court and the Chief Prosecutor Giovanni Giorgio: officially "a sign of solidarity", with an invitation to "let the magistrates work". The press also speculates that the visit contained an attempt to contain indiscretions about the investigation, often with scabrous details "offending pity".

Overall, the official tone used by the police and the magistracy reflects, to a considerable extent, a climate of respect for the rights of the persons under investigation.



Media coverage

Overview on judicial reporting

As mentioned above, the right of journalistic reporting, like the communication of judicial offices, should take several interests into account. In particular, the right to privacy is the dividing line between the public interest in knowing a fact and the interest of individuals in not seeing personal events disclosed which third persons have no interest in knowing.

Not all cases of disclosure of information concerning judicial documents are punishable.

Thus, the Court of Cassation (judgment 5259/84) ruled that "for the publication in the press of news injurious to honor to be considered a lawful expression of the right to report and not give rise to civil liability for violation of the right to honor, three conditions must be fulfilled: 1) social utility of information; 2) objective truth, or even only putative truth, if the result of diligent research work; 3) civil form of presentation of the facts and their assessment, which does not exceed the informative purpose to be achieved and is characterized by fair clarity, avoiding forms of indirect offence".

The limit of continence in presentation is understood not in a formal but in a substantive manner: namely in not exceeding what is strictly necessary - i.e. essential - to satisfy the public interest.

A protection for journalistic work is provided by Article 51 CP, which excludes punishability where a right is lawfully exercised. In case the abovementioned principles were respected, even in the event of a damage caused to the honor of third parties, the journalist could not be punished. A judge decides on its validity.

In addition to the primary legislation on the issue, the Order of Journalists has established its own code of conduct. Among the obligations identified for journalists, the first article mentions the

observance of the duties of loyalty and good faith. In this regard, Article 9 prescribes the obligation to rectify news that is proven to be inaccurate and correct any errors made, by subsequent publications. This principle requires the writer of the article to draft a new text in which any error is corrected, in agreement with the editor-in-chief, who bears the burden of control.

Article 8 of the “Testo unico dei obblighi del giornalista” (Journalists’ code of conduct) highlights certain aspects of judicial reporting: journalists must always and in any case respect the presumption of innocence of the accused; in the event of an acquittal, they must report it with adequate prominence, correcting and rectifying what may have been written *ex ante*, with particular attention to online publications. In addition, “the highest caution should be exercised in releasing names and images of persons convicted of minor offences or sentenced to very light penalties, except in cases of particular social relevance”. The text also calls for a clear distinction to be made between facts and hypotheses, reality and journalistic commentary, and for the various stages of criminal proceedings to be differentiated. Thus, accusatory hypotheses should not be presented as hypothetical sentences.

Article 8 of the code of conduct requires journalists, except the case the information is essential, not to provide news or publish images or photographs of persons involved in events that violate personal dignity, and not to dwell on details of violence, unless they are socially relevant.

The Order of Journalists imposes certain forms of disciplinary sanction (ranging from a warning to expulsion) for those who fail to comply with the provisions.

Law 47/1948, in Article 15, deals with “Publications with shocking or gruesome content”. It orders that the penalties provided for in Article 528 CP will be applied in the case of “publications describing or illustrating, in striking or horrifying detail, events which have actually occurred or merely imaginary, in a way likely to upset the common sense of morality or the family order or

to provoke the propagation of suicide or crimes”. Although it is acknowledged that the formulation of the text imposes loose limits, it was decided to quote this rule because of its relevance to the case to be discussed below.

Role of the media in Mastropietro's case

The case, given the cruelty of the crime, the sensitive nature of the offences and the presence - in the role of designated perpetrator - of a man belonging to a marginalized group, received extensive media coverage. For a long time, newspapers covered the case, sometimes stirring up xenophobic feelings. A wide variety of theories have been put forward, ranging from Oseghale membership of cults dedicated to voodoo rituals to the concretization of such rituals by Oseghale eating of PM's heart.

This generated daily and close public attention to the case, in a clear example of moral panic's creation. This psycho-social phenomenon is linked both to the dissemination of moral indignation due to journalistic sensationalism and to an aim of consensus manipulation by politicians, consequently invoking more stringent public order measures. Moral panic is a condition or event in which a person or group of people becomes identified as a threat to society's values and interests.[1]

Media coverage of the case was almost total. On the evening that the body was found, a very popular TV show (“Chi l'ha visto?”) on the case was aired on state TV. It should be emphasized once again that the body, although not yet recognized by the family, had already been attributed by the newspapers to PM, who had been missing until then. The first press reports came out a few hours before the show was broadcasted. The show, which historically involves the local population in a reconstruction of the events, readily receives the testimony of the pharmacist: she recognizes PM and IO, describing the latter as a “black man”. As mentioned above, this - being part of an extra-trial reconstruction - is not subject to investigative secrecy, so there is no wrongdoing in publishing or, in this case, broadcasting it. However, an atmosphere of strong emotional tension was present, exacerbated by the presence of PM's family in the TV studio. During the transmission,

[1] See S. Cohen, *Folks Devils and Moral Panic*, Routledge, 1972.

reporters are sent to the places of interest, specifically the ditch where the suitcases containing PM's body were found and IO's flat. Again, since the presence of law enforcement officers in the area is visible and perceptible, the transmission of such images is not illegal. A violation of the law could only be assumed if the police had alerted the press to the location of the search or arrest of the suspect. In any case, local reporters found themselves in a position to pick up some images - promptly broadcast on national television - of a handcuffed IO, with his trousers unbuttoned and lowered. They are undoubtedly degrading to IO, depicting it in a manifest state of inferiority, immediately portraying him as guilty. It has already been mentioned how Article 114, paragraph 6-bis of the Criminal Code decrees the unlawfulness of the transmission of this type of images. This behavior is also stigmatized by the article 8, paragraph 3 of Journalists' code of conducts, which state that "persons may not be presented with handcuffs on their wrists, unless it is necessary to report abuse". Both the legal norm and the ethical indication by the professional association are often empty prescriptions, given the continuous and unsanctioned use of this kind of practice by the media. There is a strong discrepancy between the norm and established practice. In the case of photographs of an arrest, it is common practice for the media to publish the picture with the wrists of the individual slightly obscured (pixels enlarged) so that the handcuffs are not clearly visible. However, they remain clearly recognizable. It could be said that this practice denotes an adherence to the rule that is at most exclusively formalistic.

In the following days, the news was reported in all national newspapers. On 1 February, the newspaper with the largest circulation in the country - and a reputation as a balanced newspaper - the "Corriere della sera" reported the news on its front page with the headline: "The mystery of the girl cut into pieces", promptly pointing out that the arrested man is of Nigerian origin and has a criminal record. The next day the title becomes definitive and labelling: "Pamela, the pusher charged with murder", giving all IO's personal details. As previously reported, IO's arrest on that date was not for murder, but for other offences. Extensive excerpts of interrogations by carabinieri are also reported.

If the defendant had knowledge of them on that date, this would not constitute an offence. An offence could, however, be found in the method, i.e. the channel through which the reporters came into possession. Article 116 CPP regulates this case, providing that "any person having an interest may obtain copies of the documents", excluding cases of secrecy of the proceedings. The competent magistrate decides on the legitimate interest. In practice, the time taken to obtain these documents is long, not in line with the hectic pace of the news. Thus, informal channels are often used, based on personal contacts and direct relations between the reporter and the legal worker.

One of the main right fielded newspapers, "Libero", known for its polarizing opinions, broke the news on page 16 on February 1 in this way: "Pamela, 18 years old and a life on the run. Cut into pieces and packed in two bags". The following day, when IO's arrest had not yet been validated, the newspaper changed its editorial line and headlined on its front page: "The Nigerian who tore the girl apart was not allowed to stay here" and continues by saying that IO "is a murderer, very murderous: he literally tore the girl to pieces and hid her body in two trolleys". From that moment on, the newspaper embarked on a crusade against the suspects, with headlines like this: "Pamela Mastropietro, the horror of the second autopsy: "The Nigerians made her suffer, then flayed her" or "Pamela Mastropietro, how she was killed: Journey into African horror, a "cold and inhuman" slaughter".

Given the periodic and uninterrupted emergence of hypotheses of voodoo rites and cannibalism, the investigators produced fast denials. The conjectures, perhaps suggestive to the reader, did not stop, and were continually reiterated, until the ruling. In consideration of the events that followed the incident, which will be explained later, it seems appropriate to refer to Article 15 of Law 47/1948, which prescribes sanctions for those who "publish, describe or illustrate, in striking or horrifying detail, events which have actually occurred or merely imaginary, in a way likely to upset the common sense of morality or the family order or to provoke the propagation of suicide or crimes". It is not possible to determine the genesis of these suppositions but, given the

responsibilities have been disconnected from the only IO, to pour them on a category or, as in this case, on two socially marginal categories: the immigrants (Nigerians) and the drug dealers.

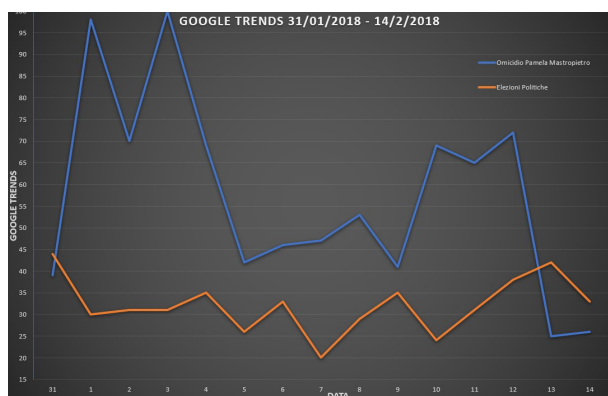
It becomes self-evident that, when these two characteristics are inherent in one or more suspects of socially alarming crimes, the culprit is pre-packaged; beyond the actual (and subsequently ascertained) personal responsibilities.

Ultimately, while there has been a moderation in the language and communication methods of the State apparatus, the same cannot be said for the media.

Public reactions to the case

As pointed out above, the case enjoyed wide media coverage and had a strong impact on society.

First of all, we would like to report the Google trends[2] regarding the case, compared to the main topic of the public debate, the general elections that would take place one month later.



Even at a quick look, queries associated with PM's murder were searched many more times than those concerning political elections. The data refer to the next two weeks after the body was found. From this it could reasonably be inferred that the population followed the case with great interest.

PM's murder provoked two main effects in society as a whole: a xenophobic raid and an exploitative use of it in the election campaign.

On 3 February 2018, Luca Traini (hereafter LT) driving a car, fired several shots at several black individuals, injuring 6 of them. The chronicles report that, on seeing the officers, he made the fascist salute and escaped, throwing away some clothes and placing an Italian flag on his shoulders. The chronicles also report that in the days before, and therefore immediately after the murder, "many hateful posts against immigrants and black people, some of them calling for the death penalty" were written on PM's mother's Facebook page.

Although links between the PM and LT were initially suggested, partly due to the latter's conflicting statements, these were later denied by the police. LT, in the moments following his arrest, stated that his initial intentions were to go to court to kill IO, and that he only changed his mind later, deciding to carry out a shooting on random black people.

The news was reported by all major international newspapers, generating a fierce internal debate. It was immediately reported that, the previous year, LT had been a candidate in a local election on the lists of the then Lega Nord - now exclusively Lega - right-wing party, the main actor in the politicization of the issue of immigration. Here, the first consequence can be linked to the second, namely the exploitative use in the political debate of the murder of PM.

The case was ineluctably linked to a stereotypical representation of the immigrant category: drug dealer, rapist and murderer.

As pointed out, the issue of immigration was the

[2] Trends show the total amount of query searches associated with the input topic. It assumes a maximum value of 100 on the date when the highest frequency of searches is detected. The reason for using this tool can be summarized in the postulate: if an individual searches for a topic on the web, it means they are interested in it.

main topic in the political debate of the time. Following this case, a process of securitization of the issue emerged clearly, the characteristics of which will be briefly explained.

Securitization is structured around three main elements: the speech act with which the process begins and through which there is a discursive representation of a problem; the actors of securitization, i.e. those who perform the speech act, making the securitizing move; the audience, i.e. public opinion.

The objective of securitization is the adoption (sometimes even the proposal) of exceptional measures, moving away from the normal political administration of problems and overcoming otherwise existing constraints. In this case, the elements are presented in their completeness.

On the day of the validation of IO's arrest, the entire political spectrum expressed itself in these terms: Giorgia Meloni, president of the far right-wing party Fratelli d'Italia, says "Enough is enough! Get all illegal immigrants out of Italy!", Gasparri of liberal party Forza Italia calls for an "exemplary punishment". But it is above all Lega's leader Matteo Salvini who raises the tone, speaking of "another death of state" and how the left parties have "blood on their hands", calling for "expulsions, expulsions, controls and more expulsions! Will Boldrini [President of the Chamber of Deputies and left-wing politician, ndr] accuse me of racism? She is the racist (towards Italians). Laura Boldrini responded by stating that Salvini took "the opportunity to spread hate" and intended "to gain votes through cynical looting". In conclusion, in expressing his closeness to Pamela's family, she found no other words but: "the Nigerian drug dealer will have to pay for everything".

Given these claims, it appears that no political party felt a particular need to protect Oseghale's right to be presumed innocent.

The politician most vocal about the case is Matteo Salvini, leader of Lega. Among other posts dedicated to the case, one can read: on February 2, 2018: "#Salvini: The Nigerian drug dealer, with a

criminal record, without documents and without a permit SHOULD NOT BE IN ITALY. From 5 March I will feel like putting some LAW and ORDER. #onyourside". on February 10, 2018: 'Three immigrants have been arrested on charges of killing and dismembering our poor PAMELA. But today the left parties are demonstrating "against racism", Pamela and the Italians victims of the violence of illegal immigrants can wait... #stopimmigration". On the day of IO's conviction at first instance, he said: "I hope that it will be a real life sentence for this INFAMOUS person, that there will be certainty of penalty, it is the minimum. I remain against the death penalty, but those who show total disregard for human life must not leave their prison cells".

In the terms of the securitization process, the speech act is clear: the Nigerian drug dealer who dismember "poor PAMELA", who "SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN IN ITALY" is logically juxtaposed to the illegal immigrants who commit violence against Italians, who - in the vision of the leader of Lega - inevitably wait for someone to restore "LAW AND ORDER".

The mandate that the securitization actor wants from the audience during the election campaign is clear and can be formulated in these terms: illegal immigrants and disorder are two existential threats to society, and the former are the cause for the latter. Extraordinary and arbitrary measures, such as the repatriation of "600,000 illegal immigrants", is promised, with the aim to restore order and security.

Without falling into determinism, a fact should be reported: in a context of overall growth at national level, the Lega obtained 146,000 more votes in the Marche region (the area of the murder and the xenophobic raid) compared to the previous election, rising from 0.69% to 17.4% of the votes. Extraordinary measures, albeit less stringent than the original promises, were actually taken a few months later. We refer to the so-called "Decreti Sicurezza" or "Decreti Salvini". The Lega itself entitled in memory of PM a conference in the European Parliament on gender violence.

The case also generated many other public

reactions: marches, demonstrations, public remembrances, prayers and similar events took place all over the country.

The public, in the atmosphere of high tension and ideological polarization described, also played a role in the development of the criminal trial.

A few days after the arrest, IO changed lawyer. Following the publication of the news in a local newspaper, the lawyer's Facebook page was invaded - in the words of the Penal Chamber of Macerata - by "violent comments and unusual attacks" directed at the lawyer, one among many: "how can you defend such beasts".

Each public hearing was surrounded by the presence of many individuals, some intent on showing solidarity to the victim's family members, while others were busy making insulting and threatening remarks to the defendants' lawyers.

It seems like the debates were divided into two parts: inside the courtroom there were "peaceful" sessions, while outside the court there were protests with shouts and banners against IO, leading the Penal Chamber of Macerata to intervene again, given the "extremely serious verbal and physical aggression suffered by colleagues who had taken on the defence of the accused in the crime of poor Pamela Mastropietro".

The Penal Chamber therefore found itself carrying out actions that could be described as pedagogical, invoking Article 24 of the Constitution several times, which states in its second paragraph: "the defence is an inviolable right at every stage and level of proceedings".