

[Home](#) > [Local News](#) > Wally P.: lawyer to the stars

Saturday, March 13, 2004

[E-mail](#) [Print](#)

## Wally P.: lawyer to the stars

Web-posted Mar 13, 2004

**By MIKE RAMSEY**  
Of The Associated Press

BLOOMFIELD HILLS - Wally P. had just gotten back from the Grammys - his third time going - and he was exhausted.

After hitting a series of after-parties he described as "just awesome," the 52-year-old was recovering at his office in Bloomfield Hills.

Next stop, Utah - for a week of skiing.

Who is Wally P? Don't be fooled by his nickname and lifestyle - he's not a professional musician, though he did play in a polka band called the V-tones.

Walter Piszczatowski is a lawyer who has carved out a niche representing musicians, including Eminem, who have had brushes with the law.

Besides Eminem, he has represented shock-rocker Marilyn Manson and now he's defending Jack White, who carried two Grammys home last month for his work as lead man of the White Stripes.

He didn't seek to be counsel to the stars, but Piszczatowski has a reputation.

After all, he kept Eminem out of jail in 2001. The Grammy-winning rapper could have faced up to 5 years in prison for felonious assault. He instead pleaded guilty to a reduced charge of carrying a concealed weapon and was placed on probation.

White sought out Piszczatowski after he was charged with misdemeanor aggravated assault, accused of punching Jason Stollsteimer, lead singer of the Von Bondies, at a Detroit bar in December.

White has a pretrial hearing scheduled Tuesday. If convicted, he faces up to a year in jail and a \$1,000 fine.

Musicians "ask around, who's the guy to get in town?" Piszczatowski said.



Attorney Walter Piszczatowski talks with his client Marshall Mathers, better known as Eminem, before his sentencing in Oakland County Circuit Court on weapons charges. -Daily Oakland Press file photo / CHARLIE CORTEZ

### TOP JOBS

**The World's fastest** growing restaurant chain is now looking for General Managers for the Oakland County area. If you .....

**AUTOMOTIVE HELP NEEDED**  
**Fast growing** Oakland County Dodge Dealer looking for: TECHNICIANS for all areas. and immediate .....

**SHORE MORTGAGE** Would you like to work for a stable company that has been in the industry for twenty years, and is rapid!.....

[View all TopJobs \(36\)](#)

### TOP AUTOS

**CHEVY IMPALA SS** 2004 black, sun roof, leather, loaded, 14K mi., exc. condition \$19,500 248-347-3739...

**13 FT. aluminum** boat w/ trailer, fisher finder trolling motor 5 HP. Mariner outboard, \$1200. 248-623-1663...

**CHEVY CAMARO 1988** T-Top, Automatic, 305 V8 w/32K mi. on motor, \$3000/ best. 248-681-8677...

[View all TopAutos \(19\)](#)

### TOP HOMES

**AUBURN HILLS FREE RENT**, office approx. 1700 sq. ft. new build out to suit, 248-332-5200, 248-496-1700 ...

**CLARKSTON 1800 Sq.** Ft. Office Space across from Oak Hurst Golf Course. 248-391-3014...

**WATERFORD BY Owner** 4615 Streamside Trail. Welcome to your New Home 3 bdrm., 2 bath, 2 car attach. garage, full bsmt., Mu.....

These days, Piszczatowski is the guy.

Piszczatowski grew up on Detroit's west side in a working-class neighborhood. His dad spent 38 years at Fisher Body making car chassis and his mom was a public school secretary.

As his name (Pizz-uh-TOW-skee) might indicate, he is born of Polish stock. He said he spoke only Polish in his house until he was five years old, when he started going to school.

He was the first person in his family to graduate from college. He received a degree in Polish language and political science at Wayne State University in Detroit and then went there for law school.

He worked in the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office in Detroit for seven years, then served as an assistant U.S. attorney for five years.

Then in 1988, he decided to hang his shingle with some buddies he knew back in his early days in the county prosecutor's office. He joined up with Hertz, Schram & Saretsky, a law firm based in Bloomfield Hills.

Howard Hertz has been representing musicians, including George Clinton, and labels, including Atlantic Records, for 25 years.

Hertz, a member of the National Association of Recording Artists and Scientists, should get some of the credit for Piszczatowski's client list.

When Eminem was charged in 2000, his manager went to Hertz, who was representing Eminem's production company. Piszczatowski was the firm's lead criminal defense lawyer, and until then had never represented a musician.

Tony Ciulla, Marilyn Manson's manager, said Eminem's manager recommended Piszczatowski when Manson - whose real name is Brian Warner - was charged with sexual assault in July 2001.

Ciulla's client was in trouble for wrapping his legs around a security guard near the stage at a Detroit-area show and gyrating suggestively.

Manson was facing a two-year prison sentence and inclusion on the sexual offender registry before Piszczatowski got his charge knocked down to disorderly conduct. Piszczatowski settled a civil lawsuit in that case in February.

Ciulla said he'd recommend Piszczatowski to others because of his skill and also because of his demeanor. Tall, thin, blond and spouting a colorful vocabulary, Piszczatowski is not exactly a stereotypical dark-suited and somber lawyer.

"When you meet him, and you spend a little time with him, he comes off as personable, happy-go-lucky," Ciulla said. "Once he gets in that courtroom, it's all business. And when he needs to be tough, he's tough. I don't think that's something you really see from Wally until you see him in the courtroom."

Piszczatowski talks fast, and a lot, and rarely about legal things. His office is decorated with photos of his wife and two teenage daughters - mostly on skiing trips - and a few Eminem posters.

He has a framed cover of Newsweek magazine with Eminem and Dr. Dre on the cover and a little note in the corner that reads "Keep me out of jail or I want my money back," signed "Slim Shady." (Slim Shady is the alter ego of Eminem, who's real name is Marshall Mathers III.)

"He's a big music fan, and I think that definitely comes across and that's important," Ciulla said. "He really appreciates what artists do."

U.S. District Court Judge Bernard A. Friedman said Piszczatowski is an excellent lawyer who is dead serious and courteous during trial. But when court is in recess, he's a blast.

"The best thing about him is that he is funny," he said. "There are a lot of good lawyers out there, but they don't have the same personality and attitude."

Piszczatowski, who charges \$300 an hour, won't deny he gets an extra thrill from representing musicians.

"It's not only the legal side you deal with," he said. "You see these literal geniuses in a different field of art," he said.

But most of the time, Piszczatowski isn't representing rock and roll stars. More typical would be a corporate executive accused of a white collar crime.

"I think it's luck," he said. "It's being there and trying to do a good job for everybody."

---

 [E-mail](#)  [Print](#)

---

[Feedback](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Place A Classified Ad](#) | [Copyright © 2007 The Oakland Press, All Rights Reserved](#) |  
[Interested in a career at Journal Register Company, click here](#)