

Driver in double fatal admits being high

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A Centereach woman admitted in court Wednesday that she was drunk and on drugs when she wrapped her grandmother's Lexus around a tree in Central Islip, killing two of her friends.

Taylor Nolte, 20, shown above in photo, pleaded guilty to aggravated vehicular homicide, second-degree manslaughter, aggravated vehicular assault, driving while intoxicated and other charges including some related to drug use. In return for her plea, Suffolk County Court Judge Martin Efman promised to sentence her to 4 1/2 to 13 1/2 years in prison.

Prosecutor Patricia Brosco recommended the maximum of 5 to 15 years, but Efman said one of the factors he considered was that the victims also were intoxicated.

During questioning by Brosco, Nolte said that on Jan. 28, 2010, she drank two cans of the caffeinated malt beverage Four Loko, smoked marijuana and took Ecstasy in the hours before the 4:45 a.m. crash on Wilson Boulevard. She said she was driving 60 to 70 mph on the curvy, hilly road and ran two stop signs before hitting one tree -- shearing it off at its base -- and crashing into another.

Brosco said Nolte's blood-alcohol content was .09 percent hours after the crash. The legal limit is .08. Killed were Kelly Mallazzo, 18, of Hauppauge, and Kenyen Gaskins, 23, of Central Islip. Two other men in the car were injured.

As Nolte answered Brosco's questions, Mallazzo's mother wept quietly in the courtroom. "She wanted to accept responsibility for this incident and at the same time spare the victims' families a monthlong trial," said Nolte's attorney, Michael Brown of Central Islip, after the plea.

He said several people in the car, including Mallazzo, had taken turns driving up and down Wilson Boulevard and said the occupants were urging her to go faster before the crash.

After the crash, however, one survivor, Anthony Dormer, told police in a statement that he had asked Nolte to slow down.

"I told her to chill out with her driving," he said in the statement. "She was driving too fast. I put my seat belt on. That's why I did not get hurt as bad as the rest." Efman will sentence Nolte July 19.