

Son who killed ailing mom will be freed

Newsday - Long Island, N.Y.

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Date: March 6, 2012

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In an unusual act of prosecutorial mercy, a Brentwood man who suffocated his bedridden mother before trying to kill himself will be freed from jail next month after pleading guilty Tuesday in Suffolk County Court.

"This is an uncommon offer where we have a murder charge," said Suffolk Assistant District Attorney Glenn Kurtzrock.

Juan Gonzalez, 70, had been charged with second-degree murder in the death of his mother, Teresa Gonzalez, 98, in May. He pleaded guilty to second-degree manslaughter and Suffolk County Court Judge James Hudson agreed to sentence him to 6 months in jail and 5 years of probation. Gonzalez will get credit for serving jail time since his arrest last May.

Kurtzrock told Hudson that Gonzalez did everything for his ailing mother, who was bedridden, unable to see or hear.

"He fed her and bathed her," Kurtzrock said, even as he struggled with diabetes, cataracts, shingles and high blood pressure.

When Gonzalez got a letter from his doctor informing him that a spot on his hand was skin cancer, his poor English led him to believe he was going to die soon and no one would care for his mother.

Gonzalez tied a plastic bag over his mother's head, killing her, and then took all his insulin, a bottle of Tylenol and slit his wrists. He was unconscious for five days and as a result of the insulin overdose, his kidneys have failed and he will require dialysis the rest of his life.

"Sometimes we have to temper justice with mercy," Kurtzrock said. "And in this case, I believe they're the same thing."

Gonzalez, who needed a walker to enter the courtroom, wiped away tears as he pleaded guilty.

His attorney, Michael Brown of Central Islip, thanked Kurtzrock and the district attorney's office for reaching the agreement.

Kurtzrock said his own investigation reviewed Gonzalez's medical and family history. His office would not have gone along with the plea deal if there were any doubt about what happened, he said.

"It's a very fair resolution to a horrible, horrible incident for this family," Brown said.

Gonzalez's daughter, Carol Gonzalez, 43, said her father was overwhelmed by his and his mother's

health problems, and they didn't want to burden the rest of the family. He will live with her family in Nassau County when he leaves jail, she said.

"It's very painful for him," she said. "He loved his mother -- my grandmother -- very much. There isn't a moment when he's not crying about this."

She said she was grateful to Brown and prosecutors for finding a way to let her father leave jail.

"We were expecting the worst, and we got the best," she said. "It is very special."