

Lawyer Faces Trial for Attempting to Kill Girlfriend

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Morrison/FreeImages[/caption]

Summary: *Lawyer who faces trial for attempted murder turns down plea deal.*

An attorney who is on trial for the attempted murder of his girlfriend [turned down a plea deal](#) on Tuesday that would have cleared him from a prison sentence, NJ.com reported.

Todd Gorman, who is based in Secaucus, New Jersey, met Stephanie Schwartz in a suicide chat room on the Internet. Although they both had good jobs, they suffered from alcoholism and depression. This led to a troubled relationship.

Gorman now stands trial for attempted murder during a 2011 incident at the couple's home. 11 months after that incident, Schwartz committed suicide.

"Now is the time if you want to do this, sir, because the jurors are coming tomorrow, and they are ready to hear the case," Judge Mark Nelson said to Gorman, according to NJ.com.

But Gorman's defense lawyer, Peter Willis, says Gorman wants to see this through trial. "He has reasoning in his mind that he is not guilty of this crime — that is the main reason," and further, he would probably lose his license to practice law if he took the plea deal.

Police responded to a 911 call on the day of the incident, and heard Schwartz screaming "Help, help, he's stabbing me," Hudson County Assistant Prosecutor Tracy McQuaide said in her opening statement.

Guns leveled, the police entered, and found Gorman "sitting on the floor with Stephanie in front of him with his arms and legs around her. They are covered in blood. The floor is covered in blood. Everything is covered in blood."

An officer kicked Gorman in the face and wrenched Schwartz from his grasp. He kicked Gorman till he was out cold, and then an ambulance took Schwartz to Jersey City Medical Center-Barnabas where she received medical attention for her cuts on her forearm, forehead, back of head and chest.

Willis called this account of the events something "of a fable," and said "you don't present false testimony in a grand jury and indict a person based on false testimony and you will be witness to it."

Though Gorman doesn't recall the events of that night, he recalls telling a police officer, "I wasn't trying to kill her. I was trying to stop her from killing herself."

Willis will present a case that Schwartz was violent, breaking two of Gorman's ribs on one occasion and two of his teeth with a shovel on another occasion, and that Gorman suffered defensive wounds on his hands during the night in question. He'll also argue that Schwartz attempted to kill herself that night, and Gorman was preventing her from doing so, "holding her as tight as he could so she couldn't hurt herself and she couldn't hurt him anymore."

The judge warned Gorman that the attempted murder charge may come with a 10- to 20-year prison term, whereas the probation plea deal for aggravated assault held no such risk. Gorman felt it was worth the risk.

Sources:

[Secaucus lawyer on trial for attempting to kill girlfriend he met in suicide chat room, defense says](#) (NJ.com)

[Secaucus lawyer accused of attempted murder turns down plea deal](#) (NJ.com)

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