

Plea deal for Fort Lauderdale man accused of drowning his Alzheimer's-suffering father

Robert "Bobby" Yurkanin II will plead guilty to manslaughter and be sentenced to no more than 15 years probation

By Tonya Alanez, Sun Sentinel

A Fort Lauderdale man accused of killing his [Alzheimer's](#)-suffering father by holding him under the ocean until he went limp, will see his first-degree murder charge downgraded to manslaughter, his defense attorney said Thursday.

Under the terms of a plea deal, Robert "Bobby" Yurkanin II, 53, is scheduled to plead guilty Friday morning to the reduced charge in exchange for a sentence of no more than 15 years probation, defense attorney Michael D. Weinstein said.

The tragic June 15, 2007 incident, Weinstein said, exemplifies the toll that Alzheimer's disease takes on caregivers.

The Alzheimer's Association estimates 5.3 million Americans are living with the disease. Millions more live with other types of dementia.

Robert "Bob" Yurkanin Sr., 84 removed his swim trunks on a Fort Lauderdale beach. Onlookers told police the son cursed at his father and dragged him into the water. Yurkanin Sr. died a day later from complications from a near drowning, the medical examiner concluded.

Witnesses told police the son cursed at his father, treated him roughly and told worried onlookers this was the "only way" his father "was going to learn."

In a frantic 911 call, a witness says: "Somebody has got to hurry 'cause the tide is coming in and we can't move him."

In the background, Bobby Yurkanin yells: "I'm his son...Don't tell me what to do!"

The younger Yurkanin had a meltdown on the beach that day, Weinstein said, triggered by years of caring for his mother before her death and coping as sole caretaker for his father.

He had "no intention of harming" his father, Weinstein said. "We are glad that Bobby can put the fear of life in prison behind him and can now move forward and rehabilitate his life after the tragic deaths of his much-loved mother and father."

The plea deal is scheduled for 8:30 a.m. Friday before Circuit Judge Mily Rodriguez Powell.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

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