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Local News

Convicted rapist avoids life sentence



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MIAMI (WSVN) -- Former Miami Police officer Michael Ragusa, a convicted rapist, avoided facing life in prison after receiving his sentence.

Instead, the 32-year-old Ragusa received 10 years in prison and 10 years probation with intensive therapy. "This was the outcome he wanted," said defense attorney Milton Hirsch. "He will be out nine years from now. He's going to get some therapy, we've arranged for that as part of the plea. He recognizes that he is going to benefit from that, and I think this is one of those plea agreements where no one gets everything he wants but everybody gets something that's good for them."

Prosecutors gathered Wednesday morning at the Richard E. Gerstein Justice Building where three of the victims declined to testify in the trial. The convicted rapist plead guilty to several counts of armed kidnapping and sexual assault by a law enforcement officer.

Prosecutors said the final verdict reached a good resolution to this disturbing case. "It would take this man

for 10 years off the streets, and, after that, he is going to be under very intensive scrutiny," said Jorge Cueto, prosecutor in the case.

Ragusa, who at one point faced life in prison, will now serve a mandatory 10-year sentence with credit of the one year he already served behind bars. Once released, the 32-year-old will be in a mentally disordered sexual offender treatment program for 10 more years.

Last March, officials arrested Ragusa after a victim's boyfriend called police and accused him of sexually assaulting his girlfriend. Once the arrest was made public, six other alleged victims came forward. In all Ragusa is accused of rapping and kidnapping three women while patrolling the streets of Miami in uniform and in his patrol car.

Ragusa is currently at the Miami-Dade County Jail where he will stay for a few more days until he is transferred to an unidentified Florida prison where he will serve out nine years behind bars.

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