

88-year-old Cheektowaga man hits wife in the head with a hammer

By **Jim Herr** - September 11, 2017



Erie County Holding Center Mug Shot of Martin Turkiewicz.

CHEEKTOWAGA, N.Y. – A Cheektowaga man is facing Attempted Murder charges after hitting his wife in the head with a hammer.

The Erie County District Attorney's Office says Martin Turkiewicz, 88, struck his wife in the head with a hammer on September 9th while she was a resident at the Garden Gate Health Care Facility on Union Road.

Cheektowaga Police responded to the health care facility around 6 p.m. to investigate a 911 hang up call. When dispatchers called back the front desk did not know of any problems.

However, a few minutes later, dispatchers were told by a caller, that a man just walked up to the desk and said he just killed his wife with a hammer.

Mr. Turkiewicz was transported to the police station and was interviewed by the detective's bureau.

"He was cooperative with us. It was one of those cases where everything was handed over to us and there really wasn't a whole lot to do on our end other than collect evidence. We

obviously knew who did it, we had him in custody,” said Jim Speyer, Assistant Chief of Police.

Rita Turkiewicz, 86, suffered serious injuries and was transported to Erie County Medical Center.

“They’ve been married for 60-years and it’s obviously a sad, traumatic story. It is shocking to see something like that with the use of a hammer. To think a couple like this who had lived together, married for that long to come to a conclusion like this and it’s just sad. You don’t see it that often, but it does happen with elderly couples,” added Mr. Speyer.

He was arraigned before Cheektowaga Town Judge Paul S. Piotrowski on the charges of Attempted Murder in the Second Degree and Assault in the First Degree. He pleaded not guilty and will return to court on September 13th.

“There are multiple theories but as far as a motive, we’re not going to speculate on that. We still have to discuss it with the family members and get a few more interview. To be honest with you, it’s not up to us to supply him with a defense or a motive. He tried to kill her, he thought he killed her, he was there, he did it, and we will prosecute it,” said Mr. Speyer.

D.A. John Flynn states that if Mr. Turkiewicz is convicted of the charges he faces a maximum of 25 years in prison.

The health care facility released the following statement:

“Garden Gate Health Care Facility, 2365 Union Road, Cheektowaga, is cooperating with police regarding a domestic incident between a female patient and her husband that took place at the facility on Saturday, September 9, 2017.”

Mr. Flynn commends the Cheektowaga Police Department for its investigative work, including Lt. Kenneth Rusin and Detectives Terence Griffin and James Jenson. Chief Colleen Curtin Gable of the DA’s Homicide Bureau is prosecuting the case.