



## 88-year-old accused of trying to kill his wife granted bail

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**BUFFALO, N.Y. (WIVB)** — An elderly Cheektowaga man accused of trying to kill his wife was granted bail Wednesday morning.

Martin Turkiewicz appeared in Cheektowaga Town Court before Judge Paul Piotrowski, who granted the 88-year-old \$10,000 bail or \$50,000 bond on his two B felony charges.

Turkiewicz is charged with Assault in the First Degree and Attempted Murder in the Second Degree.

The 88-year-old waived his right to a felony hearing Wednesday.

It's alleged that he struck his wife, 86-year-old Rita Turkiewicz, multiple times in the head with a claw hammer at the Garden Gate Healthcare Facility on Union Road in Cheektowaga.

The alleged assault took place Saturday evening according to Cheektowaga Police.

Rita Turkiewicz suffered a skull fracture and a brain bleed; police indicated she was nearly dead when they arrived.

Prior to Wednesday, Martin Turkiewicz was being held without bail at the Erie County Holding Center.

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Authorities say Rita Turkiewicz was in and out of the Garden Gate facility for rehabilitation, and that Martin often visited her multiple times a day.

In court Wednesday, Turkiewicz's attorney Joseph Terranova argued his client was trying to put his wife out her misery.

"What happened on that night without question, was a complete, categorical aberration," Terranova told the judge Wednesday.

Diane Cline, one of the couple's daughters, described her father as "a loving grandfather, loving great grandfather, loving husband, religious man, and trusted friend and wonderful caregiver."

The couple also has a 64-year-old blind son, who Martin Turkiewicz cares for.

"What my father is accused of is not the man he was. Something snapped," Cline told Judge Piotrowski.

Cline said her mother's health was declining, and that her recent stay at Garden Gate was especially difficult for the family, as her mother's dementia worsened.

Cline also told the judge her mother had stopped eating and participating in any sort of activity.

Terranova told the judge his client indicated to police "I just wanted to end it for her.... I hope I didn't make it worse for her."

He also called his client's alleged actions "a clumsy act of desperation of compassion."

According to prosecutors, Turkiewicz told his son he was planning to kill Rita, and made multiple confessions to staff at the Garden Gate Healthcare facility following the alleged attack.

Assistant District Attorney Danielle D'Abate and Chief of the Homicide Bureau of the Erie County's District Attorney's Office Colleen Curtin Gable argued against bail.

"She is still at risk, and if this defendant is released, she is at risk, at significant risk," D'Abate said of Rita Turkiewicz.

The 86-year-old was upgraded from 'serious' to 'fair' condition at ECMC Wednesday.

Her improving health could potentially impact one of her husband's charges, which is tied to the extent of her injuries.

"That may impact a charge of Assault 1st which requires serious physical injury, although quite frankly having seen the photographs of this poor woman's head, I think we can still make out serious physical injury," said Curtin Gable in court.



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Martin Turkiewicz in Cheektowaga Town Court Wednesday

As a condition of his bail, Martin's daughter must live with him and help him take care of his blind son, her brother.

The judge also ruled for an Order of Protection in favor of Rita Turkiewicz, keeping Martin from seeing or communicating with her for the time being.

This case will now be sent to a Grand Jury, who will decide if there's enough evidence to move forward with an indictment.

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