

Cheektowaga man gets maximum sentence in strangling death of girlfriend

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By Keith McShea

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A Cheektowaga man was sentenced Friday to the maximum 15 years in prison for strangling his girlfriend to death in his apartment in January.

Sonny Martinez, 27, was sentenced by Erie County Court Judge James Bargnesi to a sentence of 15 years in prison followed by 15 years of post-release supervision for causing the death of Brittney Balbuzoski in his Ivanhoe Road apartment in Cheektowaga on Jan. 19, according to the Erie County District Attorney's Office.

Martinez admitted he strangled Balbuzoski, 23, when he pleaded guilty to second-degree manslaughter in July. He had faced a maximum of 5 to 15 years in prison.

Martinez also will be required to register as a sex offender upon his release.

Erie County District Attorney John J. Flynn commended Cheektowaga Police Department Detectives Terrence Griffin and Chris Chojnacki for their work in the investigation. The case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Christine M. Garvey of the DA's Homicide Bureau.

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