

Vengeful ex-girlfriend sentenced to life in prison for brutal murder of ex-boyfriend's mother in West Palm Beach

By [SUSAN SPENCER-WENDEL](#)

Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

Thursday, July 30, 2009

PALM BEACH GARDENS — It's life in prison for Rhonda Norman.

Circuit Judge Sandra McSorley sentenced Norman this afternoon for the murder of her former boyfriend's mother, Jane Tackaberry, and attempted murder of his 6-year-old son, Elijah, whose throat was slashed in the attack.

Jurors earlier recommended 9-3 that Norman die by lethal injection for orchestrating the attack out of jealousy and anger at John Tackaberry, but McSorley rejected that.

"I hope you are consumed by the horror of your conduct while you reside in prison for the rest of your natural life," McSorley said.

McSorley earlier sentenced Norman's partner in the crime, Wes McGee, to life in prison after a jury recommended that sentence.

One of Norman's attorneys conceded in closing arguments at her 2008 trial that Norman set the wheels in motion that led to the 2006 stabbing death of Jane Tackaberry, 53, and the wounding of Elijah.

In tape-recorded statements played for the jury at trial, Norman admitted she was bent on revenge because John Tackaberry was out with another woman the night she met McGee at a gas station and gave him \$50 to accompany her to the Tackaberry home in West Palm Beach.

She and McGee barged in about 1 a.m. Norman told detectives that McGee grabbed Tackaberry by the throat and threw her to the floor. She said Tackaberry pleaded with her for her life.

"I feel bad, but I just figure all the stuff I went through with John and how he hurt me psychically," she told detectives.

She admitted handing McGee a butcher knife and a meat cleaver from the kitchen. "Finish it," she said she told him.

Elijah was sleeping in a bedroom. McGee, she said, brought the boy out to the living room, held his head to the floor with one foot and sliced his throat. Norman admitted cutting the boy's chest. "I did it to spite John," she told detectives.

Currently, there is only one woman sitting on Florida's Death Row, according to the Department of Corrections.