

State seeks death for Miami mom in 1990 'Baby Lollipops' slaying



TIM CHAPMAN/Miami Herald
Ana Maria Cardona

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Ana Maria Cardona, the Miami mother twice convicted of torturing, starving and beating her toddler son to death in 1990, deserves execution as punishment for her crimes, a prosecutor told jurors Monday.

Miami-Dade Assistant State Attorney Susan Dannelly made her argument at the start of the penalty portion of trial for Cardona, who was convicted in July for the slaying of her son, 3-year-old Lazaro "Baby Lollipops" Figueroa.

The same 12-person jury convicted Cardona of first-degree murder and aggravated child abuse. The jury will recommend a sentence, which ultimately will be decided by Miami-Dade Circuit Judge Reemberto Diaz.

Dannelly said Cardona should be put to death because of the "heinous, atrocious and cruel death" she inflicted on Lazaro.

Cardona was convicted at trial in 1992 of Lazaro's murder, and became the first woman in Florida to be sentenced to Death Row for her own child's murder. The Florida Supreme Court later overturned her conviction and ordered a retrial.

Lazaro, badly beaten and weighing just 18 pounds, was discovered dead in the bushes of a Miami Beach bayfront home in November 1990. Unidentified at first, Lazaro was dubbed Baby Lollipops for the design on his T-shirt.

Prosecutors said Cardona tortured Lazaro over months, eventually dumping his bloodied body before fleeing with her lover to the Orlando area.

Defense attorney Teresa Enriquez said Cardona's life deserves to be spared because the woman was raised in Cuba by a mother who showed her no love, was sexually abused as a child and has found Christianity while behind bars.

As Enriquez spoke, Cardona buried her face in her hands, sobbing.

"Ana is not the same person she was 20 years ago," Enriquez said, her own voice quivering. "As she sits here today, she had good in her heart and the reason is that she had opened her heart to God."

Prosecutors will rely on medical experts to detail the boy's incredible suffering.

On Monday, forensic dentist Richard Souviron testified that two of Lazaro's teeth had been knocked out, and the flaps of tissue connecting his gums to both lips had been torn out, causing excruciating pain.

"It would have been painful for a substantial period of time, to eat or chew or move his lips," he said.