

# EX-COP MAY PAY IN HOOKER'S DEATH AS DA EYES SLAY RAP

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AN EX-COP imprisoned for shooting a prostitute who mocked him after he failed to perform sexually could be charged with her murder now that she has died eight years later, the Daily News has learned.

Gayle Hoffman was paralyzed in March 1996 when rookie transit cop Rolando Hernandez shot her just eight days after graduating from the Police Academy.

Hoffman, 34, died six months ago in a Long Island nursing home from illnesses directly related to her gunshot wounds, authorities said.

"The manner of death has been classified as a homicide," said Diane Markunas, a spokeswoman for the Nassau County medical examiner.

Hernandez was convicted of attempted murder in 1997 and sentenced to up to 25 years in prison. Now Queens District Attorney Richard Brown is reexamining the shooting.

"We reopened the case based upon the death of the victim to determine if a homicide prosecution would be warranted," said Nicole Navas, a spokeswoman for Brown.

Hoffman died from pneumonia and a urinary infection at the A. Holly Paterson Nursing Home in Uniondale in April.

The medical examiner determined the conditions grew out of the spinal cord injury and quadriplegia she suffered after being shot in the neck, chest, arm and leg.

During the cop's trial, Hoffman described from her wheelchair how Hernandez shot her with his service revolver.

Shortly before the shooting, Hernandez and a friend brought Hoffman back to his Far Rockaway apartment for sex. But Hoffman laughed at Hernandez after he was unable to perform sexually.

Later, as they walked along Beach 29th St., Hernandez brandished his gun and said, "You'll never dis anyone like that again," before opening fire, evidence showed.

Hoffman, who was a crack addict and had been a prostitute since age 13, spent the years before her death in drug rehab and nursing homes.

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