

# Retried murderer gets life sentence

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## Document Text

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Walter Ruiz was sentenced to life in prison Wednesday for acting as the hired gunman in the 1995 murder of a Drew Park grocer.

Four years ago, Ruiz, 41, was sentenced to death for kidnapping, robbing and shooting Rolando Landrian, but he won a new trial last year after the Florida Supreme Court found prosecutors had committed "egregious and inexcusable prosecutorial misconduct."

Jurors convicted Ruiz of first-degree murder again this week, but they recommended that he serve life in prison. Circuit Judge J. Rogers Padgett imposed that sentence immediately.

Lotia Romanes and her husband, Delio, had previously been convicted of hiring Ruiz to kill Landrian, who was Mrs. Romanes' former common-law husband. Prosecutors said the motive was greed, and that the Romaneses wanted to take over the business. Lotia and Delio Romanes each were sentenced to life in prison.

But the jury's recommendation came after testimony from Mrs. Romanes' family that Landrian molested his wife's daughters from a previous marriage and ultimately fathered five children by them.

During testimony Wednesday about Landrian's abusive history and Mrs. Romanes' overtures to have Ruiz kill Landrian, Ruiz suddenly said, "Let them know the whole story. Let them know what garbage he was."

That prompted Ruiz's attorney, Brian Gonzalez, to interrupt his examination and quiet his client.

In his final remarks to the jury, Gonzalez pleaded with them to examine the good relationship that Ruiz has maintained with his own family. Gonzalez reminded the jury that with no possibility of parole, Ruiz would still live the rest of his life in a small prison cell. "What I'm really asking you for is mercy and not leniency," he said.

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## Abstract (Document Summary)

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