

HIV carrier sent to prison for having unprotected sex

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — A man convicted of attempted murder for knowingly exposing a 17-year-old girl to the AIDS virus was sentenced yesterday to nearly 9½ years in prison.

Alberto Gonzalez, 28, was sentenced to 65 months in prison for attempted murder and to three consecutive 16-month terms for giving the girl marijuana.

The case was considered a test of the use of existing laws to prosecute those who knowingly expose others to HIV at a time when many states have passed or are considering laws specifically to cover that situation.

The teen-ager testified that she had unprotected sex with Gonzalez in 1990, and that he did not warn her he was infected. She has so far tested negative for the AIDS virus.

Before sentencing, Gonzalez called his conviction a "racial vendetta. . . I was a guinea pig." Multnomah County Circuit Judge Ancer Haggerty said there was no racial or judicial prejudice involved. He also said he didn't know if Gonzalez would be medically able to serve his entire sentence.

Jurors deliberated for about 7½ hours over two days before reaching their verdict Wednesday night.

Deputy District Attorney David Peters had argued that Gonzalez was a danger to society.

Defense attorney Karolyn March



Gonzalez

said she believed the conviction was racially motivated. The prosecution has a lynch-mob mentality, she said, and "the criminal justice system is not the area for a public health issue."

Two of Gonzalez's former sex partners have tested HIV-positive. One of them, Shawn Hopp, died of AIDS earlier this year. The other, Bridgett Pederson, attended both the trial and the sentencing.

"It's adequate," Pederson said of the sentence. ". . . I hope this message goes out to others."

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