

# Man gets 5 years for home invasion

By Michelle Tuccitto  
Register Staff

**NEW HAVEN** — Before a Superior Court judge sent him to prison for five years, Ryan Crowther tearfully apologized for his role in a home invasion in which he and an accomplice donned masks, broke into a woman's North Branford house and robbed her.

Judge Roland Pasano sentenced Ryan Crowther, 25, of Branford to 14 years, suspended after five years, with five years probation. Crowther only would serve the full 14 years if he violates probation upon release.

At Thursday's sentencing, Crowther turned to face his victim, who had been a family friend and apologized.

"I'm sorry for what I did and what happened," Crowther said. "I just want to say I'm sorry."

Pasano said he was taking Crowther's decision to plead guilty to save the victim from the ordeal of a trial, his cooperation with the state and remorse as considerations in his decision. Crowther pleaded guilty to first-degree burglary, first-degree robbery and conspiracy.

It was an intentional breach of trust, Pasano said. "A woman who treated you like a son, now lives in terror. You had a lot going for you, the love of family and friends, and if you took this away, you were a good kid."

From the Dec. 1, 2000 invasion of a White Hollow Road residence in North Branford, Police said a woman called 911, saying two masked men broke into her house and robbed her. The victim had been home alone. Police said the two men used a crowbar to break in, threatened the victim with the crowbar, demanded money and barricaded her in a small furnace room in her basement.

The victim, who was not injured, recognized Crowther despite his mask. The robbers fled with the woman's pocketbook and about \$30 cash. They attempted to use her credit cards in several locations, but they had been canceled, police said.

Before the sentencing, Victim Services Advocate Diane J. Anglian read aloud a letter from the victim.

"We always treated you like a son," the victim said in the letter. "You robbed me of my freedom and made me afraid to be in my own home. You changed my whole life the day you came in and robbed me. I can never forgive you. I still have nightmares."

Assistant State's Attorney James Dinnan recommended a longer sentence of 20 years, suspended after 12, with five years probation. Before the incident, the victim's family had fired Crowther from a job, he said. Defense attorney Tara Knight told the court that the crime was out of character for Crowther, who had no prior criminal record. She said Crowther had become

addicted to painkillers after suffering from a head injury, and Knight claimed this addiction might have been a factor in the crime.

Several friends and relatives spoke on Crowther's behalf, including his father, Robert Crowther.

"No parent ever wants to see their son or daughter in this situation," said Robert Crowther. "I believe Ryan is a good son and can put his life back on track. Ryan has been cooperative, and I ask for your understanding."

Family friend Barbara Brangi also said the incident was out of character.

"What happened that day was not the Ryan we know and love."


she said. "He is so sorry for what he has done, and I know he doesn't do that again."

Ryan Crowther's co-conspirator, Vincent Martone of East Haven, entered a guilty plea under the Alford doctrine last month for his role.

Martone received a longer sentence — 12 years in jail with eight years of special probation. Martone had also been charged with tampering with a witness and intimidating a witness after he allegedly tried to influence a witness' testimony when his case had been going to trial.

Michelle Tuccitto can be reached at mtuccitto@nhregister.com or at 789-5615.

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