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Leonardo Espinal (Department of Correction); Steward Espinal (Courtesy family)

## **DAD'S POISON PIZZA A DEADLY CRIME**

### ***Jealousy Leads to Revenge Ending in Child's Death***

(Bronx, NY – March 19, 2015) – He laced his kids' pizza with rat poison. For that, Bronx District Attorney Robert Johnson announces that 49-year-old **LEONARDO ESPINAL** will spend 20-to-life in prison.

Following a plea of guilty last month to Murder in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree (Class A-1 Felony) and Attempted Murder in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree (Class B Felony), ESPINAL was sentenced by Supreme Court Justice Troy Webber to 20 years-to-life for the murder of his 5-year-old son STEWARD, and, concurrently, 15 years in prison plus another five years post-release supervision for the injury to his daughter MIA, who was 7-years-old at the time.

In November 2012, LEONARDO ESPINAL was having issues with his ex-wife, Rosaura Abreu, and she had kicked him out of the family apartment. When ESPINAL discovered Abreu was seeing another man, he carried out a callous revenge plan to poison their two children. ESPINAL penned a suicide note, and fed the poisoned pizza to the children, eating some as well. The little girl threw up from ingesting the rat poison; STEWARD soiled himself, and the father locked himself and the boy in the bathroom. Refusing to come out, ESPINAL's stepmother called 911 and police broke down the door to find the father dazed, but alive. The little boy was in the tub, dead from the combination of poison and being submerged in water.

The children's mother, ROSAURA ABREU, submitted a victim impact statement to the Court:

*"Mi querido angelito...I will never forget the last time I saw my little son...he was radiant, happy, content, and followed me all around the house. When it was time for me to leave, he followed me to the door and I knelt down to talk with him. It's as if my heart knew that it would be the last time I would see him alive..."*



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Noting that the tragedy impelled mother and daughter to move, *“Mia suffered anxiety attacks every time I would mention going back to that apartment where she lived with her little brother. She never wanted to sleep in the same bed where she slept with her Steward, protecting him from monsters.*

*“Mia will have to live for the rest of her life with the horrific memory that her own father caused in attempting to kill her. Although therapy helped the both of us, Mia and I suffer every day the absence of our boy in our daily lives. Mia suffers...when she goes to parties, when she goes to bed, when she plays with other children, when she sees photos of him, when she sees another boy the same age as him, when she sees me sad because she knows I am thinking of him.*

*“All we can do is take it day by day.”*

The case against LEONARDO ESPINAL was prosecuted by Child Abuse/Sex Crimes Senior Trial Assistant Jill Starishevsky.

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