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Elderly doctor, wife sentenced to prison for running \$80M 'pill mill'

By [Rebecca Rosenberg](#)

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Lydia Lucas and Dr. Rogelio Lucas

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An elderly Manhattan doctor and his wife were sentenced to state prison Thursday for **running an \$80 million prescription "pill mill"** — after turning down no-jail plea deals.

"If this were a movie or a book, the title would be, 'When Good People Do Bad Things,'" said Justice A. Kirke Bartley before giving Rogelio Lucas, 80, 1 1/3 to 4 years and his office-manager wife, Lydia Lucas, 82, 1 to 3 years.

Prosecutors had initially offered the couple a no-jail plea deal, but they decided to roll the dice at trial and were convicted in Manhattan Supreme Court of 30 counts of sale of a controlled substance and conspiracy raps.

"There can be no question that the Lucases lived an exemplary life for half a century," the judge said, "but something happened to change that trajectory to cause them to spread a cancer throughout this city."

Rogelio prescribed 3.2 million oxycodone pills since 2009 when the couple turned their practice into a cash-only pill mill, according to the Special Narcotics Prosecutor.

The practice worked with several major drug rings who sent as many as 50 "runners" a day to pick up prescriptions for the highly addictive painkillers, which dealers in turn sold on the black market, official said.

According to prosecutors, crowds of junkies and runners gathered in the streets forcing the Lucases to relocate their clinic three times with their final address at 205 W. 101st St.

Prior to launching their lucrative drug-dealing racket, they operated a legitimate clinic catering to the elderly and Medicaid patients.

Rogelio, who earned his medical degree in the Philippines, had lived a respectable life and served as a colonel in the U.S. Army's medical department, court records show.

"Rather than serving the communities whose trust they had gained, Rogelio Lucas and Lydia Lucas chose instead to abuse that trust and profit off of the opioid crisis ravaging our country," said Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan in a statement.

Rogelio surrendered his license in 2016 after his arrest. His lawyer couldn't immediately be reached for comment.

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