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Bestselling 'pH Miracle' author heads to jail

Diego Union-Tribune)

Robert O. Young, author of the pH Miracle diet book series, looks to defense attorney Wil Rumble after a bailiff placed him in handcuffs in a Vista, Calif., courtroom Thursday. (Teri Figueroa / San

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the answer.

By Teri Figueroa

five months in jail, after admitting that he illegally treated patients at his luxury ranch without any medical or scientific training. Robert O. Young was taken into custody in a San Diego County courtroom Thursday.

He had been convicted last year on two counts of practicing medicine without a

San Diego — The author of the popular pH Miracle book series will spend the next

license and pleaded guilty earlier this year to two additional felony counts. The 65-year-old Young didn't speak during the hearing, which marked the end of a three-year criminal case that highlighted his controversial theories and the pricey

treatments he offered to seriously ill or dying patients, who in some cases were given

intravenous fluids mixed with baking soda at \$500 a pop.

He's the author of several books, including the bestselling "The pH Miracle: Balance Your Diet, Reclaim Your Health," which was published in 2002 and later translated into more than 18 languages. His work, and treatments at the ranch, were based on the theory that acidity in the body is the cause of disease, and that an alkaline diet is

accredited institutions - had oversimplified the "extremely complex fields" of microbiology and hematology. "I think where it all went very wrong is you became overly aggressive and overly

confident in areas you just had no knowledge about," Whitney said.

Superior Court Judge Richard Whitney said Thursday that while there was some

benefit to Young's work, the author — who has no post-high school degrees from

The judge said Young had "stolen time" from terminally ill people, including some who "were bilked out of tens of thousands of dollars."

Young was arrested in January 2014 after an investigation started by the state

medical board. His alkaline theories, rooted in work by an 1800s French scientist, were not technically on trial, although they were center stage during the criminal case.

Deputy Dist. Atty. Gina Darvas called Young the "wizard of pHraud" and painted him

as a charlatan who made money peddling pseudoscience to desperate, dying people.

Darvas said Young's degrees came from a nonaccredited "diploma mill" where Young went from a bachelor's degree to a doctorate in about eight months in 1995. During the trial, defense attorney Paul Pfingst argued that Young was under attack because he espoused alternative beliefs. He said people sought Young's help precisely

A jury convicted Young in early 2016 on two counts of practicing medicine without a license but deadlocked on several remaining charges. Young, who faced retrial on those counts, instead struck a deal in April that put an end to the criminal case.

Under the deal, Young was sentenced to three years, eight months in custody,

because he was not a doctor, but rather a naturopathic practitioner.

credited for spending roughly the last year under house arrest.

Aside from jail time, Darvas insisted on another condition: Young had to make a public admission declaring that he is not a microbiologist, hematologist, medical or naturopathic doctor or trained scientist. He gave those admissions when he entered

although he probably will serve only half that time for good behavior. He is also being

Figueroa writes for the San Diego Union-Tribune

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his guilty plea in April.

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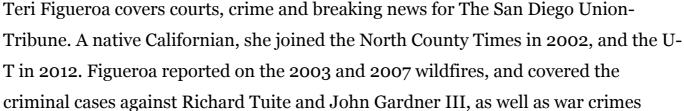
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