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D.A. BROWN: QUEENS NIGHTCLUB OWNER AND BOUNCER
CONVICTED IN SHOOTING DEATH OF PATRON
Defendants Face 25 Years to Life in Prison

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown announced today that a Jackson Heights nightclub owner and a club bouncer have been found guilty of the 1993 slaying of a patron after forcing him out of the club at gunpoint.

District Attorney Brown said, "Justice was delayed in this case, but not denied. This was a brazen execution on a public sidewalk and is deservant of a lengthy term."

The District Attorney identified the defendants as Rasheen Sweeney, 48, of 107-60 155th Street in Jamaica and Vishnudatt Nisthalal, 48, of 186-08 Cambridge Road in Jamaica. They were convicted of Murder in the second degree by a jury in Queens Supreme Court after a six-week trial before Justice Gregory Lasak. Jurors deliberated for three days before reaching a verdict on Friday night. The defendants face up to 25 years to life in prison when they are sentenced on January 16, 2008.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the trial testimony, on the night of January 18, 1993, the defendant Vishnudatt Nisthalal, owner of the Juanchito Bar at 76-07 Roosevelt Avenue, ordered defendant Rasheen Sweeney, who was a bouncer at the bar, and together with another bouncer who has not been apprehended, to remove the victim, Yamile Alberto Puentes, from the bar and kill him. According to testimony, the two bouncers forced Puentes out of the club at gunpoint, took him down the block and shot him once in the head. The second bouncer, who allegedly pulled the trigger, has not been apprehended.

The men were arrested in 2004 after a witness, who had been a disc jockey at the nightclub, spotted Nisthalal at a laundromat and went to the 115th Precinct to report seeing him. According to trial testimony, the disc jockey overheard Nisthalal order the bouncers to kill Puentes and saw them lead the victim out of the bar at gunpoint.

Assistant District Attorney Peter Lomp of the District Attorney's Homicide Trial Bureau prosecuted the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Brad Leventhal, Bureau Chief, and Jack Warsawsky, Deputy Bureau Chief, and the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Charles A. Testagrossa and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Daniel A. Saunders.

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Note to Editors: E-version of this press release posted at www.queensda.org