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**D.A. BROWN: QUEENS GUN TRAFFICKER SENTENCED TO 28 YEARS TO LIFE
IN PRISON FOR THE 2004 MURDER OF MAINTENANCE WORKER**

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown announced today that a Jamaica, Queens, man involved with running guns from South Carolina to New York has been sentenced to 28 years to life in prison for the fatal shooting of a Rochdale Village maintenance worker who allegedly owed him money.

District Attorney Brown said, "The defendant was not only responsible for taking a life but his activities as a gun trafficker endangered the lives of others and warrant the lengthy prison sentence imposed today by the court."

The District Attorney identified the defendant as William Powell, 26, of 140-39 158th Street in Jamaica, Queens who was convicted on June 15, 2007 before Acting Queens Supreme Court Justice Barry Kron who imposed the indeterminate sentence of 28 years to life in prison.

The District Attorney said that, according to trial testimony, on October 13, 2004, Powell gave money to several individuals whom he had recruited as 'straw buyers' to purchase handguns in South Carolina and transport them back to Queens County where Powell planned to sell them for a profit on the black market.

Four days later, according to the testimony, on the night of October 17, 2004, Powell and a co-defendant, Tirzah Hill, drove to the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn to speak with one of the recruited men who had returned to New York without any guns. Unable to get back his money, Powell and Hill kidnapped Aaron Strait – who had accompanied the man to South Carolina – and placed him in the trunk of their car. Once back in Queens, Strait was released from the trunk and Powell ordered him to kill Gregory Leak, a Rochdale Village maintenance worker who purportedly owed money to Powell. When Strait refused to do as instructed, it was testified, Powell had another man commit the murder. At approximately 3:12 a.m. on October 18, 2004, Leak was summoned to come down to his building's lobby where he was shot three times, resulting in his death.

The District Attorney noted that defendant Tirzah Hill, 22, of 136 East 87th Street in Brooklyn, pled guilty last month to Unlawful Imprisonment in the Second Degree and was sentenced to one year in jail.

Assistant District Attorney Shawn Clark of the District Attorney's Homicide Trials Bureau, prosecuted the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Brad A. 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: Press release e-version posted on www.queensda.org