



**RICHARD A. BROWN**  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

**DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
QUEENS COUNTY**  
125-01 QUEENS BOULEVARD  
KEW GARDENS, NEW YORK 11415-1568  
718-286-6000

Release # 213-2007  
[www.queensda.org](http://www.queensda.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2007

**CONTACT: PRESS OFFICE**  
(718) 286-6315

**D.A. BROWN: QUEENS MAN PLEADS GUILTY**  
**TO MANSLAUGHTER IN CHOKING DEATH OF WIFE**

*Left Two-Year-Old Daughter in Car With Mother's Body; Faces 20 Years in Prison*

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown announced today that a Jamaica, Queens, man has pleaded guilty to manslaughter in the October 2004 choking death of his wife whose body was discovered in a parked SUV five days after she was killed, along with her two-year-old daughter who was rescued by firefighters.

District Attorney Brown said, "The defendant has admitted to a shocking crime of violence against his wife who leaves behind a young daughter, who narrowly escaped death herself at the hands of the defendant. His conduct was violent and irresponsible and the sentence to be imposed is, under the circumstances, more than warranted."

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Leonardo Almonte, 40, of 139-11 115<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Jamaica, Queens, a bodega owner. Almonte, who has been held without bail since his arrest in October 2004, appeared today before Queens Supreme Court Justice Robert J. Hanophy and pleaded guilty to first-degree manslaughter and first-degree reckless endangerment. Justice Hanophy set sentencing for December 4, 2007, at which time he indicated that he would sentence the defendant to a determinate term of 20 years in prison.

District Attorney Brown said that, in pleading guilty, Almonte admitted that he caused the death of his wife, Cesarina Colon, 32, on the evening of October 23, 2004, by throwing her to the floor inside the family's residence at 139-11 115<sup>th</sup> Avenue, straddling her body and choking her. Afterwards, he left her body and her two-year-old child, Rosie Batista, inside a vehicle that he parked at 95<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Cresskill Place about a mile from their home.

According to the District Attorney, the baby girl was rescued on October 28, 2004, when a passerby saw the woman's body and the child inside the vehicle and called 911. Fire Department firefighters assigned to Truck 303 responded to the scene, broke into the vehicle and rescued the baby girl who was strapped in a car seat.

Assistant District Attorney Shawn Clark, of the District Attorney's Homicide Trial 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.

#

Note to Editor: Press release e-version posted at [www.queensda.org](http://www.queensda.org).