



RICHARD A. BROWN
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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

Release # 214-2007
www.queensda.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2007

CONTACT: KEVIN RYAN
HELEN PETERSON
MERIS CAMPBELL
(718) 286-6315

**D.A. BROWN: NIGHTCLUB CO-OWNER SENTENCED TO 25 YEARS TO LIFE
IN SHOOTING DEATH OF FREELANCE CAMERAMAN**

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown announced today that the co-owner of a Queens nightclub has been sentenced to 25 years to life in prison for the shooting death of a 28-year-old man who had come to book the club for a party. The murder took place inside of the nightclub in front of three eyewitnesses.

District Attorney Brown said, "The defendant has been convicted of fatally shooting a young man inside his place of business after a verbal argument and then, instead of notifying authorities, disposing of the body by placing it in the trunk of the victim's car – where the body was discovered a week later by the victim's mother. Under the circumstances, the lengthy state prison sentence imposed today is more than warranted."

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Antonio Benjamin, 43, of 1409 Thicket Way in Decatur, Georgia. Benjamin was convicted earlier this month of second-degree murder and second-degree criminal possession of a weapon following a two and one-half week jury trial before Queens Supreme Court Justice Daniel Lewis who imposed today's indeterminate sentence of 25 years to life in prison.

The District Attorney said that, according to the trial testimony, Michael Clark, who was employed as a freelance cameraman and a part-time party promoter, went to Dubie's Palace, a nightclub located at 103-19 Merrick Boulevard in the Jamaica section of Queens, on November 30, 2002, and met with the defendant. During their meeting a dispute arose over the party that Mr. Clark wanted to have at the club and, in front of three eyewitnesses, the defendant shot the victim once in the head, causing his death. The defendant then ordered the eyewitnesses to place the deceased's body into the trunk of his (Clark's) Mercedes Benz, which was then driven several blocks away and parked on a dead-end street. The body was discovered a week later by the deceased's mother.

Assistant District Attorney Andrea Eckhardt, of the District Attorney's Homicide Trials 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.

#

Note to Editors: Press release e-version posted on www.queensda.org