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**D.A. BROWN: FORMER BOYFRIEND SENTENCED TO 26 1/3 YEARS TO LIFE  
IN PRISON FOR 1999 MURDER OF QUINNIPIAC COLLEGE LAW STUDENT**

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown announced today that a Queens man, who fled to California following the disappearance in November 1999 of his former girlfriend, a Quinnipiac College law student, has been sentenced to 26 1/3 years to life in prison for her murder.

District Attorney Brown said, "The defendant has been convicted of murdering a young woman and callously disposing of her body in the hopes of concealing his crime. In the process, he has allowed her family to drift in a sea of uncertainty for more than five years, grappling with the knowledge that they may never have the body of their loved one returned to them. For them, there will never be true closure. The punishment imposed by the Court of 26 1/3 years to life in prison is more than warranted."

District Attorney Brown added, "Five and one-half years ago – in mid-November of 1999 – a young Quinnipiac College law student, who had left school in Hamden, Connecticut, on a Friday afternoon to drive to her family's home in Flushing, disappeared. She has not been seen since. The young woman, Samiya Haqiqi, was 24 years old at the time of her disappearance. She had graduated from St. John's University in 1995 and thereafter took classes at Queens College while working full time during the day as a paralegal for a Manhattan law firm. She had started her first semester at Quinnipiac College's Law School two months prior to her disappearance. Her locked 1997 Volkswagen Jetta was found in a Grand Union parking lot at Northern Boulevard and Marathon Parkway in Little Neck."

District Attorney Brown identified the defendant as Farid (John) Popal, 36, of 38833 Bell Street in Fremont, California. He was convicted on April 5, 2006, of second-degree murder, tampering with physical evidence, first-degree falsifying business records and fifth-degree conspiracy by a jury after a six-week trial before Queens Supreme Court Justice Robert C. Hanophy who earlier today imposed sentence of 26 1/3 years to life in prison.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to trial testimony, Farid Popal murdered Samiya Haqiqi on November 12, 1999, and, allegedly with the assistance of his younger brother Farhad, then 24, disposed of the victim's body, personal effects and clothing and concealed and destroyed blood evidence on the front passenger seat of his 1997 Pontiac Grand Prix; and that he thereafter requested an unsuspecting employee to clean up evidence of a fire at a transmission shop – where his brother was employed – and assist him in obtaining a replacement front passenger seat for his car. On November 16, 1999, the defendant, according to the testimony, filed false reports with the 102<sup>nd</sup> Precinct and the Blue Ridge Insurance Company claiming that his automobile had been stolen.

The defendant's brother, Farhad (Frank), formerly of Flushing, is awaiting trial on charges of first-degree hindering prosecution, tampering with physical evidence and fifth-degree conspiracy. He faces consecutive seven year terms in prison if convicted.

The investigation was conducted by New York City Police Department Detectives Steve Brown, Thomas Luberto, John Malone, Richard Mecabe and Vincent Romano under the supervision of Lieutenant Kevin Keenan, commander of the 109<sup>th</sup> Precinct Detective Squad. Members of the NYPD Police Forensic Investigation Division and detectives of the Hamden, Connecticut, Police Department also assisted in the investigation.

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Assistant District Attorney Patricia A. Malloy conducted the investigative part of the prosecution under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Peter T. Reese, Bureau Chief of the District Attorney's Homicide Investigations Bureau, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney Charles A. Testagrossa.

Assistant District Attorney Barry S. Weinrib, now Deputy Bureau Chief of the District Attorney's Narcotics Trials, prosecuted the case with the assistance of Assistant District Attorney Christine Battaglia, of the District Attorney's Kew Gardens I Trial Bureau, under the supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Trials James C. Quinn.

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