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D.A. BROWN: SWEETHEART SWINDLER SENTENCED TO FOURTEEN YEARS IN PRISON FOR ROLE IN FATAL BEATING OF ELDERLY MAN IN JAMAICA PARK

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown announced today that an Astoria realtor who hired a thug to attack an elderly man in order to scare him into selling his house to her at a low price has been sentenced to 14 years in prison for her role in his brutal death in a Jamaica Park in August 2004.

District Attorney Brown said, "The defendant has pleaded guilty to being a 'sweetheart swindler' who befriended elderly and lonely men, preyed on their vulnerability and then sought to cheat them out of their life's savings. In this case, her greed set into motion a terrible series of events that resulted in an innocent 78-year-old man being savagely pummeled to death. Today's lengthy prison sentence, under the circumstances, is more than justified."

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Liat Corman, 32, of 32-15 41st Street in Astoria, Queens, a self-employed unlicensed real estate investor. The defendant pleaded guilty on Thursday, September 7, 2006, to first-degree robbery before Queens County Supreme Court Justice Robert J. Hanophy who sentenced the defendant to fourteen years in state prison earlier today.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the charges, on August 30, 2004, at 2:50 p.m. Corman lured the victim, Charles Schlechtiger, 78, of 117-53 125th Street in South Ozone Park, to Marconi Park on 157th Street in Jamaica where she had arranged with co-defendant Jason Smith to have him confront the victim. Corman had hired Smith for \$2,000 to scare and intimidate the victim by pushing him around and taking his house keys so that he would agree to a real estate deal in which he would sell his home to Corman at low cost. Smith met the victim at the park where he had been brought by Corman and then beat him to death.

The District Attorney said that Smith, 39, of 106-44 159th Street in Jamaica, Queens, pleaded guilty to first-degree manslaughter and first-degree robbery on April 27, 2006, before Justice Hanophy, who indicated that he would sentenced him to 25 years in prison at sentencing on November 2, 2006. The defendant is presently being held without bail.

The investigation was conducted by Detective Richard Johnson of the NYPD's 103rd Precinct Detective Squad under the supervision of Captain Thomas Ryan and Sergeant Brad Miller.

Assistant District Attorneys Francesco Catarisano, Bureau Chief of the District Attorney's Kew Gardens I Bureau, and Jacqueline M. Heitmann prosecuted the case under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Trials James C. Quinn and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney for Trials John H. Larsen.

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