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D.A. BROWN: QUEENS MAN CONVICTED
OF VALENTINE'S DAY MURDER OF FIANCEE'S MOTHER

Faces Up to 27 Years to Life in Prison

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown announced today that a Queens man who represented himself at trial was convicted today of the bludgeoning death of his fiancée's 57-year-old widowed mother on Valentine's Day in 2003. The murder took place inside the Jamaica residence they shared.

District Attorney Brown said, "The defendant has now been held accountable for the vicious and brutal murder of his fiancée's mother. I only hope that those affected by this tragedy can find some degree of comfort in today's conviction and in the knowledge that the defendant will spend the rest of his life in prison."

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Tony Sexton, 37, of 108-17 160th Street in Jamaica, Queens. Sexton, unemployed, was convicted earlier today following a two and one-half week jury trial of second-degree murder and tampering with physical evidence.

A jury of seven women and five men deliberated for three hours before returning a verdict of guilty before Queens Supreme Court Justice Robert J. Hanophy who set sentencing for February 27, 2007. The defendant, who is being held without bail, faces up to 27 years to life in prison.

The District Attorney said that, according to the trial testimony, the defendant had moved in with his fiancée and her mother, Maria Rogers, 57, into the co-op that they owned at 108-17 160th Street in Jamaica – despite the fact that Ms. Rogers did not care for her daughter's relationship with the defendant or the fact that he was moving into their home. On the morning of February 14, 2003, while his fiancée was out of town, the defendant became enraged with Ms. Rogers and struck her multiple times in the head with a blunt object, causing her death. Thereafter, the defendant cleaned the area with bleach and wrapped the victim's body in fabric taken from a piece of furniture in the home before placing her inside a plastic garbage bag. The following evening, the defendant placed the victim in her own car and drove the car approximately one mile away to 97th Avenue and 148th Street, where he abandoned it. Eight days later, police discovered the car with the victim's body inside.

The investigation was conducted by Detective Richard Johnson of the New York City Police Department's 103rd Precinct Detective Squad under the supervision of Lieutenant Sal Salerno, Commanding Officer.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Brad A. Leventhal, Chief of the District Attorney's Homicide Trials Bureau, under 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