



RICHARD A. BROWN
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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

Release # 117-2007
www.queensda.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, MAY 23, 2007

CONTACT: PRESS OFFICE
(718) 286-6315

D.A. BROWN: RIKERS ISLAND INMATE CHARGED
IN MURDER-FOR-HIRE PLOT TO KILL TRIAL WITNESS

Defendant Faces Up To 25 Years in Prison

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown announced today that a Rikers Island inmate awaiting trial on kidnapping and carjacking charges has been accused of orchestrating a jailhouse plot to hire a “hit man” to kill the victim in the case – a 31-year-old Queens woman – in order to prevent her from testifying at his upcoming trial.

District Attorney Brown said, “The defendant allegedly thought he could escape prosecution by committing a more serious violent crime than the one he is charged with committing. The response to thwart his plan was swift and effective. The cooperation of victims and witnesses is critical to our crime fighting efforts and we will do everything in our power to ensure their safety. The conduct underlying these charges is extremely serious and the defendant now faces strong laws and tough penalties.”

District Attorney Brown identified the defendant as Ashumba Bryan, 29, of 154 Highland Boulevard in Brooklyn. Bryan, who has been held on Rikers Island without bail since his indictment on kidnapping and robbery charges in June 2006, was arraigned today before Acting Queens Supreme Court Justice James Griffin on charges of Conspiracy in the Second Degree (to Commit Murder) and Criminal Solicitation in the Second Degree. Bryan who faces up to 25 years in prison if convicted, was ordered held without bail and to return to court on June 15, 2007.

In the underlying case, Bryan and his brother, Sillasse Bryan, are each charged with carjacking a then 29-year-old Queens woman on October 10, 2005. While driving her around in her own car, they allegedly beat her – causing her to suffer a fractured orbital bone, among other injuries – and demanded her ATM card and code. Once the woman complied with their request, the defendants are alleged to have dumped her from the moving car while driving along the Interboro (now Jackie Robinson) Parkway. The defendants then allegedly used her stolen ATM card multiple times to withdraw money.

Bryan and his brother were each charged in that case with second-degree kidnapping, first- and second-degree robbery, second-degree reckless endangerment, fifth-degree criminal possession of stolen property and first-degree unlawful imprisonment. The Bryans, who faces up to 25 years in prison if convicted, are awaiting trial on that crime in Queens Supreme Court in Kew Gardens.

According to the latest charges, Ashumba Bryan is alleged to have said in a recorded conversation on April 26, 2007, that he was seeking to find a hit man to murder the woman in exchange for \$10,000 in cash. He allegedly provided a detailed description of the woman, as well as details regarding where she lived, the manner in which he wanted her killed, and the method of payment before and after the murder.

The investigation was conducted by Detectives Dominick DiGennaro and David Gilbert, of the Queens District Attorney’s NYPD Detective Squad, under the supervision of Sergeant Frank Horvath, and Captain John M. Zanfardino, and the overall supervision of Chief of Detectives George F. Brown.

Assistant District Attorney Maryam A. Lipkansky, of the District Attorney’s Career Criminal Major Crimes Bureau, is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney James W. Evangelou, Bureau Chief, and Robert J. Hanophy, Deputy Bureau Chief, and the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Trial James C. Quinn and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorneys for Trials John H. Larsen and Robert J. Masters.

It should be noted that an indictment is merely an accusation and that a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

#

Note to Editors: An e-version of this press release is posted on the QDA website at www.queensda.org.