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**D.A. BROWN: ALLEGED “CHOP SHOP” DUO CHARGED  
WITH STRIPPING STOLEN CAR FOR PARTS**

*Allegedly Left Thank You Note Scratched On Stripped Vehicle: “I Will Enjoy Da Parts!”*

\_\_\_\_\_ Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown announced today that two 23-year-old Cambria Heights men have been charged with stripping a stolen Honda Civic for its parts and leaving its metal skeleton on the street with notes scratched on the trunk and roof, saying, “I Will Enjoy Da Parts!” and “Thank You!”

District Attorney Brown said, “The defendants are accused of operating a chop shop out of their residence and then disposing of the skeletal remains on public streets. Breaking the law in such a manner is bad enough but the defendants then allegedly had the effrontery to scratch taunting messages into the paint finish of one car. Such arrogance is a slap in the face to not only the vehicle’s owner but to society in general.”

The District Attorney added, “Auto theft has long been a benchmark in measuring law enforcement’s effectiveness in combating crime. In 1991, when I first took office, there were some 52,000 cars stolen in Queens County. Last year, we were at less than 5,000 – that’s a decrease of 10.3 percent for the year and more than 90 percent since the early 1990s.”

The District Attorney identified the defendants as Ronald J. Young and Romel H. Hightower, both 23 and residing at 118-17 225<sup>th</sup> Street in Cambria Heights. The defendants were arraigned on Wednesday, May 16, 2007, before Queens Criminal Court Judge Steven W. Paynter on charges of third-degree grand larceny, third-degree criminal possession of stolen property, third-degree criminal mischief, possession of burglar’s tools, third-degree unauthorized use of a vehicle and third-degree auto stripping. The defendants, who each face up to four years in prison if convicted, were ordered held on \$2,500 bail and to return to court on May 30, 2007.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the charges, a Queens resident parked his blue Honda Civic SI in the driveway of his Hollis residence on the evening of May 13, 2007. When he awoke the next morning, he discovered the car gone and immediately reported the theft to police. Later that morning, police allegedly observed the defendant Hightower pushing the stolen Honda from his driveway to the street while another unapprehended individual sat in the vehicle and steered. They were then allegedly joined by the defendant Young who used a 1995 Ford Windstar to push the vehicle several blocks to 237<sup>th</sup> Street and 119<sup>th</sup> Avenue where it was abandoned. Missing from the vehicle were various parts, including the engine, wheels, front fenders and front interior seats. The words “I Will Enjoy Da Parts” and “Thank You” were scratched on the vehicle’s trunk and roof.

On May 15, 2007, a search warrant was executed on the defendants’ residence and among the items recovered were the stolen Honda’s engine, passenger door and front fenders, along with several tools.

The defendants were arrested by police officers assigned to the NYPD’s 105<sup>th</sup> Precinct.

The case is being prosecuted by the District Attorney’s Organized Crime and Rackets Bureau under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Gerard A. Brave, Bureau Chief, Marc P. Resnick, Deputy Chief, and the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Peter A. Crusco and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Linda M. Cantoni.

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

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