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**D.A. BROWN: HOUSEGUEST PLEADS GUILTY IN STABBING DEATH OF FRIEND
AND CLUBBING OF MOTHER IN HILLCREST HOME DURING BURGLARY**

Faces 30 Years in Prison

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown announced today that an unemployed man who had once been a guest in the home of a teenage friend has pled guilty to manslaughter in the November 2006 stabbing death of a friend and the baseball bat assault on the teen's mother inside their Fresh Meadows home during the commission of a burglary.

District Attorney Brown said, "The defendants' actions were brutal and troubling in that the victims opened their home to him and he repaid them for their generosity by stealing their property, destroying their family and robbing a young man of his life. The crime is one more shocking example of mindless violence that takes innocent lives and recklessly endangers public safety."

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Emmanuel Polanco, 22, a homeless drifter who had previously stayed at the victims' home for several months. The defendant pled guilty earlier today to first degree manslaughter and assault before Queens Supreme Court Justice Arthur J. Cooperman. Justice Cooperman indicated that he would sentence the defendant on February 7, 2008 to 30 years in prison on the manslaughter and five years in prison of the assault charges which will run consecutive to each other.

District Attorney Brown said that the defendant admitted in court that he repeatedly stabbed David Higgins, 19, in the abdomen, back and face when Higgins returned home on the afternoon of October 30, 2006, and discovered the defendant burglarizing his residence, a two-family house located at 77-10 162nd Street in Hillcrest. At approximately 5:30 pm, Mr. Higgins' mother, Verne Culberson, 56, returned home from work and was hit in the head by the defendant with a baseball bat which required her to receive three staples to close the wound.

The investigation was conducted by Detective Henry Szachacz of the New York City Police Department's 107th Precinct Detective Squad under the supervision of Sergeant Branko Yurisak and Detectives David Moser and John Warner of the NYPD's Queens Homicide Squad under the supervision of Lieutenant John Perdoch.

Assistant District Attorney Karen Ross of the District Attorney's Homicide Trials Bureau prosecuted the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Brad Leventhal, Bureau Chief and Jack Warsawsky, Deputy Bureau Chief, and 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: E-version of this press release posted at www.queensda.org