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**QUEENS VILLAGE RESIDENT CONVICTED OF MURDER IN FATAL SHOOTING
OF RIDGEWOOD MAN DURING BOTCHED DRUG ROBBERY**

Second Victim Wounded; Defendant Faces Up to 50 Years to Life in Prison At Sentencing

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown today announced that a Queens Village resident has been found guilty of fatally shooting a Queens teenager and wounding another man during an attempted drug robbery in January 2015.

District Attorney Brown said, "In rendering its verdict, the jury found the defendant guilty of committing a cold and calculating act. The actions of the defendant warrants imposition of a lengthy prison sentence to punish him and protect society."

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Jairam C. Ali Suarez, 26, of 214th Street, in the Queens Village section of Queens. Suarez was convicted late yesterday of two counts of second-degree murder, first-degree assault and second-degree criminal possession of a weapon, robbery and attempted robbery following a three and one-half week jury trial before Queens Supreme Court Justice Michael Aloise. Suarez, who faces up to 50 years to life in prison, is scheduled to be sentenced on November 9, 2017.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to trial testimony, 21-year-old Wilfredo Aponte, of Ridgewood, Queens, was seated in the backseat of a vehicle parked in front of 150-22 130th Street during the early morning hours of January 6, 2015, when Suarez opened the backdoor and entered the vehicle with the intent of robbing its occupants of the pound of marijuana they believed he was there to buy. While inside the vehicle, Suarez displayed a firearm and shot Mr. Aponte once in the upper right leg before turning his firearm toward the driver, John Pichardo, 19, and fatally shooting him once in the head before fleeing. Mr. Aponte was transported to a local Queens hospital and treated for his injuries.

Senior Assistant District Attorney Christine A. McCoy, of the District Attorney's Homicide Trials Bureau, prosecuted the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Brad A. Leventhal, Bureau Chief and Jack Warsawsky, Deputy Bureau Chief, and the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Daniel A. Saunders.

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