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**QUEENS DISTRICT ATTORNEY FILES JOINT MOTION TO VACATE CONVICTION  
CITING IMPROPER DISCRIMINATION DURING JURY SELECTION**

*QDA's CIU Joins with Defense to Reverse Conviction;  
10th Conviction Vacated Since DA Katz Took Office in 2020*

Queens County District Attorney Melinda Katz and defense counsel at the law firm Covington & Burling, LLP today filed a joint motion to vacate the conviction of Lawrence Scott based on evidence of improper discrimination during jury selection. A jury found Mr. Scott guilty of robbery at a 1995 trial, but today the Honorable Michelle Johnson vacated the conviction and dismissed the indictment at the DA's request.

DA Katz said, "Late last year, we discovered two 1996 convictions had been tainted by evidence of discrimination in jury selection. At that, time, we made a commitment to review other cases and take appropriate action. Today's motion to vacate this defendant's conviction reaffirms my administration's determination to reject any form of discrimination."

Documents found in the Queens County District Attorney's files in Scott's case demonstrated that a single ADA—who resigned from the QCDA's office in 1997—improperly excluded certain minorities and women from jury service in violation of the United States Supreme Court's ruling in *Batson v. Kentucky*, 476 U.S. 79 (1986).

In 2020, the QCDA's Conviction Integrity Unit was made aware of a set of notes utilized by the former ADA when exercising peremptory strikes which contained discriminatory guidance. [This discovery led the QCDA to vacate the convictions of 2 individuals whose trials were deemed unconstitutional based on the prosecutor's improper use of race in jury selection.](#) The CIU also commenced a review of all jury trials conducted by this ADA that uncovered the same discriminatory conduct in Lawrence Scott's 1996 trial.

Mr. Scott was convicted for the robbery of a cab driver in which the defendant held a hard object to the victim's neck while an apprehended accomplice stole the victim's wallet. The defendant was captured because he dropped his own wallet while fleeing the scene. Mr. Scott was sentenced to five to ten years in prison.

Mr. Scott had long completed his sentence and is presently incarcerated on a different robbery, and counsel has been appointed to assess the impact of the reversal of this prior conviction on his current sentence.

The Conviction Integrity Unit has now vacated 10 convictions since it was formed by DA Katz after she took office in 2020.

The investigation in *People v. Scott* was conducted by the CIU's Deputy Director Alexis Celestin under the supervision of Director Bryce Benjet.

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