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BROOKLYN MAN SENTENCED FOR SHOOTING DEATH AT CROWDED HOUSE PARTY

Opened Fire with More Than 100 Present at Gathering

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that Devante Richards was sentenced today to 23 years to life in prison for the shooting death of 25-year-old Jonathan Distant at a crowded Springfield Gardens house party in August 2020. The gunfire erupted after a man with Richards bumped into Distant and a staredown ensued.

District Attorney Katz said: “This was an absolutely senseless loss of a young life. It is a tragedy that strengthens our resolve to rid our streets of illegal firearms and to do all that we can to end the plague of gun violence that time and again has taken family, friends and loved ones from our communities.”

Richards, 30, of Montgomery Street in Brooklyn, was convicted by a jury last month on a three-count indictment charging him with murder in the second degree and two counts of criminal possession of a weapon in the second degree.

He was sentenced today by Justice Kenneth Holder to 23 years to life in prison on the murder charge and 15 years in prison on each of the weapon charges, to be served concurrently.

According to the charges and trial testimony:

- On August 9, 2020, at approximately 2:15 a.m., Richards and a group of friends arrived at a large party already underway for several hours in the front yard of a residence at 146-56 183rd Street in Springfield Gardens. Approximately 100 guests were in the yard and security guards managed a line of 50 more waiting to get in. Richards and his group entered and joined friends from Brooklyn.
- At approximately 4:30 a.m., as Distant prepared to leave the party, one of Richards’ friends bumped into him. The two stared at one another. Distant’s girlfriend tried to get the two men to walk away from each other.
- Richards then walked toward Distant and fired at him, hitting him in the left side of the abdomen.
- When Richards opened fire, the approximately 150 party guests began running toward the lone exit and climbing fences into neighboring yards. Additional gunshots sounded from at least two other firearms. No reported injuries resulted from the additional gunfire.

- Distant, who was from the Bronx, was taken to a local hospital where he was pronounced dead from his injuries.

Assistant District Attorney Ryan Nicolosi, of the District Attorney's Homicide Bureau prosecuted the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys John Kosinski, Bureau Chief, and Karen Ross, Deputy Bureau Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Shawn Clark.

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Note to Editors: Archived press releases are available at www.queensda.org.

