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**QUEENS MAN SENTENCED TO LIFE IN PRISON FOR TRIPLE STABBING OF
GIRLFRIEND, HER SON AND A COUSIN**

Relative Discovered Bloody Scene; Defendant Fled to Maine

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that Travis Blake was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole for the 2022 murders of his girlfriend, Karlene Barnett, and two of her family members, Dervon Brightly and Vashawna Malcolm. Blake was convicted by a jury last month of murder in the first degree and other counts for the June 2022 incident. The bodies of the victims were discovered with an array of puncture and blunt force wounds in a state of decomposition in their shared Jamaica home.

District Attorney Katz said: “Travis Blake viciously murdered his girlfriend, her son and a visiting cousin with knives, hammers, and a screwdriver, and then fled New York to avoid capture. There are no words to describe the trauma and lifelong sorrow this defendant has caused for the family of Karlene Barnett, Dervon Brightly and Vashawna Malcolm. This defendant deserves every day of his sentence, and we stand with the victims’ family as they continue to mourn this overwhelming loss.”

Blake, 31, of 155th Street, in Jamaica, was found guilty by a jury on April 2 of murder in the first degree, three counts of murder in the second degree and two counts of criminal possession of a weapon in the fourth degree following a three-and-a-half-week-long trial. Queens Supreme Court Justice Ushir Pandit-Durant, who presided at trial, sentenced the defendant today to life in prison without the possibility of parole on the first-degree murder charge, 25 years to life in prison on each charge of murder in the second degree and 364 days in jail on each weapon charge. The sentences on the second-degree murder charges are to be served consecutive to one another for a minimum sentence of 75 years, and concurrent to the sentence imposed on the first-degree murder charge.

According to the indictment and trial testimony, on June 24, 2022, at approximately 2:15 p.m., EMS responded to 911 call from a resident at a single-family home on 155th Street about a deceased person. The caller, a son of the homeowner, was inside the home when he encountered a foul odor and discovered the body of his cousin, Vashawna Malcolm, 22, on top of a bed in an upstairs bedroom in an advanced state of decomposition. Her wrists, ankles and mouth were wrapped with tape, she was partially nude from the waist down, and she had three stab wounds to the chest and one to her neck.

Police then discovered two more bodies behind a locked door to the basement. Homeowner Karlene Barnett, 55, was found deceased in a puddle of her own blood with 10 stab wounds to her back, a stab wound to

her head, and multiple skull fractures. Barnett's son, Dervon Brightly, 36, was discovered in another basement room with 13 puncture wounds from a screwdriver driven repeatedly into his neck; and multiple skull and facial fractures consistent with having been inflicted by a hammer.

According to trial records, Barnett met Blake at work and the two were dating. They lived in the home together with Barnett's son, Brightly, and Malcolm, a nursing student and Barnett's niece visiting from the island of Jamaica for the summer. A fifth person, Barnett's other son, also lived in the home.

Video surveillance of the exterior of the house, detailed in trial records, showed defendant Blake entering and exiting the home several times between June 22 and 24. The video recording also showed Brightly entering at approximately 2:50 p.m. on June 22 wearing a striped shirt. When the 36-year-old's bloodied body was discovered in the basement, he was found wearing the same striped shirt.

The surveillance video also showed the defendant outside the residence in a green shirt before Brightly came home on June 22. A short time after Brightly entered the house, Blake exited the building wearing no shirt and with a bandage wrapped around one of his hands.

Barnett was also seen on video coming home on June 22 around 7:30 p.m.-- the last time she was seen alive. When she was killed, she was still wearing the jacket that she arrived home in. The defendant is recorded on video for the last time after the incident at approximately 1 a.m. on June 24 walking toward Sutphin Boulevard and getting into a taxi.

Blake was apprehended in Maine weeks after the incident and extradited to Queens.

Police found a blood-covered screwdriver with a missing bit beside Brightly's body. The missing bit was later recovered from Brightly's neck during his autopsy. There was also a blood-stained hammer and bucket inside the residence, along with bottles of household cleaner with blood stains on them. Investigators retrieved an empty roll of duct tape and a green, blood-stained shirt from the home.

During the trial, DNA evidence from crime was presented linking the defendant to a blood-stained shirt and to bloody footprints found on the basement floor next to Barnett's body. A fingerprint matching the defendant was also discovered on a blood-stained mop on the stairs leading to the basement. Internet activity from a phone used by Blake reflected that he was researching which states had the death penalty in 2022.

Assistant District Attorney Jonathan A. Selkove, Deputy Chief of the District Attorney's Homicide Bureau, prosecuted the case with the assistance of Assistant District Attorney Ashley Clement of the District Attorney's Felony Trials II Bureau, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney John Kosinski, Bureau Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Shawn Clark.

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