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HOLLIS MAN CONVICTED FOR FATAL BEATING OF PAWN SHOP OWNER
DURING 2022 ROBBERY

*Defendant Pawned Watches, Then Beat Store Owner During Middy Robbery;
Faces Up to 25 Years to Life in Prison at Sentencing*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that Rodolfo Lopez-Portillo was convicted by a jury of fatally beating Arasb Shoughi during a pawn store robbery in March 2022. The defendant sold two watches to the 60-year-old store owner and then violently attacked the victim with what appeared to be a metal pipe, striking the man repeatedly on the head. Lopez-Portillo stole jewelry and coins, as well as the victim's ring and other personal property.

District Attorney Katz said: "This defendant brutally bludgeoned a Queens pawn shop owner to death with what appeared to be a metal pipe. After stealing jewelry and other items from the property, Rodolfo Lopez-Portillo then stole a ring off the dying man's finger before fleeing the location. Thanks to the hard work of our partners in the Maryland State Police and the US Marshals Service Capital Area Regional Fugitive Task Force, the defendant was apprehended approximately one month after the murder at a Greyhound bus station in Baltimore and returned to New York to face justice. The defendant has now been convicted of murder and will face 25 years to life in prison at sentencing."

Lopez-Portillo, 51, of Hollis, was convicted today of two counts of murder in the second degree, two counts of robbery in the first degree and criminal possession of a weapon in the fourth degree following a jury trial.

Trial openings began on March 17 and closings took place April 13. The jury deliberated for a day before reaching a verdict.

Queens Supreme Court Justice Ira Margulis ordered the defendant to return on May 11 when he faces 25 years to life in prison.

DA Katz said that, according to the charges and trial testimony, on March 28, 2022, at approximately 12:46 p.m., Lopez-Portillo entered the Global Pawn Shop on Jamaica Avenue in Hollis wearing a black face mask, black hood, black gloves and sunglasses. He sold two wristwatches to Shoughi who gave him cash in exchange.

Shoughi then left the employee side of the shop and entered the customer side to place the watches in a display case. Lopez-Portillo took off one glove, discreetly displayed what appeared to be a metal pipe and, when

Shoughi's back was turned, hit him on the head. The victim fell to the floor and the defendant hit him again repeatedly causing Shoughi to bleed profusely.

Lopez-Portillo then went to the rear of the shop and with his ungloved hand took various items including coins and jewelry and put them in his backpack. He hit Shoughi again until the victim was motionless and then took his ring and other personal property.

A woman entered the shop and saw Lopez-Portillo behind the counter. She went outside and called police. The defendant left the pawn shop but not before hitting Shoughi three more times in the head with the pipe.

The victim was taken to the hospital with severe head and brain trauma and died on April 17, 2022.

Video surveillance tracked Lopez-Portillo backwards from the pawn shop and showed him leaving a nearby apartment building on Jamaica Avenue earlier that morning.

Lopez-Portillo fled to Baltimore after the murder where he stayed for two weeks before he was apprehended at a Greyhound bus station and extradited to New York. The defendant's suitcase, which was recovered from a residence in Baltimore, contained coins, watches and jewelry. Some of the coins were identified as coming from Shoughi's shop.

Fingerprints found at the pawn shop matched those of the defendant.

Senior Assistant District Attorney John Esposito of the District Attorney's Homicide Bureau and Assistant District Attorney Olivia Quinto of Felony Trial Bureau III are prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney John Kosinski, Homicide Bureau Chief, and Karen Ross and Jonathan Selkove, Deputy Bureau Chiefs, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Shawn Clark.

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