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HOLLIS MAN SENTENCED TO 25 YEARS TO LIFE FOR KILLING PAWN SHOP OWNER
DURING 2022 ROBBERY

Defendant Pawned Watches Then Beat Store Owner During Midday Robbery

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that Rodolfo Lopez-Portillo was sentenced to 25 years to life in prison for 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: "Rodolfo Lopez-Portillo brazenly robbed a local business in the middle of the day and beat store owner Arasb Shoughi so severely that he never recovered. The defendant then fled the state with some of the stolen goods to escape accountability. Nothing can undo what happened, but we hope today's sentence of 25 years to life in prison provides a measure of solace to Mr. Shoughi's loved ones."

Lopez-Portillo, 52, of Hollis, was convicted by a jury in April 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. Queens Supreme Court Justice Ira Margulis sentenced him today to 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 the victim's 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.

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

Video surveillance tracked Lopez-Portillo backward 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 prosecuted 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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