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FAR ROCKAWAY MAN CONVICTED OF MURDER FOR 2021 SHOOTING

Victim Suffered Fatal Gunshots to Chest; Defendant Rawle Washington Faces Up to 25 Years to Life in Prison at Sentencing

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that Rawle Washington was convicted by a jury of murder in the second degree for the May 2021 shooting death of 26-year-old Ryan Thomas. The victim was shot twice in the chest shortly after getting into the driver's seat of his car near a Hollis nightspot. Washington fled the scene and was later identified as the shooter because of his distinctive tattoos.

District Attorney Katz said: "Rawle Washington shot Ryan Thomas execution style in the chest through a car window, taking the young man's life. He then thought he could escape accountability. Thanks to the work of our NYPD partners and my prosecutors he was apprehended, tried and convicted of murder."

Washington, 32, of Far Rockaway, was convicted by a jury Monday of murder in the second degree and two counts criminal possession of a weapon in the second degree. Trial openings took place on November 4 and closings occurred on November 13. The jury deliberated for approximately two hours before reaching a verdict.

Queens Supreme Court Justice Michael Yavinsky set a sentencing date of December 16 at which time the defendant faces up to 25 years to life in prison.

District Attorney Katz said that, according to the charges and trial testimony, on May 15, 2021, at approximately 4:10 a.m., Ryan Thomas left a nightclub on 199th Street near Hollis Avenue with a group of friends. They walked to a white Acura parked on Hollis Avenue and got inside with Thomas in the driver's seat.

One minute later, Washington left the nightclub along with others. Washington and two other men walked toward the Acura. The two men kept going across Hollis Avenue as Washington approached the driver's side window of the idling car and extended his arm toward the glass and fired. He then fled. A .380-caliber shell casing was recovered from the location.

Thomas managed to drive the car a short distance before crashing into several other vehicles. When police responded to the scene, they found him unresponsive in the driver's seat. He was transported to a local hospital where he was pronounced dead due to his gunshot injuries.

Video surveillance from Hollis Avenue showed Washington, who was wearing a T-shirt, jeans with ripped knees, a baseball hat and a medallion around his neck, approach Thomas' car. Video from inside the nightclub showed Washington in the same clothing with tattoos visible on his hands and arm, one of which read "Lakim" and another depicted a pocket watch with the time 6:27.

On January 18, 2022, Washington was arrested for an unrelated shooting. His tattoos identified him as the suspect in Thomas' murder.

Assistant District Attorney Gabriel J. Reale, of the District Attorney's Homicide Bureau, is prosecuting the case with the assistance of Assistant District Attorney Sean Romeo under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys John Kosinski, Bureau Chief, Karen Ross and Jonathan Selkowe, Deputy Chiefs, and under the overall supervision of Chief Assistant District Attorney Shawn Clark.

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