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82-2024
For Immediate Release
October 10, 2024

TWO MEN INDICTED FOR KILLING FRUIT STAND OWNER
Defendants Allegedly Beat Vendor with Bat After He Accused Them of Theft

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark today announced that two men have been indicted in the fatal beating of a street fruit vendor on Fordham Road.

District Attorney Clark said “The defendants allegedly beat the victim with a baseball bat after he confronted them for stealing from his fruit stand. The victim was repeatedly clubbed in the head and died two days later. The defendants will be held accountable for this brutality.”

District Attorney Clark said Terrence Downes, 44, of Queens was indicted on second-degree Murder and first-degree Manslaughter. He was arraigned today before Bronx Supreme Court Justice Brenda Rivera. Remand is continued and he is due back in court on December 23, 2024. Romel Jarrett, 37 of the Bronx, is charged with first-degree Manslaughter and will be arraigned at a later date.

According to the investigation, on September 12, 2024, on East Fordham Road, the defendants acting in concert, got into an argument with Leslie Sanchez, 56, the owner of a fruit stand. Sanchez had accused them of theft. The argument moved to the Fordham Road subway station at which point the victim walked back up the stairs to the street. The defendants brandished a baseball bat, approached Sanchez from behind started beating him. After Sanchez fell to the ground, they hit him in the head seven times. He was taken to Saint Barnabas Hospital where he died from his injuries on September 14, 2024.

The case is being prosecuted by Senior Homicide Counsel John Miras, under the supervision of Burim Namani, Deputy Chief of the Homicide Bureau, Christine Scaccia, Chief of the Homicide Bureau, and under the overall supervision of James Brennan, Deputy Chief of the Trial Division, and Theresa Gottlieb, Chief of the Trial Division.

District Attorney Clark thanked Senior Crime Victim Advocate Laura Ramirez. District Attorney Clark thanked NYPD Detective Stephen Doyle of the Bronx Homicide Squad and NYPD Detective Christopher Madden of the 46th Precinct for their work in the investigation.

An indictment is an accusatory instrument and not proof of a defendant’s guilt.