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TWO HOLLIS MEN SENTENCED FOR MURDERING DICE GAME OPPONENT

*Victim was Robbed at Gunpoint Then Fatally Shot;
Defendants Convicted by Jury*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that Mark Watson and Rodney Dunn were each sentenced today to 23 years to life in prison for the murder of 33-year-old Christopher McKnight, who was shot to death during a dice game in 2021. McKnight was winning when he was held up at gunpoint and shot.

District Attorney Katz said: “A not-so-friendly game of dice turned into a homicide when the two defendants killed their opponent. The victim was forced to empty his pockets at gunpoint, turn over his money and was then shot. This is yet another grim reminder of why we must stop senseless gun violence in our neighborhoods.”

Watson, 28, of 201st Street in Hollis, and Dunn, 40, of 109th Avenue also in Hollis, were convicted after a two-week jury trial last month. Watson was found guilty of two counts of murder in the second degree, two counts of criminal possession of a weapon in the second degree and tampering with physical evidence. Dunn was found guilty of murder in the second degree, two counts of criminal possession of a weapon in the second degree, two counts of robbery in the first degree and one count of robbery in the second degree.

Queens Supreme Court Justice Ira H. Margulis today sentenced Watson to 23 years to life on each murder charge to be served concurrently with a sentence of 15 years on each weapon charge and a year and three quarters on the charge of tampering with physical evidence. Dunn was sentenced to 23 years to life on the murder charge to be served concurrently with a sentence of 23 years on each first-degree robbery charge, 15 years on the second-degree robbery charge and 15 years on each weapon charge.

According to the charges and trial testimony:

- Around 10 p.m. on March 9, 2021, the defendants were rolling dice with Christopher McKnight of St. Albans in front of a row of businesses on Hollis Avenue near 205th Street. They had been playing for approximately two hours and McKnight was winning.
- Video surveillance showed that Dunn pulled out a gun, pointed it at McKnight, reached into McKnight’s pockets and removed money and other personal items out of his pocket, which fell to the ground.
- McKnight began to walk away. Watson then took the gun from Dunn and fired multiple times at McKnight. He was hit on the right side of his rib cage with the bullet piercing his aorta. He was taken to a local hospital where he died from the injury.
- A loaded .45-caliber gun was found in Watson’s backyard. Ballistics testing matched it to the shell casings found at the murder scene and a shell casing found in Watson’s jacket hood.
- Watson was apprehended within six minutes of the incident wearing the same clothing he wore during the shooting, as depicted on surveillance video. Gunshot primer residue was found on the right wrist of the jacket he was wearing.

Assistant District Attorney Tara DiGregorio, Deputy Bureau Chief of the District Attorney’s Human Trafficking Bureau and Assistant District Attorney Kiran Cheema, Supervisor in the Human Trafficking Bureau, prosecuted the case, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Jessica Melton, Bureau Chief, John Kosinski, Bureau Chief of the Homicide Bureau, and Karen Ross, Deputy Homicide Bureau

Chief and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Gerard Brave and Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Shawn Clark.

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