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**QUEENS DISTRICT ATTORNEY FILES JOINT MOTION
TO VACATE CONVICTION IN 1995 ROBBERY**

*Defendant to be Released After Newly Discovered Evidence Implicates Another Man;
Ninth Conviction Vacated Since DA Katz Took Office in 2020*

Queens County District Attorney Melinda Katz filed today a joint motion with the defense to vacate defendant Chad Breland's conviction and 15-year sentence for a November 27, 1995, armed robbery in the Far Rockaway section of Queens. Breland is represented by defense attorney Justin Bonus. The Hon. Michelle Johnson granted the joint motion and dismissed the indictment at the People's request.

The motion cited newly discovered evidence uncovered by the Queens County District Attorney's Conviction Integrity Unit (CIU) that both implicates another man in the crime and undermines the identifications relied on at trial to convict Breland. The CIU's investigation stemmed from the discovery of an April 2000 fingerprint report connecting another man to the crime scene. Other evidence developed in the CIU's investigation further implicated this man (and not Breland) in the crime. Although the April 2000 fingerprint report was forwarded to the 101st Precinct and other NYPD officials at the time, the Queens County District Attorney's Office was never notified of the fingerprint identification.

DA Katz said, "The discovery of new forensic evidence has raised serious questions about the conviction of Mr. Breland more than two decades ago. The fingerprint report at issue did not exist at the time of Mr. Breland's trial and was never forwarded to the District Attorney's office. In light of the new evidence, justice requires vacating Breland's conviction. Our office has also taken steps to ensure that, in the future, similar fingerprint evidence developed by the NYPD Latent Print Section after a case is closed is forwarded to our office in a timely manner."

At a consolidated trial in September 1997, Breland was also convicted of a second robbery under a separate indictment number. He was sentenced to a consecutive 15-year term for the second robbery under that indictment which is not the subject of the joint motion. Because Breland has completed his 15-year term on the remaining indictment, he is expected to be released from prison today.

The Conviction Integrity Unit has now vacated nine convictions since it was formed by DA Katz after she took office in 2020.

The CIU's investigation was conducted by QCDA Detective Investigators Ralph Maher and James Moran and CIU Director Bryce Benjet.

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Note to Editors: Archived press releases are available at www.queensda.org.

