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**DEFENDANT FOUND GUILTY OF MANSLAUGHTER**  
**IN DEATH OF TWO MEN KILLED IN 2018 HOUSE FIRE**

*Defendant Faces Up to 15 Years in Prison at Sentencing*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced today that Kahj Woods, 20, has been found guilty at trial of two counts of manslaughter. The defendant set fire to a three-story building where he was visiting with a relative in December 2018. Two men – one an octogenarian and the other disabled - were unable to escape from the second floor of the apartment and died.

District Attorney Katz said, “The defendant was convicted of causing the death of two men, whose bodies were discovered following the fire that also displaced six other residents from their homes. A jury weighed all the evidence and rendered a verdict of guilty. The defendant’s fate will be decided by the Court.”

Kahj Woods, formerly of Fountain Avenue in Brooklyn, was found guilty yesterday of two counts of manslaughter following a two-week-long trial before Queens Supreme Court Justice Michael Aloise. Sentencing was scheduled for June 2, 2022, at which time Woods faces up to 15 years in prison.

According to trial testimony, the defendant was captured on video surveillance footage, at approximately 2:50 p.m. on December 23, 2018, leaving the three-story building on 150<sup>th</sup> Street where he was briefly living with his great-grandmother. The defendant then returned, peered into the front door and departed again. Minutes later, at approximately 3 p.m., a parishioner attending religious services on the ground floor of the building exited the location after smelling smoke coming from the residence.

DA Katz said, following the fire investigators discovered the two men gravely injured on the second floor of the building. Both men were taken to a local hospital for medical attention. David Hawkins, 64, was both blind and had dementia. He was burned on 70 percent of his body and died from thermal injuries and smoke inhalation. The other victim, John Wigfall, was 86 and succumbed to smoke inhalation. Both vulnerable victims lived with the defendant’s great-grandmother, who was their caregiver.

Senior Assistant District Attorney Jonathan Selkove, of the DA’s Homicide Bureau, prosecuted the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Peter J. McCormack III and John Kosinski, Senior Deputy Bureau Chiefs of Homicide, Karen Ross, Deputy Bureau Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Daniel A. Saunders.

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