



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
RICHMOND COUNTY

DANIEL M. DONOVAN, JR.
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

130 STUYVESANT PLACE
STATEN ISLAND, NEW YORK 10301
TELEPHONE (718) 876-6300

PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: William J. Smith (718) 556-7150
William.Smith@rcda.nyc.gov

D.A. Donovan: New Indictment Unsealed in May '06 **Shooting of Ganas Commune Leader**

****** Rebekah Johnson, 44, Enters Not-Guilty Plea to Additional Charges of Attempting to Extort Money Following Commune Leader's Shooting ******

STATEN ISLAND, NY – Richmond County District Attorney Daniel M. Donovan, Jr. today announced that a not-guilty plea has been entered by Rebekah Johnson, (DOB: 2/13/63) of Jersey Street, following the unsealing of a superseding indictment in State Supreme Court charging her with two counts of Attempted Grand Larceny in the 2nd Degree, a class D felony, as well as on the previously indicted charges of one count each of Attempted Murder in the 2nd degree, Assault in the 1st Degree, both class B felonies, as well as Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the 2nd degree and 3rd degrees, class C and D felonies respectively.

District Attorney Donovan stated, “This new indictment alleges that following the shooting of Jeffrey Gross outside the Ganas compound, Rebekah Johnson, while a fugitive from justice contacted the members of the commune and demanded money be forwarded to her or that additional shootings would take place. On two separate occasions, in September and October 2006, she called the commune and demanded that \$1,000,000 be transferred to her bank account.”

The indictment alleges that shortly before midnight on May 29, 2006, Johnson fired multiple gunshots striking Jeff Gross, 52, in front of his residence at 127 Corson Avenue, the site of the Ganas Commune Compound. Mr. Gross was struck in his neck, arm and chest. Ms. Johnson was arrested on June 18, 2007, at the corner of 56th and Market Streets in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She was returned to New York City to appear on the indictment in July 2007.

Johnson was ordered held without bail by Justice Leonard P. Rienzi pending her next court appearance on December 12, 2007. The top count of the indictment, Attempted Murder in the 2nd Degree carries a penalty of up to 25 years in prison.

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The case against Rebekah Johnson is being prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Kelly Carroll of the Supreme Court Bureau, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Paul A. Capofari, Supreme Court Bureau Chief. The defendant is represented by Stanford Bandelli, Esq.

The public is reminded that an indictment is merely an accusation, and that a defendant is innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

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