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**BRONX MAN SENTENCED TO 25-YEARS-TO LIFE IN PRISON FOR
MURDER OF 28-YEAR-OLD AFTER DRUG DEAL
Defendant Bludgeoned Victim Over Counterfeit Bill**

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark today announced that a Bronx man has been sentenced to 25 years-to-life in prison for the fatal beating of a 28-year-old man, who was pummeled to death with a wooden tree stake after a drug deal went sour.

District Attorney Clark said "The defendant viciously beat to death a young man, ending his life over fifty dollars. Now, at the age of 20, Mr. Rodriguez will spend the majority of his life behind bars for this brutal crime."

District Attorney Clark said the defendant, Ruben Rodriguez, AKA Butta, 20, of 1424 Walton Avenue, was sentenced today before Bronx Supreme Court Justice Alvin Yearwood to 25 years-to-life in prison. Rodriguez was convicted by a jury of second-degree Murder on March 24, 2017. His co-defendant, Marquis Carter, 24, pleaded guilty to first-degree Manslaughter and was sentenced on April 4, 2017 to 14 years in prison followed by five years post-release supervision.

According to trial testimony, on the early morning of April 23, 2014, in the area of Grand Concourse and Rockwood Street in Mount Eden, Rodriguez and Carter met with Luis Melendez to engage in a drug deal. After receiving a fake \$50 bill from Melendez, the defendants repeatedly hit the victim with wooden sticks, striking his head and body, and causing his death.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorneys Morgan Dolan and Burim Namani of the Homicide Bureau under the supervision of Christine Scaccia, Chief of the Homicide Bureau, and the overall supervision of Nicole Keary, Deputy Chief of the Trial Division and Jeremy Shockett, Chief of the Trial Division.

DA Clark thanked Detective Edwin Perez of the 44th Precinct and Detective Peter Cullen from Bronx Homicide, as well as the BXDA Video Unit and BXDA Detective Investigators for their assistance.