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Rivera

## **PERSISTENT FELON, VICTORIOUS VICTIMS**

### ***Multiple Violent Felonies Increase Convicted Man's Sentence***

(Bronx, NY – February 11, 2015) – Bronx County District Attorney Robert Johnson today announced the sentencing of a repeat violent felon, OCTAVIO RIVERA, to 17 years behind bars, following a conviction that arose from a dispute over drugs and money.

Walter Romaine wanted to smoke some crack, but he didn't want to smoke it alone. So he asked his friend Flossey Samuels to come along to his apartment on Creston Avenue the morning of August 2, 2012.

But they were followed by OCTAVIO RIVERA – who proceeded to demand Walter's cash and phone – and when he got it, struck out with a knife.

Flossey, terrified but in control, managed to call 911 for the critically injured Walter Romaine, who, slashed in the face and ear, and stabbed in the chest, would require surgery to repair a punctured lung and torn aorta.

In August of last year RIVERA was convicted by a jury of Assault in the 1<sup>st</sup> Degree, a Class B Violent Felony, as well as Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the 4<sup>th</sup> Degree, a misdemeanor. Today, before Justice Dominic R. Massaro, he was sentenced to 17 years in prison with five years post-release supervision, after being



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adjudged a predicate violent felon, a provision of the New York State Criminal Law by which defendants who have been convicted of previous qualifying violent felonies are given tougher sentences than they would normally have gotten.

This was OCTAVIO RIVERA's second violent felony in a prolific life of crime. At age 38, RIVERA has spent more time in prison than out during his adult life for a laundry list of crimes, more than two dozen cases adjudicated in the Bronx alone, most involving the criminal possession and sale of drugs, but also including a half-dozen felonies including grand larceny, robbery, harassment, assault and criminal trespass.

But the story doesn't end there. Although RIVERA will be spending the nearly two decades behind bars, Flossey Samuels and Walter Romaine's stories involve recovery and success.

Flossey, now age 44, admits she was a lifelong drug addict who at times turned to prostitution to feed her habit. After this horrific 2012 incident and drug arrests in 2012 and 2013, she accepted plea agreements that saw her enter TASC, an alternative treatment program for drug offenders.

And it worked. Clean of drugs for a year and a half now, she has made a remarkable comeback, making progress on getting her younger children back, working toward her GED, and newly engaged to be married.

Walter Romaine, although still coping with lingering injuries from the horrific attack, also entered drug treatment with equal success. The 39-year-old continues his drug-free progress and is working with a food services company.

The case against OCTAVIO RIVERA was prosecuted by Assistant D.A. Ilya Kharkover of the Bronx D.A. Rackets Bureau.

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