



**ROBERT T. JOHNSON**  
 DISTRICT ATTORNEY, BRONX COUNTY

## **PRESS RELEASE**



### **DRUG DEAL GONE BAD LEADS TO MURDER CONVICTION** *Guilty Verdict Despite Attempts to Erase Evidence*

(Bronx, NY – October 26, 2015) – For 45-year-old **THEA “Chef” GURLEY**, hitting the “delete” key on his phone just wasn’t enough. His back-and-forth texts soliciting a gun and planning a murder turned out to be some of the key evidence that proved his downfall. Now, he has been convicted for the March 30, 2013 killing of 28-year-old **CRAIG “Stone” BREWINGTON**.

Bronx District Attorney Robert Johnson announces that, after just two-and-a-half days of testimony and three hours of deliberation, a jury convicted GURLEY of:

**Murder in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree (Class A-1 Felony)**

**Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree (Class C Felony)**

THEA GURLEY owed CRAIG BREWINGTON \$750 from a drug deal gone bad. But GURLEY was dead broke – the money he would have made from the sale of the drugs was lost after police raided a drug den and seized the contraband.

So GURLEY figured a way out – a deadly one. The day before the shooting, texts show him reaching out to three different people about getting a gun:

*“I need a throwaway”*

*“Son, I need fire power”*

And then the gun was delivered to his door – something GURLEY confirmed when he sent another text, this time with a photo of the firearm, and the message – *“Ain’t she pretty?”*



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Then THEA GURLEY called CRAIG BREWINGTON to his apartment at 2857 Barker Avenue in the Bronx Park section of the Bronx, telling him he had the cash. He had no cash for his victim, but he had the gun – a loaded .38-caliber revolver.

And he used it, firing once, with a single bullet that tore through BREWINGTON's neck, vertebrae, lung and nearly severed his spinal cord.

Then came the coverup. GURLEY dragged his victim's body as far as he could – out of the apartment and underneath a staircase landing. He called one of his compatriots to come pick up the gun. And he texted his wife – *"No one saw nothing. [If the cops come and ask] we were in Brooklyn."*

And realizing all those texts before and after were more than incriminating, GURLEY started deleting the messages and shut down his account, switching to another phone – all to no avail. A forensic analysis of the phone recovered the texts and photos.

GURLEY waited another six hours to call 911, initially telling police he thought there was a drunk passed out in his apartment hallway. He finally admitted the deceased was someone he knew, but then claimed he shot in self-defense, a defense the jury rejected.

When THEA GURLEY is sentenced on November 16th by Supreme Court Justice Judith Lieb, he faces up to 25-years-to-life for the murder charge, consecutive to another 15 years on the gun conviction.

The case against THEA GURLEY was prosecuted by Senior Trial Assistant Susanna Imbo of the Bronx D.A. Trial Bureau 30/40.

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