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TWO MEN CHARGED WITH KIDNAPPING FOLLOWING HOME INVASION

*Five Hostages Allegedly Held at Gunpoint in Richmond Hill Dwelling;
Defendants Face Up to 25 Years in Prison if Convicted*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz today announced that defendants Tex Ortiz and Wilbert Wilson have been charged with kidnapping, burglary and other crimes for allegedly taking five people hostage - including a nine-month-old infant and a 92-year-old woman. The defendants are accused of bursting into a Richmond Hill home this past Tuesday and demanding money at gunpoint.

District Attorney Katz said, “The defendants in this case allegedly terrorized the victims, pistol-whipped a mother and endangered a baby. This kind of lawlessness is inexcusable. The accused violated the sanctity and security of this home and created havoc and fear. Then they allegedly used a hostage to try to shield themselves from arrest. Both men are in custody and face very serious charges.”

Ortiz, 35, of First Avenue in Manhattan, and Wilson, 51, of Valentine Avenue in the Bronx, were arraigned Thursday before Queens Criminal Court Judge Jerry Iannece on an 11-count criminal complaint. The defendants are charged with kidnapping in the second degree, burglary in the first degree, robbery in the first and second degree, criminal possession of a weapon in the second degree and endangering the welfare of a child. Judge Iannece ordered the defendants to return to Court on November 23, 2020. Both defendants face up to 25 years in prison if convicted.

According to the charges, said District Attorney Katz, at approximately 8:40 p.m. on November 17, 2020, four women and an infant child were inside a house on 125th Street in Richmond Hill. One of the women suddenly noticed defendant Wilson inside the living room, pointing a gun at her as she sat on the sofa. She then realized a second man, Ortiz, was also in the room and had a gun aimed at her mother, who was also seated on the couch.

DA Katz said the defendants allegedly entered the house by using a crowbar on a backdoor. Once inside, the two men bound some of the victims; one of them struck one of the women in the head with a gun, which caused her to fall while holding her baby. They demanded cash from one of the victims, who tried to offer the defendant approximately \$200 from her wallet.

Continuing, according to the charges, one of the victims was able to call 911. When police arrived on the scene one of the victims clutching her baby daughter was able to escape and get out of the house. The other victims were threatened by the defendants at gunpoint. The defendants at one point used a victim as a human shield. The last hostage was allegedly forced to walk in front of them at gunpoint and yell to the police not to shoot.

The investigation was conducted by Detective Joseph Verullo of Queens Robbery Squad with assistance from the New York City Police Department's 106th Precinct.

Assistant District Attorney Matthew Luongo of the District Attorney's Career Criminal Major Crimes Bureau, is prosecuted the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Shawn Clark, Bureau Chief, Michael Whitney Deputy Bureau Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Daniel A. Saunders.

Criminal complaints and indictments are accusations. A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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