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**QUEENS MAN ARRAIGNED ON INDICTMENT FOR ATTEMPTED MURDER
AND ASSAULT CHARGES FOR SHOOTING
OF FORMER SUNY BUFFALO FOOTBALL PLAYER**

*Defendant Also Accused of Burglary and Other Crimes for Earlier Incidents;
Surveillance Video of Shooting Allegedly Shows Defendant Firing Point Blank at Victim;
Faces Up to 25 Years in Prison if Convicted*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced today that Jeffrey Thurston has been arraigned on an indictment handed up by a Queens County grand jury charging the defendant with attempted murder, criminal possession of a weapon and other crimes for allegedly shooting a former student athlete outside a deli on Springfield Boulevard in July. The defendant is also charged with various crimes for a March 2020 incident with an estranged girlfriend and her son and an unrelated alleged shooting in July 2020.

District Attorney Katz said, “This is another maddening example of the damage inflicted by easy access to illegal guns. The defendant allegedly used a handgun to escalate an incidental brush of shoulders to a near-deadly shooting of the victim in the abdomen. Months later, a young man is still in a hospital bed, struggling for his life. The defendant will be held accountable for his alleged actions.”

Thurston, 29, of 220th Street in Laurelton, Queens, was arraigned this morning before Acting Queens Supreme Court Justice Stephanie Zaro on a 15-count indictment charging him with attempted murder in the second degree, assault in the first degree, four-counts of criminal possession of a weapon in the second degree, burglary in the first and second degree, three counts of criminal possession of a weapon in the third degree, three counts of attempted assault in the first degree and endangering the welfare of a child. Justice Zaro set the defendant’s return date for October 13, 2020. If convicted, Thurston faces up to 25 years in prison.

According to the charges, on July 27th, at around 4:30 p.m., the 20-year-old victim, Malachi Capers accidentally bumped into the defendant while inside a deli on the corner of Springfield Boulevard and 136th Avenue. The defendant then allegedly punched Mr. Capers. The victim, who was a defensive end at SUNY Buffalo, chased the defendant out of the store and tackled him on the sidewalk.

Continuing said DA Katz, video surveillance captured the fight as both men wrestled on the ground. As they regained their footing, defendant Thurston allegedly pulled out a handgun and fired a single shot into Mr. Capers’ abdomen.

The defendant fled the scene but was apprehended two days later by the Regional Fugitive Task Force of the New York City Police Department. Mr. Capers is still being treated at an area hospital for life-threatening injuries.

In a separate incident, Thurston is also charged with burglary, criminal possession of a weapon and endangering the welfare of a child for allegedly breaking into an estranged girlfriend’s house, displaying a knife, and choking the woman’s 6-year-old son. This alleged incident occurred on March 13, 2020. Additionally, the defendant was indicted on an attempted assault charge for allegedly firing at an occupied vehicle on July 8, 2020.

The investigation into the attempted murder was conducted by Detective Matthew DeBonis of the 105th Precinct and Detective James Zozarro of NYPD Queens South Homicide Squad, under the supervision of Lieutenant James McGarry of the New York City Police Department’s 105 Precinct Detective Squad and Lieutenant Richard Rudolph of Queens South Homicide Squad.

Assistant District Attorney Jacqueline Iaquina of the District Attorney’s Career Criminals Major Crimes Bureau is prosecuting the case, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Shawn Clark,

Bureau Chief, and Michael Whitney, Deputy Bureau Chief and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Daniel Saunders.

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

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