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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**BROOKLYN MAN INDICTED FOR VIOLENT ATTACKS ON TWO WOMEN  
JUST WEEKS APART IN VICTIMS' APARTMENT BUILDINGS IN REGO PARK**

*Defendant Charged with Burglary, Robbery and Strangulation;  
Faces Up to 50 Years-to-Life in Prison if Convicted*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz today announced that Richard Smalls, 58, of Brooklyn has been arraigned after a Queens County grand jury indicted him on burglary, robbery and other charges for two alleged surprise attacks on women in Rego Park, Queens. The defendant is accused of pouncing on a 50-year-old woman moments after she entered her apartment building's elevator on July 3, 2020. Weeks later, the defendant allegedly attacked an elderly woman in the lobby of her apartment building. In both instances, the victims had belongings forcefully taken from them.

District Attorney Katz said, "The women who were attacked and robbed, allegedly by this defendant, should have been safe in the confines of the buildings they call home. This defendant is accused of lying in wait and seizing on a moment to attack and choke them and steal their possessions. He will be held accountable for his alleged actions to the fullest extent of the law."

Smalls, of 49<sup>th</sup> Street in the Sunset Park section, is charged in an 8-count indictment with burglary in the first and second-degree, robbery in the second and third degree, strangulation in the second degree and assault in the second degree. The defendant was arraigned this afternoon before Acting Queens Supreme Court Justice Stephanie Zaro, who remanded Smalls and set the return date for October 21, 2020. If convicted, Smalls faces up to 50 years-to-life in prison.

According to the charges, around 4 p.m. on July 3, 2020, a 50-year-old woman inside her apartment building on Wetherole Street stepped into the elevator followed by the defendant. Seconds later, he allegedly shoved her into a corner, wrapped his arm around her neck and squeezed. During the attack, Smalls allegedly said in sum and substance: Give me your stuff. After taking a ring off the woman's finger, the defendant bolted from the building.

Continuing, according to the DA, at approximately 4:15 pm on July 28, 2020, a 72-year-old woman was checking her mailbox inside the lobby of her 64<sup>th</sup> Avenue apartment building when, without warning, the defendant allegedly grabbed her from behind, placed his arm around her neck and choked her. In sum and substance, the defendant told her to shut up and then ordered her to give up the bag she carried. The elderly victim gave the defendant \$60 in cash. Smalls allegedly grabbed the septuagenarian's watch and removed three rings from her fingers. The assailant then fled the building.

DA Katz said video footage allegedly shows Smalls wearing a blue and orange hat, gray bandana and a blue t-shirt during the July 3<sup>rd</sup> elevator attack. About 15 minutes later, video surveillance captured a man in the same hat, bandana and t-shirt going through a turnstile at the 63<sup>rd</sup> Drive subway station. That image was distributed to the press and circulated in the media. Smalls was apprehended days later.

The investigation was conducted by detectives with the New York City Police Department's 112<sup>th</sup> Precinct Detective Squad.

Assistant District Attorney Derek Milligan, of the District Attorney's Career Criminal and Major Crimes Bureau, is prosecuting 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 Saunders.

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

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