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DA BROWN: QUEENS BURGLAR SENTENCED TO 24 YEARS IN PRISON
FOR RAPE AND SODOMY OF TWO WOMEN
Apprehended Following DNA "Cold Hit"

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown announced today that a Queens man who pleaded guilty to burglarizing and sexually assaulting two women in Ridgewood, Queens, five years ago has been sentenced to 24 years in state prison.

District Attorney Brown said, "The defendant admitted that he sexually attacked the two victims – a fact corroborated by the DNA evidence that he left at the scenes. The lengthy prison sentence imposed by the court is just and fits the crimes. However, as the two women noted today at sentencing, the defendant's crime will haunt them for the rest of their lives."

The District Attorney identified the defendant as John Vega, 29, whose last known address was 60-08 Cooper Avenue in Ridgewood. The defendant pleaded guilty on September 12, 2006, to the entire six-count indictment pending against him (one count of first-degree rape, two counts of first-degree sodomy, two counts of second-degree burglary and one count of first-degree criminal use of a firearm) before Queens Supreme Court Justice Barry Kron, who imposed today's determinate sentence of 24 years in prison.

In the two victim impact statements read to the Court at the sentencing, one victim said, in part, "The word "rape" I would like to disappear from earth forever. I feel ashamed and when I hear it, I feel dirty . . . I know that I'll always going to remember it and it is always going to taunt me for the rest of my life." The other victim said, in part, "I was subject to his sexual assault on a quiet morning the day after Mother's day . . . After he was finished with his vile business he quickly ran off, leaving me on the floor in total shock and desperation at what had just happened to me. It was the most terrifying experience of my life; one that I will forever have engraved in my mind."

District Attorney Brown said, "The defendant's apprehension and successful prosecution were the result of the DNA backlog project and a subsequent "cold hit" in which a DNA sample obtained from the rape kit of one of the victims was positively matched to the defendant's DNA profile in the New York DNA Databank. This case is yet another example of the critical importance of DNA evidence – evidence which is conclusive and irrefutable scientific proof that protects the innocent and punishes the guilty."

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the charges, the defendant armed with a loaded gun, broke into the place of business of a 38-year-old woman on January 9, 2001 and raped and sodomized her. Four months later, on May 15, 2001, the defendant broke into the home of a 21-year-old woman and sodomized her.

The defendant was linked to the crime in 2004 when he was required to provide a DNA specimen to the New York State DNA Index System as a result of an attempted robbery conviction.

District Attorney Brown said that the defendant was arrested on February 28, 2006, by New York City Police Department Special Victims Squad detectives under the command of Lieutenant Arthur Hall.

Assistant District Attorney Mina Q. Malik of the District Attorney's Special Victims Bureau prosecuted the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Marjory D. Fisher, Bureau Chief, Kenneth M. Appelbaum and Lucinda C. Suarez, Deputy Chiefs, and Eric C. Rosenbaum, Chief of the District Attorney's Prosecutions Unit, and the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Charles A. Testagrossa and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Daniel A. Saunders.

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Note to Editors: E-version of press release and photo of defendant posted at www.queensda.org