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Release # 84-2007
www.queensda.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25, 2007

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D.A. BROWN: QUEENS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT ARRAIGNED
ON CHARGES OF WRITING THREATENING LETTER

Allegedly Claimed To Turn Senior Prom Into Virginia Tech-Style Student Massacre

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown announced today that a 17-year-old student at Middle College High School in Long Island City has been arraigned on charges of writing a threatening letter that warned students and faculty that those attending the senior prom would share a fate similar to that which occurred at Virginia Tech earlier this month.

District Attorney Brown said, "Whether intended as a joke or not, the writing of such a letter must always be taken seriously by law enforcement personnel. The American landscape is filled with too many sad reminders of student shootings that to do otherwise would be a dereliction of duty and a betrayal to the memory of those who lost their lives in similar situations."

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Michael DiGiovanni, 17, of 71-42 69th Place in Glendale, Queens. DiGiovanni, a senior at Middle College High School, was arraigned this morning before Queens Criminal Court Judge Ira Margulis on charges of first- and third-degree falsely reporting an incident and second-degree aggravated harassment. The defendant, who faces up to seven years in prison if convicted, was released without bail and ordered to return to court on May 9, 2007.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the charges, a Middle College High School teacher walked into a classroom on April 23, 2007, and found several copies of a note – that had been printed using a school computer – which stated, "So you think Virginia Tech was bad? Just wait for the MCHS Prom! Unlike VTech there won't be any injured, I'll get the job done." The defendant allegedly admitted to writing the threatening letter on April 19, 2007, comparing the future of his school to the Virginia Tech shooting, and claimed the letter was written as a joke.

The defendant was arrested yesterday by detectives assigned to the NYPD's 108th Precinct at Middle College High School, which is located on the campus of LaGuardia Community College.

Assistant District Attorney Andrew H. Kaufman, of the District Attorney's Special Proceedings Bureau, is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys, Anthony M. Communiello, Bureau Chief, and Oscar W. Ruiz, Deputy Bureau Chief, and the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Peter A. Crusco and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Linda M. Cantoni.

It should be noted that a criminal complaint is merely an accusation and that a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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Note to Editors: Press release e-version posted at www.queensda.org.