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**D.A. BROWN: ASTORIA MAN SENTENCED TO 18 YEARS IN PRISON
IN GUNPOINT RAPE AND ASSAULT OF EX-GIRLFRIEND**

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown announced today that an Astoria man has been sentenced to 18 years in prison in the July 2005 gunpoint rape and assault of his ex-girlfriend inside his home.

District Attorney Brown said, "The sentence imposed today by the court severely punishes the defendant for the sexual assault and torture of his ex-girlfriend. Justice has been done."

District Attorney Brown identified the defendant as Joseph Gentile, 35, of 21-60 46th Street in Astoria. The defendant was convicted last October of first-degree rape, second-degree assault and fourth-degree criminal possession of a weapon before Queens Supreme Court Justice Richard L. Buchter who imposed today's determinate sentence of 18 years in prison.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to trial testimony, the defendant and a friend, Peter DiPiano, took a livery cab to his ex-girlfriend's Bronx home on the evening of July 29, 2005. Once there, Gentile approached the 23-year-old victim as she was sitting on her front porch and – displaying a .45 caliber pistol in his waistband – forcibly dragged her to the livery cab where DiPiano sat with a shotgun. The defendant then directed the livery cab driver to take them back to his Astoria residence, where he dragged the victim into the laundry room and forcibly raped her. Thereafter, he burnt her five times with a lighted cigarette on her left wrist and threatened to kill her.

According to the District Attorney, the victim was rescued when police received a 911 call from her sister who had witnessed the defendant dragging the victim into the cab. The defendant was arrested by police officers of the NYPD's 114th Precinct.

District Attorney Brown said that the defendant DiPiano 24, of 22-17 41st Street in Queens, was arrested in connection to the incident and pleaded guilty to fourth-degree criminal possession of a weapon before Queens Criminal Court Judge Robert Raciti on April 24, 2006. He was sentenced to a determinate term of one year in jail on June 26, 2006.

The investigation was conducted by Detective Cary O'Connor and Police Officers Joseph Faivus and Michael Tice of the New York City Police Department's 114th Detective Squad.

Assistant District Attorney John Carroll, of the District Attorney's Special Victims Bureau, prosecuted the case, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Marjory Fisher, Bureau Chief, Assistant District Attorneys Kenneth M. Appelbaum and Lucinda C. Suarez, Deputy Bureau Chiefs and Assistant District Attorney Frank P. DeGaetano, Supervisor, 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 posted at www.queensda.org