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**D.A. BROWN: ALLEGED GRAFFITI VANDAL INDICTED
ON CHARGES OF DEFACING QUEENS PROPERTIES**

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown announced today that a 23-year-old Long Island resident has been indicted on charges of vandalizing public and private property in Astoria, Queens.

District Attorney Brown said, "Graffiti is a blight on the urban landscape and negatively affects the quality of life of all citizens through decreased property values and increased taxes. It is also a financial burden on affected businesses and homes. With just a few dollars worth of pens, markers and paint, a graffiti vandal can wreak havoc and cause thousands of dollars worth of damage. City officials and anti-graffiti activists have done a remarkable job over the years in cleaning up New York City's image as a graffiti-scarred city. We cannot allow one individual to mar the beauty of our City and threaten to return us to the days when our transit system and our highways and buildings were covered with graffiti."

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Gregory Cianca, 23, a/k/a "VELO," of 49 Graywood Road in Port Washington, Long Island. Cianca is charged with second- and third-degree criminal mischief, making graffiti, fourth-degree criminal possession of a weapon, possession of graffiti instruments, third-degree criminal trespass and unlawful possession of marijuana. Cianca, who faces up to seven years in prison if convicted, is expected to be arraigned on the charges on May 30, 2007, in Queens County Supreme Court.

The District Attorney said that, according to the charges, the defendant was observed by police trespassing on the elevated tracks at the 31st Street and Grand Avenue subway station on May 21, 2006. It is alleged that when the defendant saw the police, he attempted to flee by running through the tracks but slipped and broke his leg. At the time of his arrest, the defendant was allegedly found to be in possession of graffiti instruments and a gravity knife.

It is further charged that, sometime between September 1, 2006, and December 25, 2006, the defendant caused more than \$1,500 worth of damage to the Thessalikon Pastry Shop, located at 33-21 31st Avenue, by using white spray paint to paint his tag, "VELO" (which consists of interlocking letters and a slash through the venter of the letter "o"), on one of the store's brick walls.

Finally, it is alleged that the defendant and another unapprehended individual were observed by police trespassing on the elevated and fenced-off Amtrak railroad tracks near 46th Street and 26th Avenue at approximately 8:25 a.m. on January 10, 2007. At the time of his arrest, the defendant was allegedly in possession of marijuana and a gravity knife. A subsequent canvas of the location revealed that the defendant had allegedly done more than \$2,000 worth of damage to the property by painting his tag "VELO" on a wall and the tracks.

Assistant District Attorney Michael Brovner, of the District Attorney's Gang Violence and Hate Crimes Bureau, is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Mariela Palomino Herring, Bureau Chief, and Michelle E. Goldstein, Deputy Bureau Chief, and the overall supervision of Senior Executive Assistant District Attorney for Trials James C. Quinn and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorneys for Trials John H. Larsen and Robert J. Masters.

It should be noted that an indictment is merely an accusation and that the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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