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D.A. BROWN: QUEENS MAN CHARGED WITH RAPING TWO WOMEN IN 1997

Apprehended as a Result of DNA "Cold Hit"; Faces Up to 50 Years in Prison

_____ Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown announced today that a Richmond Hill man has been charged with raping two women on separate occasions in 1997. The arrest was the result of a DNA 'cold hit' matching the DNA evidence from the cases with the defendant's DNA profile obtained recently from a gun seized during a drug raid.

District Attorney Brown said, "If everyone convicted of a felony or misdemeanor were required to submit a DNA sample upon conviction, the probability of the defendant having been caught sooner is very high. The cost of omitting many crimes from the DNA databank – as is the case under existing law – is that those who commit brutal acts of violence may escape identification and remain free to leave more victims in their wake."

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Peter J. Grebinger, 41, of 85-88 87th Street in Richmond Hill, Queens. The defendant, who is presently awaiting arraignment in Queens Criminal Court, is charged with two counts of first-degree rape and one count of first-degree sodomy. If convicted, the defendant faces up to 50 years in prison.

District Attorney Brown said, according to the charges, a 33-year-old woman was walking to the subway on her way to work at 7:30 a.m. on January 3, 1997, when Grebinger approached her near 87-18 101st Avenue and told her that he had a gun and not to scream. It is alleged that he demanded money from the woman and then forced her into a nearby building where he raped and sodomized her before again demanding money. She allegedly gave him a sum of money, at which point the defendant ordered her to count to one hundred and fled.

The District Attorney said that, in the second instance, it is alleged that a 22-year-old woman on her way to work at 6:20 a.m. on December 28, 1997, flagged down the defendant's car – believing it to be a dollar cab – in the vicinity of 179th Street and Jamaica Avenue. The defendant allegedly told her that the rear seat was full and that she should sit up front. Once inside the vehicle, the defendant allegedly locked the doors and instructed the woman to keep quiet and do what he told her. It is alleged that a struggle ensued, during which the defendant struck the woman in the face, slammed her head into the dashboard, and ordered her to get on the floor. After driving a short distance, the defendant parked the car and allegedly took jewelry from the woman before ordering her into the backseat, where he raped her. The defendant then allegedly resumed driving, at which point he ordered the woman out of the car and fled.

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In each case, the victim was taken to a local Queens hospital, where medical personnel prepared a sexual assault kit. On April 25, 2008, a court-authorized search warrant was executed on the defendant's residence on an unrelated matter, during which two semi-automatic firearms – a loaded 9mm and a loaded .25 cal pistol – were allegedly seized, as well as various amounts of cocaine and marijuana. The guns were tested for DNA and a profile was recovered from one of the guns. The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner linked the gun DNA profile to the two cold rape cases from 1997. The defendant was swabbed for DNA, and his DNA matched the gun.

District Attorney Brown said, "This case underscores yet again the crucial importance of DNA evidence which is irrefutable proof of guilt or innocence. After nearly ten years of avoiding arrest in the two cases, the defendant ultimately was done in by his own genes."

In the weapons and drug case, Peter Grebinger and his father, also named Peter Grebinger, were charged with third- and fourth degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, second- and third-degree criminal possession of a weapon, second-degree criminally using drug paraphernalia and unlawful possession of marihuana. Bail was set at \$15,000 for Peter Grebinger, Jr., and \$5,000 for his 62-year-old father. Both defendants are scheduled to return to court on September 8, 2008.

The investigation of the rapes was conducted by Detective Stephen Aquaviva of the New York City Police Department's Queens Special Victims Squad under the command of Lieutenant Arthur Hall.

Assistant District Attorney Eric C. Rosenbaum, Chief of the District Attorney's DNA Prosecutions Unit, is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Marjory D. Fisher, Bureau Chief of District Attorney Brown's Special Victims Bureau and the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Charles A. Testagrossa.

It should be noted that criminal charges are merely accusations and that the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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