



718.286.6000
WWW.QUEENSDA.ORG

QUEENS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
125-QUEENS BOULEVARD
KEW 01 GARDENS, NEW YORK 11415-1568



MELINDA KATZ
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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CONTACT: PRESS OFFICE (718) 286-6315
QDACommunications@queensda.org

**BOSTON RESIDENT CHARGED WITH MAKING TERRORISTIC THREATS;
ALLEGEDLY PLANTED A “HOAX DEVICE” BOMB ON CAR IN QUEENS MALL**

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced today that Louis Shenker, 22, has been charged with making terroristic threats and other felony charges for allegedly planting a fake bomb on top of a car at the Queens Place Mall in Elmhurst, Queens.

District Attorney Katz said, “Sadly, we live in a world where terror attacks are far too real. Fake bombs and hoaxes of any kind create panic and fear. The defendant in this case is accused of making terroristic threats and constructing a device that looked like it was set to explode in a shopping center parking structure. We take all potential threats seriously and the defendant now faces felony charges for his alleged actions.”

Shenker, of Amherst, Mass, was arraigned today before Queens Criminal Court Judge Karen Gopee on charges of placing false bomb or hazard substance in sports stadium, arena, mass trans. fac. mall and making a terroristic threat. Judge Gopee held the defendant without bail and ordered him to return to court on January 7, 2021. If convicted, the defendant faces up to 7 years in prison.

District Attorney Katz said that, according to the criminal charges, on Monday, January 4, 2021 at approximately 4:50 a.m., the defendant and an unapprehended other were observed by Police Officer Cruz standing next to a black Tesla that displayed a Nevada loaner license plate. The vehicle had both its front and rear hoods and all four doors open. Officer Cruz further observed the defendant and unapprehended other attempting to charge the vehicle with an electric bike. Defendant Shenker stated to Officer Cruz that the vehicle belonged to the unapprehended other and that defendant Shenker was driving it when it stalled on the parking garage ramp. Officer Cruz then received and reviewed a Massachusetts driver’s license belonging to defendant Shenker and a California state ID card belonging to the unapprehended other and observed blankets, clothing, a dog and a Black Lives Matter sign inside of the vehicle. Office Cruz was then informed by the defendant that a tow company had been called.

Furthermore, at approximately 7:35 a.m. the Black Tesla, with Nevada Loaner license plate #28922 was observed by an employee of the Queens Place Mall, covered in blankets, cardboard boxes, a Black Lives Matter sign, a dog inside the vehicle, and a gas tank with wires coming out which appeared to be a bomb.

Continuing, said DA Katz, at approximately 9:35 a.m., Detective Sean Mulcahy, arrived at the scene and observed the vehicle inside the parking garage and based on his training and experience in the identification of explosives determined that no explosives were present and that this was a hoax device designed to appear to be a bomb.

District Attorney Katz said that the defendant turned himself in to the police at the NYPD's 71st Precinct in Brooklyn, at approximately 3 a.m. on Tuesday morning.

The investigation was conducted by Detective Daniel Brady of the NYPD's Arson and Explosion Squad under the supervision of Lieutenant Carlos Lopez, Commanding Officer along with the assistance of Detective Sean Mulcahy, of the NYPD's Bomb Squad, under the supervision of Lieutenant Mark Torre, Commanding Officer.

Assistant District Attorney Rachel Stein, Supervisor of the District Attorney's Counterterrorism Unit is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Christina Hanophy, Unit Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Gerard A. Brave.

Criminal complaints and indictments are accusations. A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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