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**MASSACHUSETTS AND CALIFORNIA RESIDENTS INDICTED BY GRAND JURY
ON FELONY CHARGES FOR BOMB HOAX SCARE AT QUEENS PLACE MALL**

*Defendants Also Allegedly Abandoned a Dog in the Vehicle with Fake Explosive;
Bomb Scare Forced the Evacuation of Mall and Surrounding Area;
Both Men Face 7 Years in Prison if Convicted*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced today that Louis Shenker, 22, and Taylor Lyne, 27, have been indicted by a Queens County grand jury for making a terroristic threat and other felony charges for allegedly planting a fake bomb on top of a car at the Queens Place Mall in Elmhurst, Queens on January 4, 2021. Shenker turned himself in to police hours later. His co-defendant, Lyne, was arrested and arraigned on the indictment on February 1, 2021.

District Attorney Katz said, “There is nothing amusing about a bomb hoax, and the defendants now face very serious charges. Planting a fake explosive in a shopping center creates chaos and fear and these two men are accused of setting up a device to look like a bomb and then fleeing the scene.”

Defendant Shenker, of Amherst, Massachusetts, was arraigned today before Queens Supreme Court Justice John Zoll on an indictment charging him with placing a false bomb or hazardous substance in a sports stadium or arena, mass transportation facility, or enclosed shopping mall, making a terroristic threat and abandonment of an animal. Defendant Lyne, of Santa Rosa, California, was also arraigned before Justice Zoll last Monday on the same indictment. The two men are scheduled to return to Court on March 3, 2021. If convicted, Shenker and Lyne each face 7 years in prison.

According to the charges, on January 4, 2021 at approximately 4:50 a.m., the two men were seen in the Queens Place Mall parking garage standing next to a black Tesla with a Nevada loaner license plate. The vehicle had its front hood, trunk and doors open. The two men had allegedly connected an electric-powered bike to the car.

Continuing, said DA Katz, about two hours later the Black Tesla was observed by an employee of the mall covered in blankets, cardboard boxes with a Black Lives Matter sign attached and a dog inside the vehicle. Atop the car was a device with wires protruding from it and other mechanisms that made it look like a bomb set to explode.

This hoax forced the evacuation of the shopping center, businesses had to close and both foot traffic and motorists were blocked from entering the busy Queens Boulevard corridor.

The DA said an NYPD investigation determined the device was not an explosive but was instead a hoax device.

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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