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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**LIVERY DRIVER CHARGED WITH 1996 RAPE OF PASSENGER**

*Defendant Faces 12 1/2 to 25 Years in Prison if Convicted*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced today that Danny Stewart, 58, has been indicted by a grand jury and arraigned in Queens Supreme Court for the 1996 rape of a female passenger. The defendant – a livery driver at the time – picked up the victim from her workplace in Jamaica and allegedly sexually assaulted her in his car after displaying what appeared to be a gun.

District Attorney Katz said, “The break in this 25-year-old cold case, the oldest sexual assault case ever prosecuted in Queens County, came from a DNA match that had been previously unattainable. The victim in this case was just attempting to go home after work, but unfortunately met up with this alleged predator, who at long last faces prosecution for this crime. Justice is not always immediate, but a victim’s suffering deserves closure.”

Stewart, of W 91<sup>st</sup>, New York, New York, was arraigned today in Queens Supreme Court before Justice Ushir Pandit-Durant on a one-count indictment charging him with rape in the first degree. Justice Pandit-Durant ordered the defendant to return to court on June 15, 2021. If convicted, the defendant faces 12 1/2 to 25 years in prison.

DA Katz said, according to the charges, on September 15, 1996 at approximately 4 a.m., the then-23-year-old victim was on her way home after completing back-to-back shifts at two restaurants. She flagged down a livery cab in the vicinity of Parsons and Archer Avenues. As the vehicle approached her residence, she attempted to exit the car, but the defendant allegedly refused to let her out. Instead, he drove to a dark parking lot nearby, allegedly displayed what appeared to be a firearm, choked the woman and then raped her. After the assault the defendant allowed her to exit the vehicle, at which time she walked home and then went to the hospital.

Furthermore, DA Katz said, at the hospital a sexual assault evidence kit was collected but it was not immediately tested for DNA for the simple fact that no DNA databank existed at the time. In 2000, the New York State criminal DNA databank system was launched, and NYC was then able to test every rape kit in its possession, including the victim’s, and a male DNA profile was produced. In the fall of 2020, defendant Stewart, was swabbed for his DNA in New York State. The NYS DNA databank generated a match to the victim’s rape kit, which then alerted the NYPD and the Queens DA’s office. The matter was presented to a Queens County grand jury, which ultimately indicted the defendant.

Assistant District Attorney Matthew Regan of the District Attorney’s Special Victims Bureau is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Eric C. Rosenbaum, Bureau Chief, Debra Lynn Pomodore and Brian Hughes, Deputy Bureau Chiefs, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Daniel A. Saunders.

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

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