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QUEENS MAN ARRAIGNED ON ATTEMPTED ROBBERY, SEXUAL ABUSE
AND OTHER CHARGES FOR TWO SEPARATE ELEVATOR ATTACKS IN FOREST HILLS

Defendant Faces Up to 16 Years-to-Life in Prison if Convicted

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced today that Ralph Toro, 62, has been arraigned on attempted robbery, sexual abuse and other charges.

District Attorney Katz said, "The defendant is accused of committing two separate, terrifying elevator attacks inside two different Forest Hills apartment buildings on the same day. Among other counts, I am charging him with attempted robbery and sexual abuse. Victims need to know that we will hold defendants accountable for these types of crimes."

Toro, of Queens, was arraigned yesterday evening before Queens Criminal Court Judge David Kirschner on two separate complaints charging him with two counts of attempted robbery in the first degree, sexual abuse in the first degree, two counts of criminal possession of a weapon in the fourth degree, menacing in the second degree and harassment in the second degree. Judge Kirschner ordered the defendant to return to Court on December 28, 2021. If convicted, the defendant faces up to 16 years-to-life in prison.

District Attorney Katz said that in the first incident, on December 17, 2021, just before 11:13 a.m., a 28-year-old woman, observed the defendant standing inside the elevator in an apartment building on 75th Street. As the elevator door opened, the defendant exited, but immediately turned around and allegedly displayed a knife. Toro then began to extend his hand back and forth in a threatening manner acting as if he was going to strike the victim and then reached into her jacket pockets. The victim pushed the defendant away and he fled the scene.

In the second alleged attack, DA Katz said, between 12:00 p.m. and 12:45 p.m., a 51-year-old woman entered an elevator inside of an apartment building on 108th Street and was followed by a bald man wearing a multicolored camouflage face mask which covered his nose, mouth and neck. The defendant allegedly pulled out a knife and demanded that the victim give him money and blocked the doorway.

As the defendant continued to demand money from the woman, she informed him that she had no cash and emptied the contents of her pocketbook onto the elevator floor. The defendant, while still displaying the knife, grabbed the waistband of the victim, put his hand down her pants and sexually abused her. The victim tried to fight off the defendant and was able to shove him out of the elevator car. The defendant then fled the location.

Continuing, said DA Katz, this second incident was captured on video surveillance. The police were able to locate additional surveillance footage from various sources to track the defendant, who entered a shelter located less than half a mile away.

The defendant was arrested at the shelter after employees viewed still photographs taken from the surveillance videos and identified Toro to police.

Assistant District Attorney Talia S. Vogel, 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 C. Hughes, Deputy Bureau Chiefs, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Daniel A. Saunders.

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

Note to Editors: Archived press releases are available at www.queensda.org.

