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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, JANUARY 27, 2021

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GRAND JURY INDICTS QUEENS MAN FOR ELEVATOR ATTACKS ON WOMEN;
DEFENDANT CHARGED WITH SEX ABUSE AND ATTEMPTED ROBBERY

*Alleged Knife-Wielding Defendant Held Up Women in Forest Hills, Queens;
Faces Up to 16 Years-to-Life in Prison if Convicted*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced today that Ralph Toro, 62, has been indicted by a Queens County grand jury and has been arraigned in Supreme Court on attempted robbery, sexual abuse and other charges.

District Attorney Katz said, "The defendant is accused of committing two separate, terrifying elevator attacks – approximately an hour apart, on the same day – inside different Forest Hills' apartment buildings. As alleged, the defendant waited for the women to be alone and in a confined space to pull out a knife and attack them."

Toro, of Queens, was arraigned today before Queens Supreme Court Justice Ushir Pandit-Durant on a six-count indictment 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 and menacing in the second degree. Justice Pandit-Durant ordered the defendant to return to Court on March 3, 2022. If convicted, the defendant faces up to 16 years-to-life in prison.

District Attorney Katz said, on the morning of December 17, 2021, at approximately 11 a.m., the defendant allegedly stood inside of an elevator with a 28-year-old-woman in an apartment building on 75th Street. When the doors opened, Toro began to exit the elevator, then suddenly turned around and allegedly displayed a knife while demanding money from the woman. He reached into her jacket pockets. The victim shoved the defendant away from her and he fled.

In the second incident, DA Katz said, at approximately 12 p.m. that same day, the defendant followed a 51-year-old woman into an elevator inside of an apartment building on 108th Street. Toro allegedly pulled out a knife, demanded that the victim give him money, and blocked her from exiting the elevator.

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's floor. The defendant, while still holding the knife, allegedly put his hand down the victim's pants and sexually assaulted her. The victim tried to fight him off and 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 and traced the defendant's movements to a shelter less than one mile from the last incident.

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.

