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QUEENS MAN SENTENCED TO 18 YEARS IN PRISON
FOR NEAR FATAL SHOOTING OF FORMER COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAYER
Defendant Also Sentenced on Burglary Plea and Other Crimes for Earlier Incidents

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced today that Jeffrey Thurston, 28, has been sentenced to 18 years in prison for shooting a former student athlete outside a deli on Springfield Boulevard in July 2020. The defendant was also sentenced for a burglary related to a March 2020 incident involving an estranged girlfriend and her son, as well as an attempted assault for an unrelated shooting that occurred in July 2020.

District Attorney Katz said, “The defendant has now been held accountable for displaying a blatant disregard for public safety on three separate occasions. Within a span of a few months, he fired a gun at a vehicle, broke into the home of his estranged ex-girlfriend, and shot a young man following a brush of shoulders. The defendant has been sentenced by the court and will spend a lengthy time in prison as punishment for his callous actions.”

Thurston, of 220th Street in Laurelton, Queens, pleaded guilty on May 25th to attempted murder in the second degree, assault in the first degree, four-counts of criminal possession of a weapon in the second degree, burglary in the first and second degree, three counts of criminal possession of a weapon in the third degree, three counts of attempted assault in the first degree and endangering the welfare of a child before Queens Supreme Court Justice Ira Margulis. Yesterday, Justice Margulis sentenced the defendant to a determinate term of 18 years in prison, to be followed by five years’ post release supervision.

According to the charges, on July 27, 2020, around 4:30 p.m., the defendant encountered the 20-year-old victim inside a deli on the corner of Springfield Boulevard and 136th Avenue. The two men accidentally bumped into each other inside the store which led to punches being thrown. The victim, who was a defensive end for the SUNY Buffalo football team, chased the defendant out of the store and tackled him onto the sidewalk.

Continuing said DA Katz, the ensuing fight was captured on video surveillance and showed the defendant regain his footing and proceed to walk away from the victim. Then, Thurston suddenly turned around, pulled out a firearm and fired a single shot into the victim’s abdomen.

The defendant fled the scene but was apprehended two days later by the Regional Fugitive Task Force of the New York City Police Department.

In addition, said DA Katz, in two separate incidents, Thurston broke into his estranged girlfriend’s home on March 13, 2020, at which time he displayed a knife and choked the woman’s six-year-old son. On July 8, 2020, the defendant fired a gun at a vehicle with passengers inside. There was no one injured during that shooting.

Assistant District Attorney Gregory Lasak, of the District Attorney’s Career Criminal Major Crimes Bureau, prosecuted the case with the assistance of Assistant District Attorney Joshua Kim, of the District Attorneys Criminal Court Bureau, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Shawn Clark, Bureau Chief of the Career Criminal Major Crimes Bureau, Michael Whitney, Deputy Bureau Chief and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Daniel Saunders.

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