



718.286.6000
WWW.QUEENSDA.ORG

QUEENS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
125-01 QUEENS BOULEVARD
KEW GARDENS, NEW YORK 11415-1568



MELINDA KATZ
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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CONTACT: PRESS OFFICE (718) 286-6315
QDACommunications@queensda.org

**DEFENDANT AWAITING TRIAL ON ASSAULT CHARGES INDICTED FOR ALLEGEDLY
HIRING HITMAN TO KILL MAIN WITNESS**
Faces Up To 25 Years In Prison If Convicted

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz, joined by New York City Police Department Commissioner Keechant L. Sewell, announced today that Mark Douglas, 44, has been indicted by a Queens County grand jury and arraigned in Supreme Court on charges of second-degree conspiracy to commit murder and other charges for allegedly hiring a hitman to kill the main witness scheduled to testify against him in a pending assault case.

District Attorney Katz said, “As alleged, the defendant sought and contracted the death of an individual whom he had previously assaulted with a sharp object – an injury that required over 100 stitches. These murder-for-hire allegations are an affront to the foundation of the criminal justice system and will not be tolerated. Ensuring the safety of those who come forward to report a crime is of the utmost importance. Thanks to a joint investigation by my Office and the NYPD, the defendant has been indicted on new charges in connection to the alleged murder plot and will face justice in our courts.”

Commissioner Sewell said, “Our criminal justice system requires the safe and secure participation of all, and when that foundation of safety is threatened the response must be certain and swift. The defendant in this case demonstrated a pitiless, calculating disregard for human life – and today’s indictment reaffirms our commitment to hold violent criminals accountable for their actions. I commend and thank the Office of the Queens District Attorney, along with all of our NYPD investigators, for their outstanding work on this case.”

Douglas, of Beach Channel in Arverne, Queens, was arraigned yesterday before Queens Supreme Court Justice Toni M. Cimino on a three-count indictment charging him with conspiracy in the second degree, bribing a witness, and tampering with a witness. Justice Cimino remanded the defendant and ordered him to return to court on September 28, 2022. If convicted, Douglas faces up to 25 years in prison.

According to the charges, prior intelligence gathering concerning the defendant revealed that during the Winter of 2021/2022, Douglas put out word that he wanted to kill the main witness scheduled to testify against him in a pending assault case. As part of the resulting investigation, members of the District Attorney’s Violent Criminal Enterprise Bureau and Felony Trial Bureau worked with the NYPD’s Intelligence Bureau to set up a sting operation.

District Attorney Katz said that during the subsequent Spring and Summer of 2022, the defendant spoke several times on the phone with undercover police officers posing as hitmen regarding his alleged plan to kill the witness. In August 2022, the defendant met with the undercover “hitman” in person and allegedly agreed to pay him \$5,000 to kill the victim.

Continuing, District Attorney Katz said that according to the indictment, the defendant provided the undercover officer with detailed personal information about the witness, including his photo and address.

On Wednesday, September 7, 2022, police officers from the 100th Precinct and the Intelligence Bureau apprehended the defendant on the new charges.

The investigation was conducted by members of the NYPD’s Intelligence Operations and Analysis Section, as well as the Brooklyn South Violent Crime Squad, under the overall supervision of Chief Thomas Galati, Commanding Officer of the Intelligence Bureau.

Assisting in the investigation, and now prosecuting the case, are Assistant District Attorney Jonathan Sennett, Bureau Chief of the District Attorney's Violent Criminal Enterprises Bureau and Assistant District Attorney Dylan Nesturick of the Felony Trial Bureau, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Rosemary Chao, Deputy Chief, and Mark Osnowitz, Bureau Chief, under the overall respective supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney of the Investigations Division, Gerard A. Brave, and Executive Assistant District Attorney of the Supreme Court Trial Division, Pishoy B. Yacoub.

Prior to the conspiracy allegations, the defendant was arrested on May 25, 2021, and indicted by a grand jury on charges of assault in the first degree, assault in the second degree, and criminal possession of a weapon in the fourth degree. According to those charges, on May 16, 2021, at approximately 4:00 a.m., the defendant engaged the victim in a verbal dispute which seemingly ended when the victim left the defendant's apartment. While outside the defendant's building, Douglas allegedly approached the victim from behind with a broken glass bottle and launched a vicious assault by striking his face with the broken glass. The resulting injuries required over 100 stitches to the victim's face when he was transported to a local area hospital for treatment.

Assistant District Attorney Dylan Nesturick of the District Attorney's Felony Trials Bureau is prosecuting the original assault case, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Rosemary Chao, Deputy Chief, and Mark Osnowitz, Bureau Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for the Supreme Court Trial Division Pishoy B. Yacoub.

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

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