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**FORMER STUDENT CHARGED WITH MAKING TERRORISTIC THREAT
TO BOMB QUEENS HIGH SCHOOL**

*Defendant Allegedly Paid a Third Party to Phone In Threat To St. Francis Preparatory High School;
Faces Up to Seven Years in Prison if Convicted*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz, joined by New York City Police Department Commissioner Keechant L. Sewell, announced today that a 16-year-old former student has been charged with making a terroristic threat, reckless endangerment, and other crimes for allegedly orchestrating a phoned bomb threat to St. Francis Preparatory High School on April 25, 2022. The defendant was arrested on October 12, 2022, following a thorough investigation.

District Attorney Katz said, “Bomb threats are never amusing, and they are never harmless. My Office will use all tools at our disposal to find individuals who think they can commit crimes safely behind their computer screen and bring them to justice. As alleged, the defendant went to great lengths to orchestrate an elaborate and realistic threat against his former high school, placing thousands of students and their families in fear for their lives. This behavior will not stand, and the defendant has now been charged accordingly. I thank our partners at the NYPD for their dedication in holding alleged perpetrators accountable.”

Police Commissioner Sewell said, “The NYPD and our law enforcement partners take every threat to the safety and security of our city’s students and schools extremely seriously, and we will continue to vigorously investigate and hold fully responsible anyone who commits such an act. Bomb hoaxes cause fear, undue stress, and a diversion of resources that have a real impact on our communities. Anyone who intends to carry out a similar crime should know that NYPD detectives and our colleagues in the Queens District Attorney’s Office have zero tolerance for such conduct.”

The defendant, of Oakland Gardens, Queens, was arraigned last night before Queens Criminal Court Judge Edwin I. Novillo on a complaint charging him with making a terroristic threat, reckless endangerment in the first degree, falsely reporting an incident in the second degree, conspiracy in the fifth degree, endangering the welfare of a child, two counts of possession of air pistols and making a threat of mass harm. Judge Novillo ordered the defendant to return to Court on October 17, 2022. If convicted, the defendant faces up to seven years in prison.

District Attorney Katz said that, according to the complaint, on April 25, 2022, at approximately 9:30 a.m., a phone call was placed to the NYPD Highway Patrol Unit 3 by a male individual using the name “Jake.” The individual allegedly stated that he was a ninth grader at St. Francis Preparatory High School and that he had placed four pipe bombs inside the school. The caller allegedly further added that two of the bombs were placed inside a locker on the first floor of the school, one bomb inside a male bathroom, and one more inside a female bathroom.

Immediately following the call, approximately 2,000 students were evacuated from the school for an extended period of time while police searched the premises. No bombs or other harmful devices were found at the time.

An investigation launched by the NYPD Intelligence Bureau, in partnership with the DA's Major Economics Crime Bureau, led investigators to "Discord," an online social media platform. Records obtained by the DA's Office pursuant to a Court-authorized warrant revealed a conversation between the defendant and another Discord user known to law enforcement about making a false threat to St. Francis Preparatory School in exchange for \$80 as payment for the services.

According to the criminal complaint, as part of the above-described conversation, the Discord user known to law enforcement asked the defendant if he would like a bomb squad called. The defendant responded in sum and substance: "Just a normal SWAT... as long as the school gets evacuated." The known Discord user was later identified as a Polish national and Polish law enforcement authorities were notified of this incident. Law enforcement officials were able to trace cryptocurrency that was used as payment to the Discord user in Poland. Additional Discord records were obtained which revealed the defendant identifying himself to another Discord user. Law enforcement officials were also able to link the username to an I.P. address registered to an internet service provider at the home address of the defendant, with the account owner listed as the defendant's mother.

Furthermore, DA Katz said St. Francis Preparatory High School records indicate that the defendant had been expelled from the school in February 2022 for disciplinary reasons.

As part of the investigation, law enforcement officials recovered two air pistols from the defendant's computer room. The defendant was apprehended by members of the NYPD on October 12, 2022.

The joint investigation was conducted by Detectives Frank Italiano and Roger Burke of the NYPD Criminal Intelligence Section, under the overall supervision of Chief Thomas Galati, Commanding Officer of the NYPD Intelligence Bureau.

Assistant District Attorney Daniel Martorelli of the District Attorney's Major Economic Crimes Bureau is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Mary Lowenburg, Bureau Chief, Assistant District Attorney Catherine Kane, Senior Deputy Bureau Chief, Assistant District Attorney Jonathan Scharf, Deputy Bureau Chief, Assistant District Elizabeth Speck, Cybercrimes Supervisor, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney of Investigations Gerard Brave.

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

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