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DEFENDANT CHARGED WITH HATE CRIMES
FOR MULTIPLE SWASTIKA INCIDENTS

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that Antoine Blount was charged with criminal mischief as a hate crime and aggravated harassment for allegedly drawing swastikas on the sidewalk in front of the Reform Temple of Forest Hills, a day care center and residential building.

District Attorney Katz said: “Cowardly acts of hate, especially in front of a house of worship, have no place in our diverse borough and won’t be tolerated. We have charged the defendant with hate crimes for these antisemitic attacks.”

Blount, 34, of 113th Street in Forest Hills, was arraigned in Queens Criminal Court charged in three complaints, for a total of 10 counts, with assault in the third degree, harassment in the second degree, criminal mischief in the fourth degree, criminal mischief in the fourth degree as a hate crime and aggravated harassment in the first degree. Judge Anthony Battisti ordered the defendant to return to court May 8.

According to the charges:

- On Wednesday, March 22, at approximately 1:30 p.m., near the intersection of Jamaica Avenue and 102nd Street, the defendant approached a 27-year-old man. After getting into a verbal dispute with the victim, he grabbed the man’s necklace, ripped it off and threw it on the ground. Blount then punched the man in the jaw. The defendant also punched a 30-year-old man in the face. Both victims were taken to the hospital for treatment.
- At approximately 1:53 p.m. that day, video surveillance footage shows Blount walk up to the Reform Temple of Forest Hills on 112th Street and draw on the sidewalk. A swastika was seen on the sidewalk at that location.
- A short time later, at 3:15 p.m., video footage shows Blount walk up to an apartment building on Austin Street near the intersection of 74th Street and bend down and draw on the sidewalk. A swastika was discovered on the sidewalk.
- At approximately 7:48 p.m. on March 23, video footage shows Blount near the Sholom Day Care offices at 70-17 Main Street, bending down while holding a phone displaying an image of a swastika and drawing on the sidewalk. A swastika was discovered at the location.

The investigation was conducted by Detective Joussett DeJesus of the NYPD Hate Crimes Task Force and Detective Jason Brunder of Queens Robbery Squad.

Assistant District Attorney Michael Brovner, Bureau Chief of the District Attorney's Hate Crimes Bureau, is prosecuting the case under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for the Major Crimes Shawn Clark.

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

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