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TEEN CHARGED FOR SHOVING ELDERLY WOMAN DOWN CHURCH STEPS

Charged with First-Degree Assault, First-Degree Robbery and Various Other Charges

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that her office has charged a 16-year-old with first-degree assault, first-degree robbery and grand larceny for attacking an elderly woman on the steps of Saint Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church in Briarwood on April 7. The teen is accused of shoving the 68-year-old victim down a flight of cement stairs before taking her purse and car keys and stealing her car. He was separately charged with robbery for an unrelated incident on April 4 during which he is accused of stealing another woman's car. Arraignment is pending.

District Attorney Katz said: "The viciousness with which the defendant is accused of having committed the robbery at the church struck the city at its core. As alleged, he chose to rob an elderly woman by first pushing her down the stairs and then proceeded to take her purse and leave her to suffer while he took off in her car. He will now have to answer for the serious charges levied against him by my office. Thank you to NYPD Chief of Detectives Joseph Kenny and the entire Detective Bureau for their relentless work."

The defendant, of 89th Avenue in Jamaica, was charged in the April 7 incident with assault in the first degree, robbery in the first degree, assault in the second degree, two counts of grand larceny and criminal possession of stolen property in the fourth degree and criminal possession of stolen property in the fifth degree.

He was charged in the April 4 case with two counts of robbery in the first degree, two counts of robbery in the second degree, grand larceny in the third degree, robbery in the third degree, criminal possession of stolen property in the third degree, three counts of grand larceny in the fourth degree, criminal possession of stolen property in the fourth degree, menacing in the second degree, petit larceny and unauthorized use of a vehicle in the third degree.

He faces up to 25 years in prison if convicted.

According to the charges:

- On April 7, at approximately 9:15 a.m., Irene Tahliambouris, 68, was walking up a flight of stairs to enter Saint Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church at 84-35 152nd Street.
- As Tahliambouris approached the top step, the defendant is seen on video surveillance running up the staircase beside her and then stepping in front of the victim.
- The teen struck Tahliambouris causing her to fall backwards down the stairs landing headfirst on the concrete sidewalk, sustaining serious injuries.
- Once the victim was on the ground, the defendant is seen on video surveillance picking up Tahliambouris' purse which contained money, credit cards, her cell phone and car key. He can be seen putting his hands near the victim's waist and pockets. The victim can be seen motionless on the ground.
- The defendant is seen on video entering Tahliambouris' 2006 Nissan Altima and driving it away.
- Tahliambouris was taken to a local hospital with a fractured skull and bleeding on the brain. She remains in critical but stable condition, unable to stand or move on her own.

- Following an extensive investigation by members of the 107th Police Precinct, with the assistance of the Queens District Attorney's Office, the defendant was apprehended in front of his residence on April 11.
- The teen has been separately charged with following a woman into an elevator at a building on 127th Avenue in Rochdale Village on April 4 at approximately 10:15 a.m.
- He told the woman he followed her from a bank and saw her take money out and then demanded the money and her keys. He put his hand in his pocket and pointed what appeared to be a weapon at the woman. The victim gave the teen her car keys.
- The teen is seen on video surveillance leaving the building and getting into the woman's Toyota Corolla and driving away.

Assistant District Attorney George Kanellopoulos of the District Attorney's Special Victims Bureau is prosecuting the cases with the assistance of Assistant District Attorney Laura A. Godfrey, Director of Juvenile Prosecutions, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Eric Rosenbaum, Special Victims Bureau Chief, Debra Lynn Pomodore, Senior Deputy Chief, and Brian Hughes, Deputy Chief under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Special Prosecutions Joyce A. Smith.

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

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