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TEEN INDICTED FOR SHOVING ELDERLY WOMAN DOWN CHURCH STEPS

Charged with First-Degree Assault, First-Degree Robbery and Other Crimes

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that a 16-year-old has been indicted for first-degree assault and first-degree robbery for shoving a 68-year-old woman down the steps of a Briarwood church on April 7, leaving the seriously injured victim on the sidewalk and then stealing her purse and car. He was also indicted for a separate incident for allegedly stealing another woman's car days earlier.

District Attorney Katz said: "An assault on an elderly woman walking into church on a Sunday morning is unconscionable. After allegedly pushing the woman down the stairs, the defendant robbed her and stole the woman's car. We are grateful that the victim is recovering and that we were able to secure serious charges against him from the grand jury."

The defendant, of 89th Avenue in Jamaica, was arraigned today on a 12-count indictment charging him with two counts of robbery in the first degree, two counts of robbery in the second degree, assault in the first and second degrees, four counts of grand larceny in the fourth degree and two counts of criminal possession of stolen property in the fourth degree.

Supreme Court Justice Bruna DiBiase ordered the defendant, who faces up to 25 years in prison if convicted, to return to court on May 15.

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.
- 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 serious injuries, including a fractured skull and bleeding on the brain.
- The teen is separately charged with another robbery on April 4 in Rochdale Village.
- At approximately 10:15 a.m. on that day, the defendant allegedly followed a 50-year-old woman into an elevator at a building on 127th Avenue.
- The defendant told the woman he followed her from a bank and saw her take money out. He demanded the money and her keys. The defendant allegedly put his hand in his pocket and pointed what appeared to be a weapon at the woman. The victim then 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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