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**BERNARDO RAUL CASTRO MATA PLEADS GUILTY TO ATTEMPTED MURDER AND
ASSAULT FOR SHOOTING TWO POLICE OFFICERS**

Defendant Drove Unregistered Motorcycle Wrong Way on One-Way Street in East Elmhurst; When Cops Attempted to Stop Him, Defendant Shot Two Officers While Resisting Arrest

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that Bernardo Raul Castro Mata pleaded guilty to attempted murder for shooting Police Officer Richard Yarusso in the lower chest area and assault for shooting Police Officer Christopher Abreu in the leg. The officers attempted to stop the defendant on June 3, 2024, for driving the wrong way on a one-way street without a helmet on an unregistered motorcycle in East Elmhurst.

District Attorney Katz said: “The defendant shot two New York City police officers at close range after they attempted to stop him for driving erratically on an unregistered motorcycle. Once the officers caught up to the defendant, he fired at them. Thankfully, one officer’s bullet resistant vest saved his life while the other officer was able to recover from his injuries. With today’s plea, the defendant will now be held responsible for his actions.”

Mata, 20, undomiciled, pleaded guilty today to attempted murder in the second degree and assault in the second degree.

Supreme Court Justice Kenneth Holder set sentencing for June 10. Mata is expected to be sentenced to 28 years in prison: 25 years in prison on the attempted murder charge, followed by five years of post-release supervision, and three years on the assault charge followed by three years of post-release supervision. The sentences are to be served consecutively.

District Attorney Katz said that, according to the charges, on June 3 at approximately 1:40 a.m., NYPD police officers Christopher Abreu and Richard Yarusso and NYPD Sergeant Nicholas Condos were on patrol in an unmarked police vehicle while wearing NYPD uniforms.

The officers and sergeant observed Mata operating an unregistered motorcycle and driving the wrong way down Ditmars Boulevard near 90th Street in East Elmhurst. Mata was not wearing a helmet while operating the motorcycle. The defendant was also observed weaving the motorcycle onto the sidewalk with pedestrians present.

Officer Yarusso and Sergeant Condos exited the unmarked police vehicle and attempted to approach Mata, at which point the defendant left the motorcycle and fled the scene on foot. Officer Yarusso began a foot pursuit, while Officer Abreu followed the defendant in the unmarked vehicle. Sergeant Condos pursued the defendant using the motorcycle that the defendant had been operating.

After reaching the defendant Officer Abreu attempted to place Mata under arrest. The defendant resisted arrest by twisting his body, flailing his arms and reaching inside a bag he was wearing across his chest.

Officer Yarusso attempted to help Officer Abreu place the defendant in handcuffs and the two officers struggled with the defendant on the ground.

During the struggle, Mata removed a firearm from his crossbody bag and shot Officer Yarusso in the lower chest at point-blank range. The officer’s bullet-resistant vest stopped the bullet. Mata also shot Officer Abreu and struck him in the upper right thigh area.

Officer Abreu returned fire, shooting Mata in the foot and ankle area, at which point the defendant let go of the firearm. Sergeant Condos arrived and placed the defendant in handcuffs.

Both officers were treated for their injuries and released from a local hospital.

Police recovered a loaded Hi-Point .380-caliber pistol at the scene as well as two deformed fired bullets, nine bullet fragments, three discharged .380-caliber shell casings, and four 9 mm discharged shell casings.

Assistant District Attorney Lauren D. Reilly of the District Attorney’s Career Criminal Major Crimes Bureau prosecuted the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Michael Whitney, Bureau Chief, Roni Piplani and Timothy Regan, Deputy Bureau Chiefs, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Shawn Clark.

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

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