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**JAMAICA MAN SENTENCED TO 10 YEARS IN PRISON FOR HATE CRIME**

*Defendant Punched Sikh Man Following Auto Collision Near Van Wyck; Victim Died the Next Day*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced today that Gilbert Augustin was sentenced to 10 years in prison after pleading guilty to assault as hate crime earlier this month. After a Kew Gardens fender bender in October 2023, Augustin derided 66-year-old Jasmer Singh as “turban man” and repeatedly punched him, knocking him to the ground. Singh died of a head injury the next day.

District Attorney Katz said: “Gilbert Augustin and Jasmer Singh had a minor collision near the Van Wyck Expressway. Instead of calmly exchanging information, Augustin responded with hateful rage, derided the victim because of his Sikh religion and punched Singh three times. Tragically, the 66-year-old died at the hospital the next day. We hope that today’s sentence provides a measure of solace to Mr. Singh’s countless family members and friends and sends a clear message that we will not tolerate hate in Queens, the most diverse place in the world.”

Augustin, 32, of 111th Avenue in Jamaica, pleaded guilty on June 2 to assault in the second degree as a hate crime before Queens Supreme Court Justice Kenneth Holder who sentenced him today to 10 years in prison and five years of post-release supervision.

According to the charges, on October 19, 2023, at approximately 11:50 a.m., Augustin was operating a black Ford Mustang heading south near the Van Wyck Expressway in Kew Gardens. The defendant was hit from behind by a blue Toyota operated by 66-year-old Jasmer Singh. The front passenger side bumper of Singh’s car hit the rear driver’s side of Augustin’s Mustang.

After the collision, Singh and Augustin stopped in front of 87-34 Van Wyck Expressway in Kew Gardens to inspect the vehicles. The men got into a verbal dispute and Augustin said, “No police” and repeatedly called Singh “turban man.” Singh was wearing a turban as part of his Sikh religious practice.

The victim returned to his car and Augustin reached into the vehicle and grabbed Singh’s cell phone. At that time, Singh exited his car and recovered his phone from Augustin.

As Singh was returning to his car, Augustin punched him three times in the head and face. Singh fell to the ground and hit the back of his head on the pavement. Singh was taken to a hospital where he was determined to have sustained a brain injury. He died the next day.

After striking Singh, Augustin left the scene of the incident. He was arrested the following day after an NYPD officer spotted him in his damaged car on 111th Avenue in Jamaica. A review of DMV records showed his driver's license was suspended and he did not produce proof of insurance.

Assistant District Attorney Thomas Salmon of the District Attorney's Career Criminal Major Crimes Bureau prosecuted the case with the assistance of Assistant District Attorneys Joseph Randazzo and Jaggnor Lali under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys 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.

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