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DEFENDANT ARRAIGNED ON HATE CRIME CHARGES FOR UNPROVOKED ATTACK
ON RABBI IN FOREST HILLS

*Defendant Allegedly Said "F*ck Jews" Before Punching Victim in Face and Chest*
Faces 1 1/3 to 4 Years, if Convicted

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that Eric Zafra Grosso was arraigned on assault as a hate crime and related charges for allegedly attacking a man who was wearing a yarmulke and walking at the intersection of Queens Boulevard and Yellowstone Boulevard on Tuesday. The unprovoked attack was preceded by antisemitic slurs.

District Attorney Katz said: "The defendant is charged with felony hate crime charges for allegedly attacking a man wearing a yarmulke and spewing antisemitic slurs at the victim. The gravity of this alleged assault is compounded by the fact that it occurred on International Holocaust Remembrance Day. Anti-Jewish hate crimes account for far too many bias-motivated incidents across our city, and my office will use every tool at its disposal to hold perpetrators accountable. We will continue working with our communities to ensure Queens remains a place where everyone can live openly and without fear."

Grosso, 32, of Corona, was arraigned today on a criminal complaint charging him with assault in the third degree, assault in the third degree as a hate crime and aggravated harassment in the second degree.

Queens Criminal Court Judge Sharifa Nasser-Cuellar ordered the defendant to return to court on March 16. If convicted of the top charge, Grosso faces 1 1/3 to 4 years in prison.

DA Katz said that, according to the charges and investigation, on January 27, between 2:20 p.m. and 3 p.m., the defendant approached the victim at the intersection of Queens Boulevard and Yellowstone Boulevard in Forest Hills. The victim, a rabbi in the Bukharian Jewish community, was wearing a yarmulke.

The defendant allegedly stated "F*ck Jews" and punched the victim on the face and chest, causing the victim to fall to the ground.

Grosso was arrested shortly afterward by members of the NYPD's 112th Precinct inside the Forest Hills-71st Continental Avenue subway station.

Assistant District Attorney Zebo Fattoyeva of the District Attorney's Hate Crimes Bureau is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Michael Brovner, Bureau Chief, 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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