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**D.A. BROWN: WOODSIDE FATHER CHARGED WITH DEPRAVED ASSAULT
IN ALLEGED SHAKING OF 3-MONTH-OLD SON**

Infant Suffered Brain Damage and Other Serious Injuries; Defendant Faces Up to 25 Years In Prison

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown today announced that a Woodside, Queens, man has been charged with the depraved assault of his 3-month-old son for allegedly shaking the child and causing him to sustain life-threatening injuries including bleeding on the brain.

District Attorney Brown said, "This case is a grim reminder of the fact that never, under any circumstances, should a baby be shaken. Three seconds of shaking is all it takes to cause irreparable injury or even death. In an infant, the shaking motion is comparable to whiplash in a car accident or when shaken in anger the force is equivalent to the impact of a fall from a second-story window."

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Jerome J. Wiza, 26, of 72-30 51 Road in Woodside, Queens. He was arraigned today before Queens Criminal Court Judge Robert Raciti on charges of Assault in the First Degree and Reckless Endangerment in the First Degree. Judge Raciti set bail at \$500,000 bond/\$250,000 cash and ordered a return date of March 10, 2006. The defendant faces up to 25 years in prison if convicted.

District Attorney Brown said that according to the charges, the defendant called 911 on the afternoon of February 17, 2006, and reported that his infant son, Nikkolas, had fallen and was not breathing. EMS arrived shortly thereafter and transported the child by ambulance to St. John's Hospital. Two days later, the child was transferred to Long Island Jewish Hospital where he was diagnosed with Shaken Baby Syndrome when tests revealed that the child had suffered acute subdural hemorrhages to the brain, a fractured pelvis, eight fractured ribs, a fracture to the thigh bone and adrenal gland bleeding. According to hospital physicians, the findings are consistent with the baby having suffered at least two episodes of shaking.

District Attorney Brown said that it is further alleged that the defendant admitted to having an anger problem and further, that on February 17, 2006, he shook the baby when the infant started crying; and that when he realized that his son's lips were blue and that he was not breathing, it was then that he called 911. The defendant also allegedly admitted to having previously shaken his baby son when frustrated.

The investigation was conducted by Detective Thomas J. Sommerville of the New York City Police Department's Queens Special Victims Squad under the supervision of Lieutenant Patrick Baricelli, Squad Commander.

Assistant District Attorney Dianna L. Megias of the District Attorney's Special Victims Bureau is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Marjory D. Fisher, Chief, and Kenneth M. Appelbaum and Lucinda C. Suarez, Deputy Chiefs, and the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Charles A. Testagrossa and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Daniel A. Saunders.

It should be noted that criminal charges are merely an accusation and that a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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Note to Editors: E-version of this press release posted at www.queensda.org.