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**D.A. BROWN: PRISON INMATE INDICTED ON CHARGES
OF RAPING WOMAN IN 1996 AND 12-YEAR-OLD GIRL IN 2004**
Apprehended as Result of DNA "Cold Hit"; Faces up to 50 Years in Prison

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown announced today that a former Far Rockaway resident who is presently serving a three-year sentence in Ulster County for grand larceny has been indicted on charges of rape and robbery stemming from incidents that occurred in 1996 and 2004. The defendant was ordered to submit a DNA sample after his conviction which has now been positively matched to the rape kits taken at the time of each incident through the national database known as CODIS (Combined DNA Index System).

District Attorney Brown said, "The defendant is alleged to have robbed a couple and raped the female over 11 years ago and to have stolen the innocence of a 12-year-old girl over two years ago. If it had not been for the DNA expansion law enacted in 2006, these cases would have remained unsolved. This case underscores yet again the crucial importance of DNA evidence which is irrefutable proof of guilt or innocence."

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Richard Thomas, 40, of 2234 New Haven Avenue, Far Rockaway, Queens. The defendant is being held pending arraignment in Queens Supreme Court on charges of first-degree rape, robbery, unlawful imprisonment, criminal use of a firearm and endangering the welfare of a child and faces up to 50 years in prison if convicted.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the indictment, on August 17, 1996, the defendant approached a couple who were seated in their vehicle and stopped at a red light and at gunpoint ordered them out of the car. The defendant, at gunpoint, robbed the male victim and then locked him in the trunk of the vehicle. The defendant then raped and robbed the female victim in a nearby vacant lot and then locked her in the trunk.

The indictment further charges, that on February 20, 2004, at 1124 Bay 27th Street, the defendant attacked a 12-year-old girl as she walked to school and raped and robbed her.

The District Attorney said that the 1996 sexual assault evidence kit was tested as part of the City's Backlog Project and linked to the 2004 sexual assault. The Backlog project is an initiative that reopens sexual assault cases in which perpetrators have been identified using DNA from rape kits that are matched with convicted felony offender DNA profiles on file with New York and national DNA databanks.

The investigation was conducted by Detectives Sal Molino and James O'Boyle of the New York City Police Department's Queens Special Victims Squad under the supervision of Lieutenant Arthur Hall, Commanding Officer.

Assistant District Attorneys Karen Migdal of the District Attorney's Special Victims Bureau, and Denise Tirino of the District Attorney's Homicide Trial Bureau are prosecuting the case under the supervision of Bureau Chiefs Marjory D. Fisher, and Brad Leventhal and Deputy Chiefs Kenneth M. Appelbaum, Lucinda C Suarez and Jack Warsawsky, and the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Charles A. Testagrossa and Deputy Assistant District Attorney Daniel A. Saunders.

It should be noted that an indictment is merely an accusation and that the defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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