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D.A. BROWN: ST. JOHN'S STUDENT TO BE ARRAIGNED TOMORROW
ON WEAPON CHARGES AT HOSPITAL BEDSIDE
Arraignment To Take Place Via Closed-Circuit Video Feed

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown today announced that St. John's University freshman Omesh Hiranman, 22, is expected to be arraigned tomorrow at his bedside at Bellevue Hospital Center on charges of bringing an unlicensed loaded .50-caliber rifle onto the Jamaica Estates campus yesterday.

The District Attorney said that Hiranman, of 92nd Street in East Elmhurst, Queens, is presently being held on two counts of fourth-degree criminal possession of a weapon (with intent to use said weapon unlawfully against another and possession of a rifle in a building or grounds used for educational purposes) and several violations of the New York City Administrative Code (possession of a rifle without a permit or a certificate of registration). If convicted, he faces up to one year in jail.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the charges, Hiranman walked onto St. John's University campus on the afternoon of Wednesday, September 26, 2007, with a Fred Flintstone rubber mask over his face and a loaded .50-caliber Wolf rifle in his hand. Shortly thereafter, it is alleged, a St. John's campus security guard grabbed the defendant and, with the assistance of Christopher Benson, a St. John's student and a NYPD cadet, subdued the defendant, disarming him and holding him until police arrived.

The Wolf rifle was allegedly loaded with one round of ammunition and ballistic tests verified that both the rifle and the ammunition were operable.

Hiranman, who was transferred this afternoon from Queens General Hospital in Jamaica to Bellevue Hospital Center's psychiatric unit, is expected to be arraigned tomorrow at his Manhattan hospital bedside via a two-way video hook-up with the Queens Criminal Courthouse in Kew Gardens.

District Attorney Brown added, "St. John's University is to be commended for its rapid response in alerting students and faculty to the situation that occurred yesterday on its campus. As recent events have so tragically illustrated, situations of this nature can escalate and turn violent and deadly. Fortunately that did not turn out to be the case here as those on campus maintained a level of calmness that resulted in no panic or injuries during the crisis. The New York City Police Department also deserves to be praised for its handling of this potentially dangerous situation in a professional and efficient manner, greatly minimizing disruption and maintaining public safety and order."

Assistant District Attorneys James W. Evangelou, Bureau Chief of the District Attorney's Major Crimes Bureau, and Samantha M. Rosenberg of the District Attorney's Kew Gardens II Bureau are prosecuting the case under the overall supervision of Senior Executive Assistant District Attorney for Trials James C. Quinn and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorneys for Trials John H. Larsen and Robert J. Masters.

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

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Note to Editors: Press release e-version posted at www.queensda.org.

NOTE: REQUESTS FOR MEDIA ACCESS TO THE ARRAIGNMENT MUST BE MADE THROUGH THE NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF COURT ADMINISTRATION AT 212-428-2500