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**MALE AIDE CHARGED WITH SEXUALLY MOLESTING NINE-YEAR-OLD BOY  
ON SCHOOL BUS AND POSSESSING LEWD IMAGES OF CHILDREN**

*Faces Up To Seven Years In Prison*

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown today announced that a 20-year-old school bus aide has been charged with sexually molesting a 9-year-old male student on the bus earlier this week and with possessing nude photos of children on his cell phone.

District Attorney Brown said, "The charges are very disturbing. As a school bus aide, the defendant's responsibilities are to ensure the safety of students to and from school. Instead, the defendant is accused of turning a ride to school into a terrifying sexual ordeal for a young boy."

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Darnell Washington, 20, of 636 Beach 22<sup>nd</sup> Street in Far Rockaway, Queens. Washington, who works as a bus aide for Philippe and Elmer Transportation, was arraigned last night before Queens Criminal Court Judge Ira Margulis on charges of first-degree sexual abuse, possessing a sexual performance by a child and endangering the welfare of a child. He was ordered held on \$200,000 bail and to return to court on May 18, 2009. If convicted, he faces up to seven years in prison.

The District Attorney said that, according to the charges, the school bus was at the intersection of Rockaway Beach Boulevard and Beach 73<sup>rd</sup> Street at about 7:50 a.m., on Monday, April 27, 2009, when Washington asked the 9-year-old boy to play a game in which Washington reached inside of the front of the boy's pants and sexually abused him. Washington then allegedly reached into the back of the boy's pants and rubbed his buttocks. Finally, it is alleged that Washington showed the boy a photograph of a nude young girl on his cell phone. A review of the defendant's cell phone following his arrest allegedly revealed dozens of visual images of naked children involved in various sexual poses.

The alleged abuse case came to light when the victim returned home and told his parents what had occurred.

The investigation was conducted by Detective Miguel Ruiz of the New York City Police Department's Queens Special Victims Squad under the supervision of Lieutenant Arthur Hall, Commanding Officer

The District Attorney's Special Victims Bureau is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Marjory D. Fisher, Bureau Chief, and Kenneth M. Appelbaum and Lucinda C. Suarez, Deputy Bureau Chiefs, and under 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 a criminal complaint is merely an accusation and that a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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