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Release # 150-2009
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, AUGUST 13, 2009

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TWO ALLEGED TEENAGE DRAG RACERS CHARGED
WITH RECKLESSLY ENDANGERING PUBLIC

12-Year-Old Boy Critically Injured During Alleged Illegal Street Race

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown today announced that two Queens teenagers have been charged with reckless driving and assault, among other charges, in connection with their alleged involvement in an illegal street race last night on Francis Lewis Boulevard in the Auburndale section of Queens, in which a 12-year-old passenger in one of the cars was critically injured.

District Attorney Brown said, "While the days where neighborhoods near streets like Francis Lewis Boulevard in Bayside and the South Conduit in South Jamaica had to endure organized NASCAR-like noise and danger are behind us, there are still renegades of all ages who persist in engaging in high-risk behavior behind the wheel of oftentimes souped-up cars and SUVs."

The District Attorney continued, "More than the noise generated by these vehicles, however, is the enormous danger these illegal drag races pose to innocent pedestrians, passengers and other motorists. A vehicle weighing in excess of twenty-five hundred pounds and traveling at speeds greater than sixty miles an hour is transformed into a dangerous missile when it is hurling down a street designed and engineered for speeds of only twenty-five to thirty-five miles an hour."

The District Attorney identified the defendants as David Lakhchakov, 16, of 153-25 76th Road in Flushing and David Badalov, 18, of 135-11 78th Drive in Flushing. Lakhchakov, who is presently awaiting arraignment in Queens Criminal Court in Kew Gardens, is charged with second-degree assault, endangering the welfare of a child and various violations of the vehicle and traffic law – including reckless driving, speed contest and driving by an unlicensed driver. Badalov, who is presently hospitalized, will be arraigned at a later date on the same charges except for the charge of unlicensed driving. If convicted, they each face up to seven years in prison.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the criminal charges, Badalov and Lakhchakov were racing at upwards of 76 miles per hour along Francis Lewis Boulevard in the vicinity of Weeks Lane, a 35 miles per hour zone, in Auburndale last night, August 12, 2009, when Badalov lost control of his 2004 BMW and slammed into the 2009 Lexus being driven by Lakhchakov and then spun out of control and struck a parked 2004 Ford van. Badalov and two passengers in the BMW – 18-year-old Ilya Ishakov and 12-year-old Aviv Babayev – were taken to a local Queens hospital.

According to the complaint, Babayev, who was sitting in the backseat of the car, suffered two broken femurs, a broken pelvis, severe trauma to his torso and head, and swelling to his brain that required surgery. Furthermore, according to the complaint, Lakhchakov had a class "DJ" license which is a junior license and is not a valid driver's license in New York City.

The investigation was conducted by Detective Robert Saporito of the New York City Police Department's Accident Investigation Squad under the supervision of Lieutenant Michael Kelly, Commanding Officer.

Assistant District Attorney George Kanellopoulos, of the District Attorney's Homicide Investigations Bureau, is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys John W. Kosinski, Chief of the District Attorney's Vehicular Homicide Unit Peter T. Reese, Bureau Chief, and Peter J. McCormack III, Deputy Bureau Chief, 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 a criminal complaint is 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.