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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**MOTORIST CONVICTED OF ASSAULTING UNIFORMED POLICE OFFICER  
BY DRAGGING HIM ALONG QUEENS STREET**

*Faces Up to 25 Years in Prison*

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown announced today that a Valley Stream resident has been convicted of seriously injuring a New York City police officer following a car stop by dragging him at a high rate of speed down a busy Queens street with his automobile.

District Attorney Brown said, "The defendant stands convicted of seriously injuring a uniformed police officer during the performance of his duties. Fortunately, the officer survived. However, this case underscores yet again the dangers faced by New York City police officers on a daily basis. There is nothing 'routine' or 'predictable' about a traffic stop. Every stop has the potential for danger. Today's jury verdict is a measure of justice that will ensure the defendant is held accountable for his actions."

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Walter Hurdle, 53, of 7 North Cloverfield Road in Valley Stream. Hurdle was found guilty late this afternoon of first- and second-degree assault, assault on a police officer and reckless driving following a two-week jury trial. Queens Supreme Court Justice Richard L. Buchter, who presided at trial, set sentencing for September 8, 2009. Hurdle, who has been in jail in lieu of \$500,000 bail since his arraignment on January 21, 2007, faces up to 25 years in prison.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to trial testimony, at approximately 8:20 p.m. on January 18, 2007, uniformed police officers observed the defendant rolling an object while sitting bent over in the driver's seat of a 2001 GMC Denali at the intersection of 122<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Sutphin Boulevard. When police approached the vehicle and requested to see the defendant's driver's license, he was unable to produce one. When the defendant's driver door opened, they saw what appeared to be a glassine envelope fall onto the vehicle's running board and the defendant drop an object which was later recovered from inside the vehicle and which appeared to be a marijuana cigarette.

The District Attorney said that when police asked the defendant to step out of the vehicle he refused and instead sped off at a high rate of speed with Sergeant John Pagnotta caught inside the vehicle's driver side door. According to police officers at the scene, the defendant's vehicle struck their parked patrol car, crushing Sgt. Pagnotta who was pinned in between the patrol car and the inside of the defendant's door. The defendant refused to stop and dragged Sgt. Pagnotta approximately fifteen to thirty feet – with Sgt. Pagnotta yelling and screaming in pain – before the sergeant was thrown free and tumbled another ten to fifteen feet into oncoming traffic on Sutphin Boulevard, where a vehicle had to abruptly stop – coming within a foot of striking Sgt. Pagnotta. The defendant then fled the scene at a high rate of speed in the opposite direction of oncoming traffic, causing vehicles to swerve out of the way. The defendant's vehicle was discovered abandoned a few blocks away.

Sgt. Pagnotta was transported to a local Queens hospital, where he was treated for a broken pelvis, several broken ribs, a fractured backbone and a dislocated shoulder.

Senior Assistant District Attorney Patricia M. Theodorou, of the District Attorney's Career Criminal Major Crimes Bureau, prosecuted the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney James W. Evangelou, Bureau Chief, and Robert J. Hanophy, Deputy Chief and the overall supervision of Senior Executive Assistant District Attorney for Trials James C. Quinn and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney for Trials John H. Larsen.

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