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**QUEENS MAN ARRAIGNED ON CHARGES OF ATTEMPTED MURDER**  
**FOR SHOOTING BREEZY POINT MAN IN HEAD**

*Faces up to 25 Years in Prison*

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown announced today that a Rockaway Park man has been charged with shooting a 27-year-old Breezy Point man in the back of the head this past weekend, critically wounding him.

District Attorney Brown said, "A Saturday night out has turned into a life and death situation for a young man when, without warning, he was senselessly but deliberately shot in the back of the head. This case is just one more glaring example of mindless gun-related violence that recklessly puts people's lives at risk."

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Robert Cassato, 36, of 102-00 Shore Front Parkway in Rockaway Park, Queens. Cassato was arraigned last night before Queens Criminal Court Judge Gene Lopez on charges of second-degree attempted murder, first-degree assault, second-degree criminal possession of a weapon and first-degree reckless endangerment. Cassato, who faces up to 25 years in prison if convicted, was held without bail and ordered to return to court on June 19, 2009.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the charge, the victim, Thomas O'Neil, and another unidentified individual were at the intersection of Beach 129<sup>th</sup> Street and Newport Avenue in Belle Harbor at approximately 3:25 a.m. on Sunday, June 14, 2009, when Cassato displayed a handgun and fired a round in the air as he walked toward them. It is further alleged that the unidentified individual heard a second shot, following which O'Neil fell face down on the ground bleeding from the back of the head. A second unidentified individual allegedly witnessed Cassato point the gun at O'Neil and fire, critically wounding him. O'Neil was removed to a local Queens hospital, where he is presently in a chemically induced coma and is in critical condition.

The investigation was conducted by detectives assigned to the New York City Police Department's 100<sup>th</sup> Precinct's Detective Squad.

Assistant District Attorney Anjula Garg, of the District Attorney's Kew Gardens I Trial Bureau, is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Francesco Catarisano, Bureau Chief, and Robin D. Leopold, Deputy Bureau Chief, and the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Trials James C. Quinn, and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorneys for Trial 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](http://www.queensda.org).