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STEPFATHER SENTENCED TO 25 YEARS IN PRISON
FOR SEXUALLY ABUSING TWO PRE-TEEN STEPDAUGHTERS

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown today announced that a Laurelton man convicted of sexually abusing his wife's two pre-teen daughters over a six-year period has been sentenced to 25 years in state prison.

District Attorney Brown said, "The defendant occupied a position of trust and authority over his victims and chose to violate that responsibility in the most base ways – physically and emotionally traumatizing them while ultimately robbing them of normal lives. The nightmare he imposed on them more than justifies today's lengthy prison sentence."

District Attorney Brown identified the defendant as Herdis Baptise, 50, of 139-11 226th Street in Laurelton, Queens. Baptise was convicted earlier this month of first- and second-degree course of sexual conduct against a child after a two-week jury trial presided over by Acting Queens Supreme Court Justice Fernando Camacho, who imposed today's determinate sentence.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to testimony at Baptise's trial, the defendant began sexually abusing his two stepdaughters in July 1998 – when they were seven and eight years in age – and continued until July 2004 when the younger of the two turned thirteen. Testifying at trial, the girls recounted how, on at least one occasion, Baptise inferred that they should be quiet and said that he would give them candy.

The investigation was conducted by the New York City Police Department's Queens Special Victims Squad located at the Queens Child Advocacy Center under the supervision of Lieutenant Patrick Baricelli, Squad Commander, and Sergeant Guisella Rodriguez.

Assistant District Attorney Lauren Parson, of the District Attorney's Special Victims Bureau, prosecuted 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 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.

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Note to Editors: E-version of this press release posted at www.queensda.org