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**D.A. BROWN: TWO TRIALS END WITH DEFENDANTS  
CONVICTED OF CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN**

*Seven-Month-Old Baby Physically Assaulted by Nanny;  
Two Pre-Teen Sisters Suffer Sexual Abuse At Hands of Stepfather*

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown today announced the conviction – in two separate and unrelated trials in Queens Supreme Court – of a Glendale nanny who assaulted an infant girl in her care and a Laurelton man who sexually abused his wife’s two pre-teen daughters over a six-year period.

District Attorney Brown said, “In both cases, the defendants occupied positions of trust and authority with their victims and chose to violate that responsibility in the most base ways – physically and emotionally traumatizing their young victims and ultimately robbing them of normal lives. The nightmares they imposed on their victims warrant the imposition of lengthy prison sentences.”

District Attorney Brown identified the defendants as Alma Calderaro, 35, of 78-37 73<sup>rd</sup> Place in Glendale, and Herdis Baptise, 50, of 139-11 226<sup>th</sup> Street in Laurelton. Calderaro was convicted after a five-week jury trial of first-degree assault and endangering the welfare of a child. Baptise was convicted after a two-week jury trial of first- and second-degree course of sexual conduct against a child.

Acting Queens Supreme Court Justice Robert McGann, who presided at the Calderaro trial, set sentencing for March 20, 2009, at which time the defendant faces up to 25 years in prison. Acting Queens Supreme Court Justice Fernando Camacho, who presided at the Baptise trial, set sentencing for March 30, 2009, at which time the defendant faces in excess of 30 years in prison.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to testimony at Calderaro’s trial, on January 11, 2006, the defendant took the seven-month-old infant – who was in a non-responsive state and having difficulty breathing – to the emergency room at St. John’s Queens Hospital. The infant was then transferred later that evening to Long Island Jewish Hospital where medical personnel observed bleeding in the brain and eyes and extensive brain damage – injuries consistent with the non-accidental inflicted trauma of Shaken Baby Syndrome/Abusive Head Trauma which occurs when a baby is repeatedly and violently shaken.

At trial, the infant’s parents testified that their daughter was in perfect health up until the time she was dropped off at Calderaro’s residence. In taking the stand, Calderaro testified that the baby was gasping for air and that she shook the infant in order to revive her. However, medical experts

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testified that the defendant's account of how the baby was injured was inconsistent with the nature and severity of the injuries she suffered. The child, who is now nearly four years old, has permanent brain damage.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to testimony at Baptiste'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 investigations of both cases were 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 Attorneys Leigh Bishop and Lauren Parson, of the District Attorney's Special Victims Bureau, prosecuted the cases against Calderaro and Baptiste, respectively. Both cases were prosecuted 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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