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QUEENS MAN CHARGED WITH INTERFERING WITH TENNIS MATCH AT U.S. OPEN
Faces Up To A Year In Jail and \$5,000 In Penalties

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown announced today that a Briarwood resident who ran out onto the tennis court at the Arthur Ashe Tennis Stadium last night and hugged tennis player Rafael Nadal following his U.S. Open's Men's Singles match against Gael Monfils has been charged with criminal trespass and interfering with a professional sporting event.

District Attorney Brown said, "The Queens District Attorney's Office and U.S. Open officials have zero tolerance for spectators who fail to conduct themselves responsibly at sporting events. What is particularly disturbing in this case is that the defendant actually made bodily contact with a player. Fortunately, U.S. Open security personnel reacted swiftly to the situation and removed the defendant from the court without incident."

The District Attorney noted that while the defendant might possibly have been simply an overzealous fan, in 1993, tennis pro Monica Seles was stabbed in the back by a spectator during a match in Hamburg, Germany. "There is no such thing as being too careful," said District Attorney Brown.

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Noam U. Aorta, 23, of 142-06 Pershing Crescent in Briarwood, Queens. Aorta is presently awaiting arraignment in Queens Criminal Court in Kew Gardens on charges of third-degree criminal trespass and interfering with a professional sporting event. If convicted, he faces up to one year in jail and civil penalties of \$5,000.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the charges, Aorta entered the playing area at the Arthur Ashe Stadium in Flushing Meadows, Queens, just after midnight and approached tennis player Rafael Nadal who had just won a fourth-round U.S. Open match against Gael Monfils. As Nadal was changing shirts, Aorta allegedly rushed Nadal and hugged and kissed him before security personnel whisked him away.

District Attorney Brown noted that the New York City Council passed the Interference with a Professional Sporting Event Law in 2003 after fashion designer Calvin Klein stepped out onto the basketball court at Madison Square Garden in March 2003 to speak with player Latrell Sprewell while a Knicks game was in progress. John McCarthy, 38, of Clifton, NJ, was the first person charged under the law when he ran onto the field during a Mets game at Shea Stadium on May 4, 2004, carrying a sign that read "Howard Stern: Here's Johnny." McCarthy pleaded guilty in August 2004 and was sentenced to eight weekends in jail, fined \$2,000 and ordered to serve three years' probation, during which he was prohibited from going to Shea Stadium.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Purvi Patel, of the District Attorney's Economic Crimes Bureau, under the supervision of Gregory C. Pavlides, Bureau Chief, and Christina Hanophy, Deputy Bureau Chief, and the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney of the Investigations Division Peter A. Crusco and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Linda M. Cantoni.

It should be noted that a 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.