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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
WEDNESDAY, MAY 22, 2024

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**CHARGES FOR BOTH LIQUOR STORE OWNER AND TWO ALLEGED SHOPLIFTERS**  
**AFTER INCIDENTS ON WYCKOFF AVENUE**

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that Edwin Poaquiza and Kevin Pullatasi are charged with petit larceny for allegedly stealing two bottles of liquor from Franja Wine and Liquors on Wyckoff Avenue. Separately, store owner Francisco Valerio is charged with assault for allegedly discharging his weapon when attempting to pistol-whip a man on the sidewalk outside his liquor store.

District Attorney Katz said: “Two crimes, inside and outside a liquor store, resulted in three people being charged in this case. As alleged, brazen thieves stole merchandise from a neighborhood liquor shop. After the store was targeted by these shoplifters, the stolen merchandise was recovered and the two men were escorted out of the store. At that point, the store owner was physically attacked by one of the men. Unfortunately, as alleged, that led to a reckless shooting by the store owner on a public street in broad daylight. All three of the defendants in this incident will have to answer charges against them.”

Francisco Valerio, 53, of Brooklyn, New York, was arraigned last night on charges of assault in the second and third degrees, reckless endangerment in the first degree and criminal possession of a weapon in the fourth degree. Judge Anthony Battisti ordered the defendant to return to court July 29. If convicted of the top count, Francisco Valerio faces up to seven years in prison.

Defendant Edwin Poaquiza, 20, of Brooklyn, New York was separately arraigned last night on a charge of petit larceny. Judge Battisti ordered the defendant to return to court on July 24. If convicted, Poaquiza faces up to 364 days in jail.

Defendant Kevin Pullatasi, 20, of Brooklyn, New York remains in the hospital for treatment for a gunshot wound and criminal charges against him are pending.

According to the charges and statements made in court:

- At approximately 7:40 p.m. on May 20 inside the Franja Wine and Liquors at 785 Wyckoff Avenue, Luis Valerio, the owner’s brother and store employee, observed Pullatasi take a bottle of Ciroc vodka from the shelf and conceal it under his jacket.
- Luis Valerio then confronted Pullatasi.
- At that point, store owner Francisco Valerio observed Poaquiza take a brown liquor bottle from a store shelf and place it inside his jacket.
- Luis and Francisco Valerio then had Poaquiza and Pullatasi return the bottles of liquor while inside the store.
- Poaquiza and Pullatasi indicated that they wanted to purchase the alcohol.
- The Valerios asked the two men to leave and a verbal argument started. They then demanded that the men leave and pushed them out of the store.
- The Valerios remained in the doorway of the liquor store and Poaquiza and Pullatasi went outside the store and were on the sidewalk.
- Once outside the store, Poaquiza and Pullatasi engaged in a heated verbal argument with the Valerios.
- On the sidewalk, Poaquiza and Pullatasi turned and walked away from the owner and the employee.

- The employee continued to verbally engage Pullatasi and then Pullatasi ran back toward the doorway of the liquor store where the employee and owner were still standing.
- When Pullatasi got to the doorframe, one of the two men from store kicked Pullatasi.
- At that point Pullatasi kicked both men, punched them and tried to slam the door on their hands.
- Francisco Valerio – who has a concealed carry permit – took out his firearm, which had been concealed in his rear waistband.
- Francisco Valerio shot Pullatasi when attempting to strike Pullatasi with his gun.
- Pullatasi was shot once in the abdomen and was transported to a local hospital where he is being treated for internal bleeding as the result of the gunshot wound.
- Responding officers recovered a 9 mm semi-automatic pistol from Francisco Valerio.
- Francisco Valerio and Poaquiza were taken into custody.

The investigation was conducted by Detective Paul Palminteri of the New York City Police Department's 104<sup>th</sup> Precinct.

Assistant District Attorney Hugh McCann of the District Attorney's Career Criminal Major Crimes Bureau is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Michael Whitney, Bureau Chief, and Roni C. Piplani, Deputy Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Shawn Clark.

*Criminal complaints and indictments are accusations. A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.*

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