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QUEENS GRAND JURY INDICTS MAN FOR HATE CRIME ATTACK ON MUSLIM WOMAN

*Defendant Allegedly Harassed, Then Struck Victim With Metal Pipe;
Faces Up to 15 Years in Prison if Convicted*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced today that Joval Cedeno, 41, has been indicted by a Queens County grand jury and arraigned in Supreme Court on assault as a hate crime and other charges for allegedly pursuing and then attacking a Muslim woman inside the N train near the Queensboro Plaza train station on February 18, 2022.

District Attorney Katz said, "As alleged, the defendant was motivated by his own hatred when he attacked the victim, who was wearing a Hijab at the time, based on her physical appearance and perceived ethnicity. This shameful behavior will not be tolerated in Queens County and I remain committed to holding accountable those who try to undermine the feeling of safety for our vibrant and diverse communities. The defendant has been indicted and faces justice in our courts."

Cedeno, of Winthrop Street in Brooklyn, was arraigned yesterday before Queens Supreme Court Justice Toni Cimino on a five-count indictment. The defendant is charged with assault in the second and third degrees as a hate crime, assault in the second and third degrees and aggravated harassment in the second degree. Justice Cimino ordered the defendant to return to Court on November 2, 2022. Cedeno faces up to 15 years in prison if convicted.

According to the charges, on February 18th, at approximately 8:00 a.m., the defendant approached the victim soon after she boarded the "N" train at the Queensboro Plaza subway station and engaged her in a verbal dispute. At the time, the victim was wearing a Hijab, which is a traditional Muslim garment, in addition to loose clothing covering her arms and legs, pursuant to her Muslim religious practice.

DA Katz said during the verbal dispute, the defendant allegedly hurled expletives at the victim and stated in sum and substance: "Why aren't you wearing a sundress?" He then, according to the charges, hit the victim on the back of her neck and on her back multiple times.

The victim was transported to a local hospital for treatment.

In addition, according to the criminal complaint, at approximately 9:40 a.m. that same day, Cedeno approached a second victim while on the 5 train near the Atlantic Avenue-Barclays Center train station in Brooklyn. During that incident, the defendant allegedly slapped the victim on the face repeatedly while stating in sum and substance: "Go back to Germany, cracker."

Following an investigation led by Detective Desmond Brown of the New York City Police Department's Hate Crime Task Force, Cedenó was apprehended in his home in Brooklyn on September 14, 2022.

Assistant District Attorney Gabriel Mendoza, Assistant Deputy Bureau Chief of the District Attorney's Hate Crimes, is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Michael Brovner, Bureau Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for the Supreme Court Trial Division Pishoy B. Yacoub.

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

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