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PRESS RELEASE

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D.A. DONOVAN: FOLLOWING DNA “HIT”, CONVICTED FELON ARRAIGNED ON RAPE CHARGES FOR '06 BOARDWALK ATTACK

******Jason Gonzalez, 27, Arraigned on Charges of 1st Degree Rape and 2nd Degree Assault , Linked to Crime
by DNA Collected Following 2000 Conviction******

STATEN ISLAND, NY – Richmond County District Attorney Daniel M. Donovan, Jr. today announced that Jason Gonzalez, (DOB: 3/23/1980) formerly of Robin Road, Staten Island, has been arraigned on an indictment alleging that he forcibly raped a 62 year old woman under the boardwalk at South Beach on July 17, 2006. The defendant was linked to the crime by DNA evidence recovered from the victim following the assault and matched to the defendant by a DNA sample collected in 2000 and maintained in a state database. The defendant is currently serving a sentence of 2 to 4 years in the Franklin Correctional Facility for an earlier felony charge of Grand Larceny in the 3rd Degree, from which he was returned for today's arraignment.

“This is yet another remarkable example of DNA collection from criminals leading to another sexual predator facing justice,” stated District Attorney Donovan. “This case, and others across our state, should serve as another incentive for our legislature and Governor Spitzer to enact meaningful enhancements to the DNA database, such as collecting DNA samples at the time of arrest, just like fingerprints.”

The indictment alleges that the defendant approached the woman, who was homeless, as she was sleeping on a bench on the boardwalk, he is alleged to have engaged her in conversation and then grabbed her from behind, choking her and threw her over a railing on the boardwalk onto the sand below. The defendant is then alleged to have dragged the victim under the boardwalk where he raped her. The victim sustained a broken pelvis and femur in the attack.

At arraignment in State Supreme Court, Justice Leonard P. Rienzi ordered the defendant remanded until his December 12, 2007 court date. The top count of the indictment, Rape in the First Degree, a Class B felony, the carries a maximum sentence of up to 25 years in prison.

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The case against Jason Gonzalez is being prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Wanda DeOliveira, Deputy Chief of the Sex Crimes/Special Victims Bureau, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Yolanda L. Rudich, Bureau Chief. The defendant is represented by Gregory C. Clarke, Esq.

The public is reminded that the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

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