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PRESS RELEASE

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Staten Island Man Sentenced to 22 years for Weapon and Assault Charges

*** Clinton James illegally possessed a loaded gun when he assaulted a Police Officer with his car ***

STATEN ISLAND, NY – Richmond County District Attorney Michael E. McMahon today announced that CLINTON JAMES has been sentenced to 22 years in prison after previously being found guilty of one count of Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the Second Degree, two counts of Assault in the Second Degree and one count of Reckless Endangerment in the Second Degree.

JAMES, 35, was convicted of four indictment counts following a seven-week jury trial in Richmond County State Supreme Court before Acting Staten Island Supreme Court Justice Wayne Ozzi. The defendant was sentenced to 15 years in prison on Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the Second Degree (the maximum as a predicate with a prior violent conviction). Additionally, Judge Ozzi sentenced defendant to 7 years in prison on both Assault in the Second Degree convictions (the maximum) and 1 year in jail on Reckless Endangerment in the Second Degree (the maximum on an A misdemeanor). The 1 year-term will run concurrent to the 7-year term. The judge imposed that the 15-year sentence run consecutive to the 7-year sentence, totaling 22 years, followed by 5 years' post release supervision.

(On a separate drug-related indictment, JAMES was sentenced to 3 ½ years prison to run concurrent to the 22-year sentence. That sentence also includes 5 years' post release supervision.)

“Clinton James showed absolute disregard for the safety of both the police and pedestrians when he used his car as a weapon in a failed attempt to escape capture by members of the NYPD Gang Squad,” said District Attorney McMahon. “Although he tried to ditch his gun, detectives were able to recover the firearm – successfully ridding the streets of Staten Island of one more illegal weapon. Criminal actions like these will not be tolerated in our borough, and individuals who commit such crimes will be vigorously prosecuted. I want to thank ADAs Mark Palladino and Michele Molfetta for their efforts in prosecuting these cases, and I also want to thank the brave detectives of the NYPD Gang Squad for apprehending Clinton James before he hurt a civilian or had a chance to use his gun.”

On March 9, 2013, Staten Island Gang Squad intercepted phone calls revealing that CLINTON JAMES wanted to buy a gun from Damon Scott Brannon. (Brannon has previously been convicted and sentenced to 10 years in prison for his role in the crime.) They agreed to meet on Laguardia Avenue by the Todt Hill Houses, a public housing development. During the rendezvous, detectives observed JAMES exit from Brannon's car and tuck a firearm in his waistband before entering his Toyota Camry.

Detectives attempted to pull JAMES over at the stoplight on Schmidts Lane at Slosson Avenue but JAMES jumped the curb and drove at speeds exceeding 80 MPH as he zoomed through stop signs and stoplights to avoid capture. Police attempted to arrest JAMES when he got stuck in traffic at the stoplight on Manor Road at North Gannon Avenue. Instead, JAMES rammed his Camry into other civilian automobiles, pinning Det. Maira between two vehicles before dragging him with his car. Detective Maira's partner, Det. John Fahim, then approached the Camry and saw JAMES with the gun in his hand pointed in the direction of Det. Maira. Det. Fahim yelled "Gun" and fired three shots, hitting JAMES in the abdomen.

The wounded defendant drove away, only to crash into more cars, hit a utility pole on North Gannon Avenue at Gansevoort Boulevard and flip his car over. He then crawled out of the damaged Camry and ran down Quinlan Avenue, where police finally arrested him. JAMES told police he threw the gun out the window, but officers recovered the loaded .44-caliber revolver from the car. Det. Maira underwent shoulder surgery for his injuries and was forced to retire from the NYPD.

The case was prosecuted by ADA Mark Palladino and ADA Michele Molfetta.