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QUEENS MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO ATTEMPTED MURDER
FOR SHOOTING FORMER SUNY BUFFALO FOOTBALL PLAYER
*Defendant Also Pleads Guilty to Burglary and Other Crimes for Earlier Incidents;
Faces 18 Years in Prison at Sentencing*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced today that Jeffrey Thurston, 28, has pleaded guilty to attempted murder, criminal possession of a weapon and other crimes for shooting a former student athlete outside a deli on Springfield Boulevard in July 2020. The defendant also pleaded guilty to burglary charges for a March 2020 incident involving an estranged girlfriend and her son. Additionally, the defendant admitted to attempted assault charges for an unrelated incident, also in July 2020.

District Attorney Katz said, “The defendant has admitted guilt in a number of criminal incidents, each one more alarming than the next. From firing a gun at a vehicle, to breaking into the home of his estranged ex-girlfriend, to shooting a young man following an incidental brush of shoulders, this defendant has displayed a complete disregard for public safety time and time again. He has now been held accountable and will spend a lengthy time in prison for his actions.”

Thurston, of 220th Street in Laurelton, Queens, pleaded guilty today to attempted murder in the second degree, assault in the first degree, four-counts of criminal possession of a weapon in the second degree, burglary in the first and second degree, three counts of criminal possession of a weapon in the third degree, three counts of attempted assault in the first degree and endangering the welfare of a child before Queens Supreme Court Justice Ira Margulis. Justice Margulis indicated that he will sentence the defendant to a determinate term of 18 years in prison, to be followed by five years’ post release supervision. Thurston’s sentencing is scheduled for June 13, 2022.

According to the charges, on July 27, 2020, at around 4:30 p.m., 20-year-old Malachi Capers accidentally bumped into the defendant while inside a deli on the corner of Springfield Boulevard and 136th Avenue. The defendant then punched Mr. Capers. The victim, who was a defensive end for the SUNY Buffalo football team, chased the defendant out of the store and tackled him onto the sidewalk.

Continuing said DA Katz, video surveillance captured the fight with both men wrestling on the ground. After the defendant regains his footing, he begins to walk away from Mr. Capers then turns and faces the victim, removes a firearm and fires a single shot into Mr. Capers’ abdomen.

The defendant fled the scene but was apprehended two days later by the Regional Fugitive Task Force of the New York City Police Department.

In addition, said DA Katz, in a separate incident, Thurston also pleaded guilty to burglary, criminal possession of a weapon and endangering the welfare of a child charges for breaking into his estranged girlfriend’s home on March 13, 2020. At that time, the defendant displayed a knife and choked the woman’s six-year-old son. Additionally, the defendant pleaded guilty to attempted assault for firing a gun at a vehicle where people were seated. This shooting, that did not injury anyone, occurred on the July 8, 2020.

Assistant District Attorney Gregory Lasak, of the District Attorney’s Career Criminals Major Crimes Bureau, prosecuted the case with the assistance of Assistant District Attorney Joshua Kim, of the District Attorneys Criminal Court Bureau, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Shawn Clark, Bureau Chief, and Michael Whitney, Deputy Bureau Chief and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Daniel Saunders.

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