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QUEENS MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO ROBBERY SPREE
FOR SERIES OF CAR-JACKINGS, BOGUS TEST DRIVES AND
HOLD-UPS AT GUNPOINT

*Defendant Used Facebook to Steal Luxury Cars;
Captured Following High-Speed Chase;
Faces Nine Years in Prison at Sentencing*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced today that Rayon Gounga, 22, has pleaded guilty to two counts of robbery and will go to prison after going on a crime spree between September 2019 and January 2020. The defendant committed car-jackings, arranged test drives of cars using social media then took off with the vehicles, and held up two food delivery workers at gunpoint. The finale was a high-speed chase that included the hijacking of a van carrying nearly a dozen passengers who were on their way from JFK Airport to a nearby hotel.

District Attorney Katz said, “This defendant went on a car-stealing spree resembling a real-life, and really dangerous, version of the video game Grand Theft Auto. He also victimized two delivery workers by taking their cash at gunpoint. When police spotted the defendant sleeping in a vehicle he had stolen, he took them on a wild chase that endangered the police and public. This guilty plea brings an end to his reckless criminal behavior.”

Gounga, of 111th Avenue in South Ozone Park, pleaded guilty Wednesday to robbery in the first and second degree before Queens Supreme Court Justice Michelle Johnson. The defendant will be sentenced on September 27, 2021. Justice Johnson indicated she will order Gounga to prison for nine years.

According to the charges, on September 28, 2019, the defendant used Facebook to set up a meeting with the seller of an Audi sedan. Instead of taking a test drive, the defendant drove off and never returned. He repeated this scheme on October 18, 2019 with another person selling a BMW on Facebook and yet again on October 22, 2019 – driving away with a second BMW.

In December 2019, Gounga committed two separate gunpoint robberies of Chinese food deliverymen. In both instances, he got away with the victims’ wallets.

According to the Court files, the defendant car-jacked a driver at gunpoint and took the motorist’s Chevy Suburban on December 29, 2019. About two weeks later, on January 10, 2020, police found the defendant sleeping in the automobile. In an effort to evade capture, the defendant led police on a high-speed chase through parts of Southeast Queens. After crashing the vehicle on the Nassau Expressway, Gounga jumped out and fled on

foot. He jumped over a fence and accessed the cargo area at Kennedy Airport. Moments later, he car-jacked a van carrying nearly a dozen passengers who were on their way from the airport to a nearby hotel.

The chase continued in yet a third vehicle when the defendant hopped out of the stolen van at a gas station and car-jacked a Honda, which he crashed at 135th Street and 109th Avenue. The defendant ran away on foot but was found under a van parked in a nearby driveway.

Assistant District Attorney Eric Weinstein, of the Felony Trials Bureau II, prosecuted the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Mark Osnowitz, Bureau Chief, Rosemary Chao, Deputy Bureau Chief, Charissa Ilardi, Unit Chief, Michael Kavanagh, Section Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Felony Trials Pishoy Yacoub.

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