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GEORGIA MAN ARRESTED FOR RAPING FIVE VICTIMS IN SOUTHEAST QUEENS
IN THE 1990s

Extradited to Face Charges; Faces Up to 25 Years in Prison, if Convicted

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that Michael Benjamin was arraigned today on an indictment charging him with rape in the first degree, sodomy in the first degree, sexual assault in the first degree, burglary in the first degree and other crimes for allegedly raping five women from 1995 to 1997. The defendant was originally indicted on the charges in 2005 as an unidentified John Doe based upon evidence collected.

In May 2024, DNA from a discarded cup used by the defendant and retrieved inside the Rockdale County Sheriff's office in Georgia was submitted and matched the DNA retrieved from the victims at the time of the crimes.

District Attorney Katz said: "After several decades, this defendant will finally face charges of violently raping at least five women, some at gunpoint, between the years 1995 and 1997 in southeast Queens. Although decades have passed, these cold cases were not forgotten. Thanks to the bravery of the victims, vital DNA evidence was gathered, which helped law enforcement identify the person responsible. It is never too late for justice, and I thank my prosecutors and the detectives for their work on this case."

Benjamin, 57, of Conyers, Georgia, was arraigned today on a 17-count indictment charging him with five counts of rape in the first degree, sodomy in the first degree, four counts of sexual abuse in the first degree, three counts of burglary in the first degree, two counts of burglary in the second degree and two counts of robbery in the first degree.

Supreme Court Justice Gia Morris remanded the defendant and ordered him to return to court December 5. If convicted of the top charges, Benjamin faces up to 25 years in prison.

DA Katz said that, according to the indictment and investigation, the defendant was responsible for numerous violent rapes, burglaries and robberies during the late 1990s in the neighborhoods of Jamaica, St. Albans, Laurelton and Brookville.

The four incidents charged in this indictment involve five victims and the following allegations:

On July 24, 1995, Benjamin broke into the home of victim #1 through a window while she slept. He pulled a sheet over her head, tied the victim up, raped her and fled with her cash and jewelry.

On August 24, 1996, Benjamin broke into the home of victim #2 while she slept. He placed a jacket over her head and raped her.

On September 16, 1996, Benjamin approached victim #3 as she walked to her front door. He forced the woman inside her house at gunpoint and threatened to kill her husband and child -- who were home -- if she did not comply with his demands. Benjamin proceeded to rape the victim before fleeing with cash.

On February 8, 1997, Benjamin broke into the home of victims #4 and #5 holding a gun. He proceeded to rape the victims and fled the scene with cash and jewelry.

Benjamin was apprehended on September 22 by local law enforcement members in Georgia. On October 15, he was extradited to New York.

The investigation was conducted by Detective Matthew Monahan of the NYPD Cold Case Squad.

Assistant District Attorney Jennifer Camillo of the District Attorney's Special Victims Bureau is prosecuting the case, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Eric C. Rosenbaum, Bureau Chief, Brian C. Hughes, Deputy Bureau Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Special Prosecutions Joyce Smith.

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

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