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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, February 19, 2015

**Brooklyn Man Convicted Of Raping 13-Year-Old Girl
In Basement Laundry Room in Gravesend**
Defendant Faces Up To Life in Prison at Sentencing

Brooklyn District Attorney Ken Thompson today announced that a 42-year-old Brooklyn man has been convicted of first-degree rape and other charges for the 2013 attack of a 13-year-old girl in the basement laundry room of her Gravesend apartment building after threatening her with scissors.

District Attorney Thompson said, "This defendant's brutal attack on an innocent and defenseless child is unforgivable. He has proven himself unfit to live in a civilized society and now must be locked up as punishment for his deplorable crimes and to protect others."

The District Attorney said that the defendant, Bennett Castello, 42, of East 29th Street, in Midwood, Brooklyn, was convicted yesterday of two counts of predatory sexual assault, two counts of first-degree rape, one count of first-degree sexual abuse and one count of first-degree burglary as a sexually motivated felony, following a jury trial before Brooklyn Supreme Court Justice Danny Chun. Justice Chun set sentencing for March 18, 2015, at which time the defendant faces 25 years to life in prison on the top count.

The District Attorney said that, according to trial testimony, on April 29, 2013, at approximately 3:30 p.m., in the vicinity of West 2nd Street in Gravesend, Brooklyn, the victim, a 13-year-old girl, entered her apartment building and was followed inside by the defendant. He then followed her into the elevator, pressed the button for the basement and forced her out while threatening her with scissors.

The District Attorney said that, according to trial testimony, the defendant then forced the girl into the laundry room where he groped and raped her, then threatened to kill her if she told anyone. After the defendant fled, the victim ran upstairs to her apartment, told her parents what happened and they called 911.

The case was prosecuted by Senior Assistant District Attorney Deborah Cohen of the District Attorney's Sex Crimes Bureau, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Coleen Balbert, Bureau Chief.

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