



OFFICE OF THE ULSTER COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
Emmanuel C. Nneji, District Attorney

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**WOODSTOCK MAN SENTENCED IN ULSTER COUNTY
COURT FOR HATE CRIME**

On Friday, March 1, 2024, Shayne Wilber, age 31, of Woodstock, New York, was sentenced before the Honorable Bryan Rounds in Ulster County Court to two to four years in state prison for the felony convictions of Menacing in the Second Degree and Assault in the Third Degree, both as hate crimes, for his attack on a gay man in Woodstock. The Menacing and Assault charges would otherwise be misdemeanors; however, the grand jury indictments of those two offenses as hate crimes elevates them to the felony level.

The defendant, while at a bar in April 2023, hurled homophobic slurs at the victim upon learning he was gay. Defendant then threw an object at the victim's face causing physical injury to the victim's lip. Defendant proceeded to jump over the bar area and attack the victim, pulling out a box cutter in the process.

In pleading guilty, defendant admitted that the acts were intentionally committed because of his perception regarding the victim's sexual orientation. Defendant had been under the supervision of the Ulster County Probation Department at the time the hate crimes were committed.

Defendant has remained in the Ulster County Jail since the incident. As a condition of the sentence, the defendant submitted a letter of apology to the victim and the community for his actions. In addition to the prison sentence, the District Attorney required the letter of apology as a means for the defendant to confront his own behavior.

"The victim in this case had moved to our community here in the Hudson Valley because he believed he would be accepted for who he is based on our values," said **Deputy Chief Assistant District Attorney Paul Derohannesian**. "It is deeply concerning that he was targeted in this insidious way in public, jeopardizing other patrons' safety and exposing them to his hateful beliefs. Our office will continue to investigate and prosecute hate crimes to the fullest extent of the law."



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District Attorney Emmanuel Nneji said that “Ulster County is enriched by its diversity in its people and ideas, religious, social and political orientations and ideologies. It is the inalienable right of everyone to be safe in their person and property, and to expect that anywhere in this County, including the streets and sidewalks, bars, churches, and schools. Anyone who has any ideas of committing a hate crime in this County should be on notice that they will be prosecuted to the fullest extent allowed by law. The humanity and dignity of everyone in this community deserves no less. Crimes of hate degrade the character of a community and its people; they undermine the promise of an environment where people can thrive and enjoy their freedoms and liberties without fear of being targeted for a crime. As District Attorney, I unequivocally state that there’s no room in my heart and in my Office for sympathy for anyone who commits such crimes.”

The case was prosecuted by Deputy Chief ADA Paul Derohannesian. The defendant was represented by attorney Saman Soltankhah of Kingston.

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Contact the New York State Division of Human Rights hotline at 844-NO-2-HATE or via online form available at <https://forms.ny.gov/s3/DHR-Bias-Incident-Form> to report hate and bias incidents.