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**ALLEGED UNLICENSED DRIVER CHARGED WITH LEAVING THE SCENE
OF FAR ROCKAWAY CRASH THAT SERIOUSLY INJURED WOMAN**

Defendant Faces Up to Four Years in Prison If Convicted

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown today announced that a 23-year-old Far Rockaway man has been charged with leaving the scene and driving with a suspended license after hitting a young woman crossing the street with family members over the weekend.

District Attorney Brown said, "The defendant is accused of striking a pedestrian and driving away immediately afterwards without exchanging information or checking to see if the victim needed medical assistance, thus leaving the critically injured victim and her family to fend for themselves. The defendant, who is also charged with driving without a valid license, now faces serious charges."

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Denzel Watson, 23, of Beach 19th Street in Far Rockaway. Watson was arraigned today before Queens Criminal Court Judge Ernest Hart on a 2-count criminal complaint charging him with leaving the scene without reporting and second-degree aggravated unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle. Watson, who faces up to four years in prison if convicted, was ordered held on \$250,000 bond/\$100,000 cash bail and to return to court on December 29, 2015.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the charges, Watson was driving a white 2013 Ford Mustang with black racing stripes eastbound on Seagirt Boulevard at approximately 12:35 p.m. on Sunday, December 13, 2015, when, at the intersection of Seagirt Boulevard and Beach 19th Street, he collided with a 21-year-old female pedestrian walking with members of her family. When police arrived at the scene they allegedly found the victim lying unconscious on the ground and what appeared to be parts of a side view mirror in the roadway. The victim was transported to a local Queens hospital to be treated for injuries allegedly sustained in the collision and which included a fractured hip and femur, facial fractures and head injuries. The victim remains in critical condition.

It is additionally alleged that less than thirty minutes later, the white Ford Mustang was stopped by police near the Queens/Nassau border. The Mustang allegedly appeared to have sustained front end damage and was missing parts of the passenger side view mirror. Watson allegedly could not produce a valid driver's license.

Assistant District Attorney Kristin J. Papadopoulos, of the District Attorney's Homicide Investigations Bureau, is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Peter T. Reese, Bureau Chief, and Peter J. McCormack III and Richard B. Schaeffer, Deputy Bureau Chiefs, and John W. Kosinski, Vehicular Homicide Unit Chief, and the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Charles A. Testagrossa and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Daniel A. Saunders.

It should be noted that a criminal complaint is merely an accusation and that a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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Note to Editors: Press release e-version posted at www.queensda.org.