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NEW JERSEY MOTORIST CHARGED WITH MANSLAUGHTER
IN WEEKEND MULTI-VEHICLE CRASH ON GRAND CENTRAL PARKWAY
*Two Passengers – a Teenager and 34-Year-Old Man – Dead In Incident, Several Others Injured;
Defendant Faces Up To 15 Years In Prison If Convicted*

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown today announced that a 33-year-old Roselle, New Jersey, man has been charged with manslaughter and other related charges for causing the death of a 16-year-old boy and a 34-year-old man, who were passengers in his vehicle. Several other people were seriously injured in the four-vehicle crash that occurred early yesterday morning on the Grand Central Parkway near 188th Street.

District Attorney Brown said, “A wedding celebration ended in a horrific tragedy when one of the guests – the defendant – allegedly got behind the wheel of his vehicle, drove recklessly and at a high rate of speed on one of Queens County’s major highways before losing control and crashing into several vehicles and through a guardrail, resulting in the death of two of his five passengers – a 34-year-old man and a sixteen-year-old boy, who was ejected from the vehicle – and causing serious injury to three others.”

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Andrew D. Shakespeare, 33, of Roselle, New Jersey. Shakespeare is presently awaiting arraignment in Queens Criminal Court on a criminal complaint charging him with two counts of second-degree manslaughter, three counts of second-degree assault, one count of second-degree reckless endangerment and one count of reckless driving. If convicted, Shakespeare faces up to 15 years in prison.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the charges, Shakespeare was driving a black 2014 BMW X5 at a high rate of speed in the right westbound lane of the Grand Central Parkway near 188th Street sometime after 6:00 a.m. on Sunday, July 16, 2017, when he veered into the acceleration/entrance lane to pass a white Nissan – which was in the right lane – before sideswiping the Nissan and losing control of his vehicle. It is alleged that Shakespeare then crashed into a 2016 Nissan Rogue and that both Shakespeare’s vehicle and the Nissan Rogue then struck and went through the guardrail separating the parkway’s westbound and eastbound lanes of traffic and landed in the parkway’s eastbound lanes, where the Nissan Rogue flipped over, landing on its roof, and came to rest facing northbound on the eastbound side of the parkway and Shakespeare’s BMW rolled over and came to rest on its tires on the parkway’s eastbound shoulder.

It is additionally alleged that at the time that the Nissan Rogue and BMW crashed through the center guardrail, a silver Mercedes Benz SUV was traveling eastbound on the parkway and had to take evasive action, which resulted in the Mercedes Benz flipping over and coming to rest on its side facing southbound on the right shoulder of the parkway’s eastbound lanes.

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According to the complaint, there were five people other than Shakespeare in his vehicle at the time of the incident and that, according to an account of one of the passengers, they were all coming back from a wedding that had started at 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, July 15, 2017, that Shakespeare drank alcohol earlier that evening, and that Shakespeare was changing lanes and lost control of the vehicle at the time of the collision. It is additionally alleged that Shakespeare stated to a responding police officer that after the wedding they went to a friend's house, where he had one beer at approximately 1:30 a.m. before attempting to drive to Brooklyn.

It is further alleged, according to the complaint, that police responding to the multi-vehicle crash site observed Shakespeare near his vehicle and that he had bloodshot watery eyes. There also allegedly was the smell of alcohol coming from Shakespeare's vehicle and numerous alcoholic beverage containers outside of the vehicle.

Akeam Grant, 16, who had been a passenger in Shakespeare's vehicle was observed lying in the roadway and pronounced dead at the scene. Layon Campbell, 34, was extracted from Shakespeare's vehicle and transported to a local Queens hospital where he was pronounced dead. A third passenger, also a sixteen-year-old male, was transported to the hospital for treatment of a fractured pelvis and a fractured right arm. A 60-year-old male passenger sitting in the front seat of the Nissan Rogue was hospitalized for multiple leg fractures of his right leg and a 63-year-old male passenger sitting in the rear seat of the Rogue was hospitalized for a fractured rib and injuries to his neck and back.

According to the complaint, police investigating the collision observed the parkway's center median and guardrail to have a 30-foot section missing from it and a 240-foot skid mark originating from the right lane of the westbound side of the Grand Central Parkway to the left lane of the westbound lane of the Grand Central Parkway that was made by Shakespeare's vehicle. Based on the skid mark, police allegedly estimate that Shakespeare's vehicle was traveling at a minimum of 76 miles per hour in the posted 50 miles per hour speed zone.

Finally, it is alleged that Shakespeare refused to submit to a portable breathalyzer test and a blood test at the hospital to which he had been transported and that a court-authorized warrant was signed requiring hospital staff to draw Shakespeare's blood, the results of which are still pending.

The investigation was conducted by the New York City Police Department's Collision Investigation Squad and its Highway Unit Number Three.

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

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.