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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 4, 2018

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QUEENS MAN ARRAIGNED ON MURDER CHARGES
IN DEATH OF THREE-YEAR-OLD GIRL

Defendant Faces Up To 25 Years to Life in Prison If Convicted

Defendant Mark Jenkins, 32, of the Rockaway Park section of Queens was arraigned this afternoon before Queens Criminal Court Judge Jeffrey Gershuny on a complaint charging him with second-degree depraved murder and first-degree depraved assault. If convicted, Jenkins faces up to 25 years to life in prison.

District Attorney Brown said, "A child's death is always a brutal blow, but the manner in which this little girl died is beyond heartbreaking. The defendant - a father-figure to the tot - was entrusted to care for her and keep her safe from harm. Instead, the defendant stands accused of applying such force to her tiny body that she succumbed to the injury. If convicted of this heinous crime, the defendant could be incarcerated for the rest of his days."

District Attorney Brown said, according to the charges, Jenkins was the sole adult in the apartment with three-year-old Bella Edwards and her 3-month-old sibling for about eight hours on Monday. The little girl's mother returned to the home at approximately 5 p.m. and was told her daughter was sleeping. About an hour later, the mother tried to wake Bella and realized she was not responding and 911 was called.

Continuing, the District Attorney said, according to the complaint, the three-year-old child was rushed to a nearby hospital in full cardiac arrest and died soon after arrival. At the hospital, the treating physician noticed bruises on the girl's face and torso. Preliminary results of the autopsy showed little Bella died as a result of blunt force trauma to her abdomen. There was bruising throughout her body, the child's small bowel was torn and her small intestine lacerated. Other medical studies are still pending.

Jenkins was ordered held without bail and to return to court on May 11, 2018.

Jenkins is being represented by Debra Friedenber, of Queens Law Associates, 718 261-3047.

The investigation was conducted by detectives assigned to the New York City Police Department's 100th Precinct Detective Squad, the Queens South Homicide Squad and the Queens District Attorney's Child Fatality Unit.

Assistant District Attorney Leigh Bishop, Chief of District Attorney Brown's Child Fatality Unit, is prosecuting the case with the assistance of Assistant District Attorney Melissa A. Kelly, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Kenneth M. Appelbaum, Chief of the District Attorney's Special Victims Unit, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Daniel A. Saunders.

A copy of the criminal court complaint is attached with this release.

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

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Note to Editors: E-version of this press release is posted on www.queensda.org