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GRAND JURY INDICTS SECOND MAN FOR MURDER
IN STRAY-BULLET KILLING OF YOUNG MOTHER IN ASTORIA

*Two Additional Queens Men Also Indicted;
Defendant Faces Up to 25 Years-to-Life in Prison If Convicted*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced today that Benaiah Reid, 19, has been indicted by a grand jury and arraigned in Queens Supreme Court on murder charges and other crimes for the March 2021 shooting death of a 37-year-old mother of two children. The defendant was allegedly aiming to shoot a rival gang member.

District Attorney Katz said, “As alleged, an innocent woman was in the wrong place when reputed gang members started firing shots at each other. This defendant allegedly fled the jurisdiction but was captured in Florida and returned to face charges. Tragically, this senseless gun violence will forever impact the lives of the victim’s young children, who must now grow up without their mother. This is another example of why we need to get illegal guns off our streets and why we need to hold accountable those who use them.”

Reid, of 49th Street in Woodside, Queens, was arraigned at midday before Queens Supreme Court Justice Michael Aloise on a three-count indictment charging him with murder in the second degree and two-counts of criminal possession of a weapon in the second degree. Justice Aloise remanded the defendant and ordered his return to Court on May 20, 2021. If convicted, the defendant faces up to 25 years-to-life in prison.

DA Katz said the victim, Guedelia Vallinas, was walking near the intersection of 48th Street and Broadway on March 12, 2021, around 8:14 p.m. when she was struck by a single bullet.

The defendant along with the co-defendant had allegedly fired multiple shots at a rival gang member, who moments before the fatal shot struck Ms. Vallinas, allegedly fired at least one shot near the basketball court in the Woodside Houses.

Mrs. Vallinas was rushed to a nearby hospital where she succumbed to the injuries later that night.

Defendant Reid was returned to New York on May 5, 2021 after being apprehended in Polk County, Florida.

Supervising Assistant District Attorney Gabriel Mendoza, with assistance from Assistant District Attorneys Joanna Matuza and Kevin Timpone of the District Attorney’s Violent Criminal Enterprise Bureau, are prosecuting the case, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Jonathan Sennett, Bureau Chief, Michelle E. Goldstein, Senior Deputy Bureau Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Gerard Brave.

Criminal complaints and indictments are accusations. A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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