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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**MAN INDICTED BY QUEENS COUNTY GRAND JURY IN SHOOTING DEATH  
OF WOMAN STRUCK BY STRAY BULLET THROUGH BEDROOM WINDOW**

*Victim's Teen Son Found Mother Dying in Pool of Blood;  
Defendant Faces Up to 25 Years-to-Life in Prison if Convicted*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced today that Issam Elabbar, 31, has been indicted by a Queens County grand jury and arraigned on murder, manslaughter and other charges for allegedly firing a single shot in the early hours of September 30, 2020. The bullet ripped through a 3<sup>rd</sup> floor apartment window striking a mother of three, killing her.

District Attorney Katz said, "Inside your home, you expect to be safe. You expect your loved ones to be safe from the violence and senseless mayhem that of late has plagued our neighborhood streets. But, last month an innocent woman became the victim of a senseless act of gun violence while in her own home. Sadly, the victim's oldest son discovered his mother gasping for air and bleeding to death. This defendant, who evaded capture for several days, has been indicted and will answer for his alleged crimes."

Elabbar, of 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue in Corona, was arraigned before Queens Supreme Court Justice Michael Aloise on a seven-count indictment charging him with murder in the second degree, manslaughter in the second degree, criminal possession of a weapon in the second degree, attempted petit larceny, criminal possession of a controlled substance in the third degree and unlawful possession of pistol ammunition. Justice Aloise set the defendant's return date for January 12, 2021. If convicted, the defendant faces up to 25 years-to-life in prison.

District Attorney Katz said, shortly before 1 a.m. on September 30th, the defendant and another man were on the sidewalk on 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue near 92<sup>nd</sup> Street allegedly attempting to steal a bicycle secured to a fixed object on the sidewalk. The victim, Bertha Arriaga, was near her bedroom window of the family's apartment at the precise moment the defendant allegedly swung his right arm around the front of his body and fired over his left shoulder behind him.

According to the charges, the wayward bullet ripped through the glass window and struck the 43-year-old mother and wife in the neck. She fell to the floor with blood pouring from the gunshot wound and struggled to breathe. The victim's 14-year-old son heard gurgling noises. He followed the sound and found his mother. Despite the woman's husband attempting CPR on Mrs. Arriaga, she died from the injury.

The investigation was conducted by Detective Douglas Deotto, of the New York City Police Department's 115<sup>th</sup> Precinct Detective Squad, under the supervision of Sergeant Brian McManus and Lieutenant Filastin Srou and Detective Joseph Bey, of the NYPD's Queens North Homicide Squad, under the supervision of Sergeant Andre Rosa and Lieutenant Timothy Thomson.

Senior Assistant District Attorney Christine McCoy, of the District Attorney's Homicide Bureau, is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Brad A. Leventhal, Bureau Chief, Peter J. McCormack III, Senior Deputy Bureau Chief, John W. Kosinski and Kenneth A. Appelbaum, Deputy Bureau Chiefs and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Daniel A. Saunders.

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

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