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CONNECTICUT RESIDENT INDICTED ON VEHICULAR MANSLAUGHTER CHARGES
IN DEATH OF DIRT BIKE RIDER KILLED ON THE LONG ISLAND EXPRESSWAY

*Defendant's Blood Ethanol Level Was Allegedly Twice the Legal Limit;
Faces Up to 25 Years in Prison if Convicted*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced today that Jorge Serrano, 30, has been indicted by a Queens County grand jury and arraigned in Supreme Court on vehicular manslaughter and driving while intoxicated charges. The defendant allegedly struck and killed a man riding a dirt bike on the Long Island Expressway in September 2021.

District Attorney Katz said, "This is a senseless tragedy on a Queens highway caused by a motorist who allegedly chose to ignore the rules of the road, driving while drunk and without a valid license. Now a man is dead and his family left grieving a sudden and unnecessary loss. The defendant is now charged with very serious crimes."

Serrano, of Torrington, Connecticut, was arraigned yesterday before Acting Queens Supreme Court Justice Gene Lopez on a 13-count indictment charging him with aggravated vehicular homicide, two counts of vehicular manslaughter in the second degree, criminally negligent homicide, vehicular assault in the first degree, assault in the second degree, two counts of operating a vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, leaving the scene of an incident without reporting/death, reckless driving, two counts of aggravated unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle and driving by unlicensed operator. Justice Lopez set the defendant's return date for December 14, 2021. If convicted, Serrano faces up to 25 years in prison.

According to the charges, in the early morning hours of September 11, 2021, Serrano was driving westbound on the Long Island Expressway when he struck a moped and a dirt bike also headed westbound. After allegedly striking the dirt bike, the defendant's vehicle dragged the bike and its rider approximately 100 yards on the highway. Serrano then drove away from the scene of the accident.

Responding police officers found 19-year-old Edwin Puma unresponsive at the scene and bleeding from his mouth. He was immediately transported to a Queens hospital, where he was later pronounced deceased.

Additionally, police officers observed a second victim – a 23-year-old man - who was the operator of the moped. This victim was conscious at the scene. He was taken to a Queens hospital for treatment of a broken left leg.

DA Katz said after the collision, police officers observed the defendant's vehicle, partially parked on the curb and partially in the middle of the crosswalk at Maspeth Avenue and 61st Street, approximately two miles from the scene of the crash. As alleged, at the time of his arrest Serrano was observed to be in an intoxicated condition with bloodshot, watery eyes, slurred speech and a strong odor of alcohol on his breath. A breathalyzer was administered to the defendant more than two hours after the collision and showed the defendant's blood ethanol level was 0.16 which is two times the legal limit.

A search of Department of Motor Vehicles records showed the defendant allegedly was driving without a valid license.

The investigation was conducted by Detective James Conlon of the New York City Police Department's Collision Investigation Squad under the supervision of Sergeant Robert Denig and Lieutenant Jagdeep Singh.

Assistant District Attorney Amy Scotto, of the DA's Felony Trials Bureau II, is prosecuting the case, with the assistance of Assistant District Attorney Joshua Garland, of the Homicide Bureau, under the supervision of FTB II Assistant District Attorneys Mark Osnowitz, Bureau Chief, Rosemary Chao, Deputy Chief and Charissa Ilardi, Unit Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Supreme Court Trials Pishoy Yacoub.

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

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