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QUEENS MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO MANSLAUGHTER
IN SHOOTING DEATH OF THE MOTHER OF HIS INFANT CHILD IN 2017

*Victim Shot in the Eye on Her Front Lawn;
Defendant Faces 19 Years in Prison at Sentencing*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced today that Robert Rodriguez, 36, has pleaded guilty to manslaughter in the first degree for shooting and killing a 21-year-old woman in September 2017.

District Attorney Katz said, "In pleading guilty, the defendant has admitted to killing the mother of his infant son, a young woman who also had two other children, during an argument in front of her home. This tragedy is a grim reminder that violence is never the solution to a dispute."

Rodriguez, of 225th Street, in the Cambria Heights section of Queens, yesterday pleaded guilty to manslaughter in the first degree before Queens Supreme Court Justice Kenneth Holder. The defendant is scheduled to be sentenced on February 1, 2022. Justice Holder indicated he will order Rodriguez to prison for 19 years, to be followed by five years' post release supervision.

District Attorney Katz said, at approximately 2 a.m. on September 17, 2017, the victim Luz Cuza and the defendant were on the front yard of her home on 147th Street. The victim's brother saw the pair in the yard, noticed Rodriguez had a firearm and talked to the defendant about the weapon then went inside the house. Minutes later, there was a gunshot and the victim's brother ran back outside to find Ms. Cuza on the ground with a fatal gunshot wound to her eye. The defendant was walking away from the scene carrying a shoe box.

Continuing, the DA said, the victim's brother banged on neighbors' doors and yelled for someone to call 911. Police responded to the scene and then went to the Rodriguez's address, where they found a loaded semi-automatic pistol and 48 rounds of ammunition in a shoebox. Forensic analysis proved the firearm was the same used to kill Ms. Cuza.

Senior Assistant District Attorney Courtney Finnerty, of the District Attorney's Homicide Bureau, prosecuted the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Peter J. McCormack III and John Kosinski, Senior Deputy Bureau Chiefs, Karen Ross, Deputy Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Daniel A. Saunders.

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