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QUEENS GRAND JURY INDICTS DEFENDANT ON MURDER CHARGES
IN DEATH OF MAN SHOT THROUGH WALL DURING BOTCHED DRUG HEIST

Defendant Faces Up to 25 Years-to-Life in Prison if Convicted

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced today that Joseph Barahona, 19, has been indicted by a Queens County grand jury and arraigned in Supreme Court on murder, burglary and attempted robbery charges. The defendant – along with two others - allegedly tried to steal marijuana from an 18-year-old man by holding him at gunpoint in February 2022. The plan went awry and the 18-year-old was killed.

District Attorney Katz said, “As alleged, the defendant participated in a scheme to steal thousands of dollars’ worth of marijuana. The armed heist delved into chaos when a gun was fired and the victim, who was being held at gunpoint, was killed. Now a young man is being mourned by his family and this defendant faces very serious charges for his alleged actions.”

Barahona, of 35th Avenue in Jackson Heights, Queens, was arraigned today before Queens Supreme Court Justice Kenneth Holder on a six-count indictment charging him with murder in the second degree, burglary in the first degree and attempted robbery in the first degree. Justice Holder set the defendant’s return date for March 29, 2022. If convicted, Barahona faces up to 25 years-to-life in prison.

According to the charges, on February 10, 2022, just before 7 p.m., Barahona went to an apartment in East Elmhurst, Queens, in an alleged attempt to buy marijuana. The defendant was escorted inside by Gregory Campos. After settling on a price, the defendant left the apartment with a sample of the marijuana to allegedly show his friends who were outside. Campos escorted the defendant back outside and held the apartment building’s door open for Barahona to come back in to make the buy. Immediately, however, two masked men appeared at the building entrance with Barahona. Campos had a gun shoved into his back and was forced upstairs by the masked men and Barahona toward the apartment they had just come from moments earlier.

DA Katz said, at the apartment door someone inside saw the attempted robbery unfolding in the stairwell, quickly slammed the door shut and yelled “get the strap.” Seconds later, a pistol was fired from inside the apartment and through the wall adjacent to the stairwell where the 18-year-old Campos was being held at gunpoint. The bullet hit the teenager in the torso, causing his death.

The investigation was conducted by Detective Sean Meade of the New York City Police Department’s 115th Precinct and Detective Frank Galati of the New York City Police Department’s Queens Homicide Squad.

Senior Assistant District Attorney John Esposito, of the District Attorney’s Homicide Bureau, is prosecuting the case, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Peter McCormack III and John Kosinski, Senior Deputy Bureau Chiefs, and Karen Ross, Deputy Bureau Chief, 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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