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WOMAN CHARGED WITH MURDER IN SIDEWALK HIT AND RUN
Defendant Faces 25 Years-to-Life in Prison if Convicted

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced today that Kiani Phoenix, 26, has been charged with murder and other crimes for allegedly driving her car onto the sidewalk and fatally striking a 59-year-old man and another pedestrian outside a Far Rockaway deli convenience store on August 27. The defendant allegedly intended to strike a woman with whom she had a dispute and drove onto the Beach 20th Street sidewalk where the victim was sitting on his walker. The defendant then backed up, allegedly hit another pedestrian, and sped away from the scene of the incident.

District Attorney Katz said, “As alleged, this defendant is accused of killing an innocent man on the sidewalk and injuring another victim in an attempt to harm someone else with her vehicle following a heated argument. The alleged criminal actions of this defendant resulted in fatal consequences, and she will now face justice in our courts.”

Phoenix, of Beach Channel Drive in Far Rockaway, was arraigned last night before Queens Criminal Court Judge Jessica Earle-Gargan on a complaint charging her with murder in the second degree, attempted murder in the second degree, assault in the second degree, leaving the scene of an incident without reporting and criminal possession of a weapon in the fourth degree. Judge Earle-Gargan ordered the defendant to return to Court on September 21, 2022. If convicted, Phoenix faces 25 years-to-life in prison.

According to the charges, on Saturday, August 27, 2022, at approximately 7:00 a.m., the defendant encountered the first victim, a 27-year-old woman at a convenience store on Beach 20th Street near New Haven Avenue in Far Rockaway, Queens. The two women argued and became embroiled in a physical altercation outside the convenience store near a parked Honda Accord. Several onlookers watched the women including second victim Milton Storch, seated on his walker with his back against the deli wall. Several onlookers attempted to separate the women and they stopped striking one another.

Continuing, said DA Katz, video surveillance footage shows the fatal collision. The defendant entered the driver’s seat of the Honda Accord, moved the car in reverse then turned sharply to the right allegedly at and toward the first victim, accelerating forward onto the sidewalk. Several people, including the first victim, darted from the path of the car escaping inside the deli. The defendant drove forward striking Mr. Storch who was unable to rise from his walker. The car then stopped and accelerated in reverse hitting a 36-year-old pedestrian behind the car. The defendant then sped away from the scene of the incident.

Mr. Storch was taken to a local Queens hospital where he was pronounced deceased. A second man was taken to the hospital and treated for back and hip injuries.

The investigation was conducted by Detective Brendan Hannon of the NYPD's 101st Detective Squad of the New York Police Department.

Senior Assistant District Attorney John Esposito and Assistant District Attorney Christine Occhiogrosso of the District Attorney's Homicide Bureau are prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Peter McCormack III and John W. 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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