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### **DELI WORKERS CHARGED IN ASSAULT, STRANGULATION OF CUSTOMER**

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that Saber Abuhadra and Jorge Hernandez are charged with assault and strangulation after they allegedly came out from behind the counter at a Rockaway Park deli and attacked a customer who complained about his food and now is fighting for his life.

District Attorney Katz said: "This is yet another instance where a seemingly minor dispute escalated into serious physical violence. We will hold these defendants accountable."

Abuhadra, 34, and Jorge Hernandez, 23, of Cornaga Avenue in Far Rockaway, were arraigned today on charges of assault in the second degree, strangulation in the second degree and assault in the third degree. Queens Criminal Court Judge Maria Gonzalez ordered them to return to court June 16. If convicted, they each face up to seven years in prison.

According to the charges:

- On June 11, between 4:50 a.m. and 5:15 a.m., Jorge Hernandez, a worker at the Pickles and Pies Food Market and Deli at 202 Beach 116<sup>th</sup> Street in Rockaway Park, punched 31-year-old James Keena of Arverne and pushed him, causing him to hit his head on a counter. Hernandez then put his arm around Keena's neck and held him on the floor while Abuhadra punched and kicked him in the head and stomach.
- Hernandez continued holding his arm around Keena's neck and Abuhadra continued punching and kicking him for several minutes after he lost consciousness and until he began seizing and shaking.
- Keena was taken to the hospital in critical condition and placed on life support because he was unable to breathe on his own.

Assistant District Attorney Hugh McCann of the District Attorney's Felony Trials II Bureau is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Mark Osnowitz, Bureau Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Supreme Court Trials Pishoy B. Yacoub.

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

**Note to Editors:** Archived press releases are available at [www.queensda.org](http://www.queensda.org).

