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DRIVER INDICTED IN FATAL HIGHWAY CRASH

Charged With Speeding 123 mph Before Losing Control on Cross Island Parkway

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that Makeda McDonald was arraigned today on an indictment charging her with criminally negligent homicide in connection with a high-speed collision on the Cross Island Parkway that killed her cousin and left her aunt gravely injured.

DA Katz said: “Disregarding the rules of the road often has devastating consequences. A life has been cut short and a family left heartbroken because the defendant, as alleged, drove at nearly two-and-half times the speed limit. My office will continue to prioritize cases of vehicular crimes to ensure that dangerous drivers are held accountable.”

McDonald, 28, of Philadelphia, was arraigned yesterday in Queens Supreme Court on a four-count indictment charging her with criminally negligent homicide, reckless driving, driving in excess of the maximum speed limit and operating a vehicle at unreasonable speed.

McDonald faces up to four years in prison if convicted. Justice Michael Hartofilis ordered McDonald to return to court on March 20.

According to the charges:

- On April 8, 2022, at approximately 3:15 a.m., McDonald was driving a black 2017 Mercedes GLA 350 southbound on the Cross Island Parkway during a rainstorm.
- The roadway’s posted speed limit was 50 mph. McDonald was driving at approximately 123 mph as she approached a split in the highway with exit ramps for the eastbound Southern State Parkway and the westbound Belt Parkway. She failed to maintain her lane, entered a grass median separating the exit ramps and struck a guardrail, launching the vehicle airborne.
- The car rolled over several times before striking an overhead light pole and the gantry supporting an overhead road sign, coming to a final rest on its roof.
- The backseat passenger, the defendant’s cousin, Moesha McLaughlin, 24, of Rosedale, was pinned inside of the vehicle. She was extracted and taken to a local hospital where she was pronounced dead as a result of her injuries.
- The front passenger, the defendant’s aunt, Nyasha Turnbull, 32, of Rosedale, was found seated upside down with her seatbelt on. She was extracted and transported to a hospital with injuries to her lung, arm, shoulder, pelvis and liver.
- McDonald turned herself in yesterday at 105th Precinct.

Assistant District Attorney Erin Mullins, of the District Attorney’s Career Criminal Major Crimes Bureau, is prosecuting the case with the assistance of Assistant District Attorney Jonathan Selkove, Unit Chief of the Vehicular Homicide Unit, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Michael Whitney, Bureau Chief, and Roni C. Piplani, Deputy Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney of the Major Crimes Shawn Clark.

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

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