



MELINDA KATZ DISTRICT ATTORNEY

FOR THE DA'S WEEKLY EBLAST,
EMAIL REQUESTS TO
INFO@QUEENS.DA.ORG

MAY 2025



A Message from District Attorney

MELINDA KATZ

CONTINUED JUSTICE FOR P.O. BYRNE

I recently sent a letter - my fourth correspondence - to the New York State Parole Board to oppose the release of the man who shot and killed Police Officer Edward Byrne in February 1988.

P.O. Byrne was guarding the home of a Queens resident who contacted law enforcement about drug dealers in his neighborhood. The victim's home was previously firebombed due to his complaints.

On February 26, 1988, David McClary ambushed Byrne, fired five shots and killed the rookie cop. He was convicted of murder in the second degree and sentenced to 25 years to life in prison.

McClary, now 59, has been incarcerated for 36 years and has consistently denied or minimized his role in the murder of Officer Byrne. He has been denied parole seven times.

The execution of a police officer is nothing short of an act of domestic terrorism and the gunman had no respect for the rule of law or the sanctity of life. McClary does not deserve the benefit of parole.

In Friendship,

STAY CONNECTED



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KEEPING OUR STREETS SAFE FOR MOTORISTS AND PEDESTRIANS

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz is hyper-focused on making our streets, highways and shared roadways safe for everyone, especially as the busy summer travel season begins.

This April, our office secured grand jury indictments against three individuals who allegedly killed others as a result of their actions behind the wheel of a car.

In one case, a former firefighter is charged in a 14-count indictment with manslaughter in the second degree, driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol and other crimes. The defendant, who was allegedly driving in excess of 80 mph, ran through a steady red light and slammed into the victim's car at the intersection of Northern Boulevard and 107th Street. The 23-year-old victim was on his way to work at LaGuardia Airport and was pronounced dead soon after being rushed to a nearby hospital.

"Drunk, drugged and reckless driving are dire threats to everyone on our shared roadways," said DA Katz. "The defendant has been indicted on serious charges as my office continues to seek justice for the victim and his loved ones."

The Queens District Attorney's Office is also prosecuting two separate deadly road rage incidents.

In one case, a May 2024 dispute on the Belt Parkway led to the intentional killing of a 55-year-old man in Breezy Point. The defendant allegedly drove onto a grassy area along the Belt Parkway in Brooklyn, passed the victim on the 11S exit ramp and stopped his car in front of the victim. The defendant and 55-year-old man exchanged words

before both men drove off.

The defendant allegedly followed the motorist for 10 minutes to a parking lot in Breezy Point. The victim parked his car, exited his vehicle and walked toward the defendant's car when the defendant allegedly reversed his SUV, put the vehicle into drive and intentionally drove into the victim. The victim was hospitalized with a traumatic brain injury and died six months later as a result of injuries from being struck by the SUV.

The defendant is charged with murder in the second degree and other crimes

In the second road rage case, a Long Island man is charged with murder for allegedly hitting a motorcycle from behind and then running over the motorcyclist and dragging him and his bike on Woodhaven Boulevard on April 5, 2025. The motorcycle burst into flames.

The crash occurred after the rider and the driver had a minor collision while exiting the Long Island Expressway.

"Our roadways are not the place to settle disputes," said the DA.

The DA stressed that driving is a privilege, and everyone should be mindful of the people they share the roadway with - both pedestrians and other motorists.



ILLEGAL CANNABIS VAN BUST



The District Attorney's office shuttered an illegal cannabis dispensary on April 16. This mobile operation allegedly dispensed candy-style packaging of cannabis and other marijuana products.

Three people are facing multiple charges and are accused of selling unlicensed cannabis products while parked under the Long Island Expressway on Woodhaven Boulevard in Rego Park.

In response to community complaints, the DA's office commenced an undercover operation with detective investigators posing as customers. In a series of undercover buys, the investigators purchased marijuana products from the unlicensed mobile operation.

A court-authorized search warrant was executed and law enforcement seized four pounds of leaf cannabis, a pound of concentrated cannabis and edibles that were in candy-like wrappers.

This mobile shop was parked across the street from a school and just a few hundred feet from a popular playground and basketball courts.

District Attorney Katz is focused on shuttering illegal weed dispensaries.

"Since November 2022, my office – working with our partner agencies – has seized more than \$25 million worth of products from more than 400 suspected illegal cannabis dispensaries here in Queens County," said DA Katz.

"We will not relent in our aggressive enforcement actions against unlicensed dealers who sell unregulated products that are targeted to children," she added.

The DA encourages anyone who knows or suspects a business is selling cannabis without a license to call 718-286-6503, or send an email to CannabisTips@queensda.org

CASES OF INTEREST

The District Attorney's office secured a trial conviction against a defendant who senselessly attacked a subway commuter with a hammer in February 2022.

William Blount was convicted at a jury trial of first-degree assault, first-degree robbery and fourth-degree criminal possession of a weapon.

The defendant kicked the 58-year-old victim down the subway entrance stairs at Queens Plaza and struck her with a hammer 13 times before running off with the woman's handbag.

The victim had multiple skull fractures and underwent a bilateral craniectomy to repair her fissures with a titanium mesh. She also endured a broken finger and other injuries.

At sentencing, Blount faces up to 25 years to life in prison.

In another case, a jury found a 31-year-old Jamaica resident guilty of murder in the first

degree for killing three people in June 2022.

Travis Blake stabbed to death his girlfriend, the woman's adult son and a visiting cousin. The bodies of all three people were found in a state of decomposition by another family member.

The defendant faces up to life in prison at sentencing.



REMEMBERING OUR FALLEN HEROES

The Queens District Attorney's Office is committed to honoring our fallen heroes. District Attorney Katz attended ceremonies in April to honor NYPD Highway Detective Anastasios Tsakos and Detective Jonathan Diller, who were killed in the line of duty.

Detective Tsakos' widow received a plaque and replica helicopter bearing his name during a ceremony at the NYPD Highway 3 Unit.

A drunk driver struck and killed Detective

Tsakos in 2021. A jury convicted the motorist of manslaughter, and she is currently serving 20 years in prison.

A plaque was dedicated to Detective Jonathan Diller at the newly opened 116th Precinct in Rosedale. Detective Diller was shot and killed in Far Rockaway in March 2024. The defendant is charged with murder in the first degree and is awaiting trial.



CRIME VICTIMS CEREMONY

The District Attorney's office hosted its annual National Crime Victims' Rights Week ceremony on April 9. This year's theme was kinship, connection and healing.

Crime Victims' Rights Week is traditionally a time to acknowledge the struggles of victims and their families. In addition to justice, survivors

need assistance to rebuild their lives after tragedy has struck.

The DA's office has a Crime Victims Advocacy program dedicated to assisting victims and their families whether it is offering help navigating the justice system or providing aid when it comes to housing and financial services.

