



718.286.6000
WWW.QUEENSDA.ORG

QUEENS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
125-01 QUEENS BOULEVARD
KEW GARDENS, NEW YORK 11415-1568



MELINDA KATZ
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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CONTACT: PRESS OFFICE (718) 286-6315
QDACommunications@queensda.org

**TEEN DRIVER SENTENCED ON MANSLAUGHTER AND ASSAULT CHARGES FOR
KILLING 14-YEAR-OLD GIRL IN GRUESOME COLLISION**

*Defendant was Driving BMW More Than 100 MPH When He Collided with Truck and Killed Passenger
Fortune Williams; Defendant's Parents Previously Convicted on Endangerment Charges in
Groundbreaking Case*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that an 18-year-old was sentenced to 1 1/3 to four years in prison for causing the death of Fortune Williams, a 14-year-old passenger in the BMW he was driving in 2023 when he was 16 years old. The teen's parents were previously sentenced on endangering the welfare of a child charges for giving their son access to the car when he was legally unable to drive the vehicle. It marked the first time parents were convicted on such charges related to a fatal car crash in Queens County and was believed to be the first prosecution of its kind in New York state.

District Attorney Katz said: "This was a landmark case where both an unlicensed teenage driver and his parents were held responsible for the teenager's deadly actions. The 16-year-old driver was operating a BMW given to him by his parents – despite having no legal authority to drive – when he crashed and killed his passenger, 14-year-old Fortune Williams. Even worse, months earlier, he was ticketed for driving without a license. With this sentence, the defendant – now 18 – will serve prison time for the tragic and untimely death of Fortune."

The 18-year-old, of 227th Street in Springfield Gardens, pleaded guilty on May 12 to manslaughter in the second degree, assault in the second and third degrees, reckless endangerment in the second degree, reckless driving and numerous vehicle and traffic violations.

Supreme Court Justice Michael Yavinsky today granted the defendant youthful offender status and sentenced him to 1 1/3 to four years in prison.

The teen driver's father, Sean Smith of 227th Street in Springfield Gardens, pleaded guilty in 2024 to endangering the welfare of a child. Justice Yavinsky sentenced him to three years of probation. As a condition of the sentence, he was required to participate in a 26-week parenting class and attend the Victim Impact Panel Program.

The boy's mother, Deo Ramnarine, also of 227th Street, pleaded guilty to endangering the welfare of a child and disorderly conduct. Judge Yavinsky sentenced her to a 26-week parenting class and to attend the Victim Impact Panel Program. She successfully completed both and was allowed to withdraw her plea to endangering the welfare of a child with only the disorderly conduct charge standing.

According to the charges, on May 17, 2023, at approximately 6:38 p.m., the then 16-year-old defendant was driving a red 2005 BMW 325i westbound on North Conduit Avenue near 160th Street at a speed calculated at 101 miles per hour, with Fortune Williams in passenger seat of the vehicle.

The posted speed limit on the street is 30 miles per hour.

The teenager lost control of the vehicle when attempting to move from the left-center lane to the right-center lane and crashed into the back of a parked UPS truck. After hitting the truck, the BMW spun across the roadway and struck a tractor-trailer traveling westbound.

As a result of the initial collision, Williams was ejected from the front passenger seat of the BMW into the back of the UPS truck. She suffered severe head trauma and was pronounced dead at the scene.

A UPS employee, who was entering his truck as the BMW collided with it, was thrown to the ground in the collision. He was taken to a local hospital where he was treated for a large hematoma to his leg, a laceration to his face and a bruise to his chest.

At the hospital where he was being treated for minor injuries, the defendant told police that he had picked Williams up at her home and was taking her to his grandmother's house. Sean Smith, who was with his son at the hospital, told police that while the BMW was registered in his name, he had bought the vehicle for his son and that the car belonged to his son.

The son had a junior driver's license, which prohibited him from driving under any circumstances in New York City.

Three weeks after the fatal crash, on June 7, 2023, Smith told the car's insurer that his son had driven the BMW approximately twice with him in the vehicle and that his son was a good driver.

Prior to the fatal collision, in November 2022, witnesses from the defendant's school saw him regularly driving the same BMW and a school administrator informed the parents that their child was driving to school.

The child was also ticketed in November 2022 for driving without a license and driving while using a portable electronic device. His name is being withheld because of his age.

Assistant District Attorneys Erin Mullins of the District Attorney's Career Criminal Major Crimes Bureau prosecuted the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Michael Whitney, Bureau Chief and Roni C. Piplani, Deputy Chief, along with Assistant District Attorney Joseph Randazzo of the District Attorney's Homicide Bureau, with assistance from Assistant District Attorney Jonathan Selkove, Vehicular Homicide Unit Chief, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys John Kosinski, Bureau Chief, and Karen Ross, Deputy Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Shawn Clark.

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