



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

**SOUTH OZONE PARK MAN SENTENCED TO 18 YEARS FOR CAR THEFT THAT LED TO
VICTIM'S DEATH**

Victim was Thrown from Car After Trying to Stop Theft; Died After 11 Months in Coma

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that Mahindra Hansraj was sentenced to 18 years in prison for a February 2023 collision that severely injured and eventually killed Tauree Thompson of Richmond Hill. Thompson jumped onto the roof of his car as Hansraj stole the vehicle, sped off on Lefferts Boulevard then crashed into a fire hydrant in South Ozone Park. After 11 months in a coma, Thompson died in January 2024.

District Attorney Katz said: "The defendant thought he could get away with a brazen car theft and was undeterred even with the vehicle's owner clinging to the automobile's roof. His reckless actions led to the death of 29-year-old Tauree Thompson. We hope today's sentence brings a measure of comfort to Thompson's loved ones as they continue to mourn his senseless loss."

Hansraj, 19, of 135th Avenue in South Ozone Park, pleaded guilty on September 4 to manslaughter in the first degree in satisfaction of the charges against him. Queens Supreme Court Justice Kenneth Holder sentenced the defendant yesterday to 18 years in prison followed by five years of post-release supervision.

According to the charges, on February 20, 2023, at approximately 9:37 p.m., Hansraj and two others were in the vicinity of 104-21 Lefferts Boulevard in South Ozone Park at the same time as Thompson was standing near his 2006 Lexus RX, with its doors unlocked and engine running. Hansraj entered the driver's seat of the vehicle and his two companions also went into the car.

Thompson jumped onto the roof of his car to stop the theft. Hansraj sped away with Thompson still on the roof. The defendant drove through a red light and swerved back and forth until he crashed into a fire hydrant. The impact caused Thompson to be thrown from the vehicle onto the pavement.

The victim sustained a traumatic brain injury and remained in a coma until his death in January 2024. The medical examiner determined his death was caused by remote blunt force injuries suffered during the collision.

Senior Assistant District Attorney Kanella Georgopoulos of the District Attorney's Homicide Bureau prosecuted the case, with the assistance of Assistant District Attorney Jaggnor Lali under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys John Kosinski, Bureau Chief, and Karen Ross and Jonathan Selkove, Deputy Bureau Chiefs, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney of Major Crimes Shawn Clark.

Note to Editors: Archived press releases are available at www.queensda.org.

