



718.286.6000
WWW.QUEENSDA.ORG

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



MELINDA KATZ
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2025

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

**BRONX MAN SENTENCED TO 24 YEARS IN PRISON FOR STEALING VICTIM'S CAR AND
RUNNING OVER THE MAN WITH HIS OWN VEHICLE**

Victim Was Unconscious When Defendant Drove Over Him

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that Zahir Williams was sentenced to 24 years in prison for the death of Francisco Ortega in October 2023. The 50-year-old victim was viciously beaten by Williams and his cohorts and left lying in an Astoria intersection. Williams then stole the victim's car and deliberately drove over Ortega's unconscious body, causing his death.

District Attorney Katz said: "Zahir Williams was sentenced today for an act of shocking cruelty and violence. After a brutal physical assault against 50-year-old Francisco Ortega, the defendant left him unconscious in the street and stole the defenseless man's car. Williams then returned to the scene and used the car as a weapon that ended Ortega's life."

Williams, 26, of Beck Street in the Bronx, pleaded guilty on October 14 to manslaughter in the first degree in satisfaction of the indictment charges against him. Supreme Court Justice Kenneth Holder sentenced him today to 24 years in prison to be followed by five years of post-release supervision.

The case against his codefendant is pending.

DA Katz said that, according to the charges and investigation, on October 20, 2023, at approximately 3:30 a.m., 50-year-old Francisco Ortega was operating a BMW sedan and stopped his car in front of 40-06 Astoria Boulevard near Williams and others. Williams approached the BMW and engaged Ortega in conversation. Ortega exited his vehicle and continued speaking with Williams and his codefendant, with whom the victim had a brief verbal dispute. Ortega then drove away.

At approximately 3:55 p.m., Ortega returned to the area and stopped at a red light at the intersection of Steinway Street and Astoria Boulevard. Williams and his codefendant approached the driver's side of the car. Ortega pulled the vehicle over, exited and stood next to his car with the door ajar and spoke with Williams. As the two men were speaking, another individual approached Ortega from behind and punched him in the back of the head. The victim fell and hit his head on the car. As Ortega lay on the ground, Williams and others repeatedly kicked and punched him.

Williams then stepped over the unconscious Ortega and entered the driver's seat of the victim's BMW. Attempting to close the door, Williams repeatedly slammed Ortega's head and body. Williams' codefendant allegedly pulled Ortega's body away from the side of the car toward the center of the road. Williams shut the door and pulled away.

Williams then drove Ortega's car around the block and plotted a deliberate approach to Ortega, who was still lying in the road unconscious. Williams slowed down, aligned the vehicle with Ortega's body, then abruptly accelerated and drove over the victim. Williams dragged Ortega's body several feet before colliding into a parked car. He then abandoned the BMW and fled on foot.

Ortega was pronounced dead due to multiple blunt impact injuries. According to the Office of Chief Medical Examiner, he was alive when Williams drove over him.

Senior Assistant District Attorney Ryan Nicolosi of the District Attorney's Homicide Bureau prosecuted the case, with the assistance of Assistant District Attorney Antonio Vittiglio, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys John Kosinski, Bureau Chief, Karen Ross and Jonathan Selkove, Deputy Bureau Chiefs, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Shawn Clark.

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

