



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**  
FRIDAY, JANUARY 30, 2026

**CONTACT: PRESS OFFICE (718) 286-6315**  
[QDACommunications@queensda.org](mailto:QDACommunications@queensda.org)

**BROOKLYN MAN INDICTED BY GRAND JURY FOR NEARLY FATAL ATTACK ON  
COUSIN**

*Defendant Knocked Out Cousin and Left Him on Street, Victim was Later Struck by Passing Car  
Faces up to 25 Years in Prison, if Convicted*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that Jonathan Velez was indicted on assault and reckless endangerment charges for punching his cousin after the two got into an argument on Rockaway Boulevard in Ozone Park in August. Velez allegedly knocked his 39-year-old relative to the ground and while the victim was unconscious, the defendant went through his pockets and then fled the scene. The victim was later run over by a passing vehicle and seriously injured.

District Attorney Katz said: “As alleged, the defendant cruelly delivered a knock-out punch to his own cousin and then brazenly rummaged through the unconscious man’s pockets and car before leaving him for dead in the middle of Rockaway Boulevard. The 39-year-old victim was later hit by a passing car and remains hospitalized with a multitude of injuries. Our thoughts are with the victim and his family as he recovers from this brutal act.”

Velez, 45, of Brooklyn, was arraigned Wednesday before Queens Supreme Court Justice Toni Cimino on a three-count indictment charging him with assault in the first and second degrees and reckless endangerment in the first degree. Justice Cimino ordered the defendant to return to court on March 9. Velez faces up to 25 years in prison, if convicted.

District Attorney Katz said that, according to the charges and investigation, on August 2, 2025, at approximately 4:10 a.m., Velez was coming from a birthday party in Manhattan with his cousin, Manuel Rivera, 39, of Queens, and was driving Rivera’s car.

At approximately 4:27 a.m., Velez parked the car on Rockaway Boulevard in Ozone Park. Velez and his cousin were engaged in a verbal dispute that became physical. The defendant then allegedly punched Rivera, which knocked him to the pavement. Velez went through his cousin’s pockets as he appeared unconscious and then rummaged through the vehicle before fleeing the scene. The victim was left lying in the middle of the street.

Minutes later the victim was run over by a passing vehicle.

Rivera was immediately transported to a local hospital where he was treated for internal bleeding, a fractured skull and a loss of teeth. He currently remains in the hospital and is unresponsive.

The defendant was apprehended Wednesday morning on 127<sup>th</sup> Street in Kew Gardens.

Assistant District Attorney Hugh McCann of the District Attorney’s Career Criminal Major Crimes Bureau is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Michael Whitney, Bureau Chief, Roni Piplani and Timothy Regan, Deputy Bureau Chiefs, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Shawn Clark.

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

#

**Note to Editors: Archived press releases are available at [www.queensda.org](http://www.queensda.org).**

