



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, AUGUST 7, 2026

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

**EAST HAMPTON MAN INDICTED FOR FATAL NEW YEAR'S DAY HIT-AND-RUN
COLLISION IN CORONA**

*Defendant Allegedly Left One Victim Dead and Another Seriously Injured; Fled to Ecuador After
Collision; Faces in Excess of 25 Years in Prison, if Convicted*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that Jonnathan Barbecho has been arraigned on indictment charges of aggravated vehicular homicide, manslaughter, assault and other offenses for a deadly hit-and-run collision in Corona that killed 27-year-old Darwin Adrian Malan Cargua and seriously injured another young man on New Year's Day. The defendant fled to Ecuador after the collision and was recently apprehended attempting to enter Honduras.

DA Katz said: "As alleged, this defendant turned what should have been a night of celebration into one of tragedy when he drove drunk and plowed into two young men who were crossing the street. One man was killed and another remains in a vegetative state. The defendant then fled from the crash and left the country on a one-way ticket. Thank you to our federal law enforcement partners, he has been returned to Queens to face serious charges against him."

Barbecho, 30, of East Hampton, was arraigned yesterday on a 19-count indictment charging him with aggravated vehicular homicide, manslaughter in the second degree, vehicular assault in the first degree, two counts of assault in the second degree, vehicular manslaughter in the second degree, two counts of leaving the scene of an incident without reporting, operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, reckless driving and multiple vehicular violations.

Queens Supreme Court Justice Gary Miret remanded the defendant and ordered him to return to court August 21. If convicted, he faces more than 25 years in prison.

DA Katz said, according to the charges and investigation, Jonnathan Barbecho was with a group of people in a bar on 104th Street in Corona on December 31, 2025. At approximately 4 a.m. on January 1, 2026, Barbecho left the bar and entered his white Chevrolet Traverse SUV to drive home two of his companions.

Barbecho was allegedly driving southbound at a high rate of speed on 102nd Street when he passed through the intersection of 37th Avenue. As he drove through the intersection, two pedestrians — Darwin Adrian Malan Cargua and Luis Paco Romero Gaucho — were walking from east to west in the crosswalk on 102nd Street. The defendant allegedly struck both men and continued southbound without stopping to render aid or identify himself.

Malan Cargua was thrown underneath a parked car from the impact and declared dead at the scene due to his blunt force head injuries. Gaucho, who was one day shy of his 24th birthday, was transported to a local hospital and underwent multiple surgeries. He currently remains in a vegetative state.

Following the crash, Barbecho drove a short distance and stopped his car near 39th Avenue and 103rd Street. He allegedly refused to return to the collision scene and he and his companions parted ways.

On January 2, Barbecho, boarded a 4 a.m. flight from Kennedy Airport to Ecuador. On January 3, investigators discovered the defendant's white SUV parked in the area with the license plates and registration removed and front-end collision damage.

Barbecho's license had been suspended following his arrest on April 13, 2025, for operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. He allegedly was found passed out in the driver's seat of his car at 2:14 a.m. while double parked with the engine running on 37th Avenue and Warren Street where he partially blocked the intersection in the same vehicle. An Intoxilyzer exam allegedly showed that

Barbecho had a blood alcohol content of .106, which was above the legal threshold of .08. That case was pending in Queens Criminal Court when the January 1 incident occurred.

Barbecho failed to return to court for an appearance on those charges and a bench warrant was issued for his arrest on January 23, 2026.

Barbecho was stopped by local authorities when he attempted to enter Honduras and was sent back to the United States to face these charges. The District Attorney would like to thank our federal law enforcement partners and the NYPD Collision Investigation Squad for facilitating the investigation of this matter and the apprehension of Barbecho.

Assistant District Attorney Vivian Gonzalez of the District Attorney’s Homicide Bureau is prosecuting the case with the assistance of Assistant District Attorney Matthew Hauszpigel under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Jonathan Selkove, Unit Chief of the District Attorney’s Vehicular Homicide Unit and Deputy Bureau Chief of the Homicide Bureau, and John Kosinski, Homicide Bureau Chief, and under the overall supervision of Chief Assistant District Attorney 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.

