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EDGEMERE MAN CHARGED WITH MURDER FOR KILLING GIRLFRIEND

Defendant Allegedly Shot Seraphina Pereira to Death, Buried Body in Shallow Grave at Nearby Park; Faces up to 25 Years to Life, if Convicted

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that Rogelio Lozano-Garita was charged with murder, weapon possession and related crimes for the shooting death of his girlfriend, 35-year-old Seraphina Pereira, and then concealing her body in a shallow grave at Rockaway Community Park. The defendant allegedly transported the victim's body to the park in a wagon.

District Attorney Katz said: "As alleged, the defendant mercilessly killed his girlfriend -- the mother of his children. He attempted to cover up the crime by wheeling her body in a pull wagon to a nearby park and burying the woman in a shallow grave. I want to thank my Assistant District Attorneys and our law enforcement partners for making sure there will be accountability in this homicide."

Lozano-Garita, 26, of Edgemere, was arraigned today on a criminal complaint charging him with murder in the second degree, criminal possession of a weapon in the second degree, concealment of a human corpse and tampering with physical evidence

Queens Criminal Court Judge Thomas Wright-Fernandez remanded the defendant and ordered him to return to court Friday. He faces up to 25 years to life in prison, if convicted.

DA Katz said that, according to the charges and investigation, on October 19, between 2:16 a.m. and 6:04 a.m., Lozano-Garita shot Seraphina Pereira in the head. They lived together in Edgemere with their two young children and Pereira's child from a previous relationship.

After allegedly killing the victim, Lozano-Garita concealed her body in a pull wagon and wheeled it to the beach at Rockaway Community Park. He then allegedly buried her body in a shallow grave on the beach. He returned home a short time later without the wagon.

The defendant reported the victim missing to police by calling 911 two days later, on October 21. He claimed to the police that he received a box dropped off at his apartment building which contained the victim's belongings and a note left behind by a surfer who Lozano-Garita claimed found the belongings on the beach. Her remains were discovered on the night of October 24 after the NYPD K9 unit conducted a search of the beach.

Assistant District Attorney Eric Weinstein of the District Attorney's Homicide Bureau is prosecuting the case with the assistance of Assistant District Attorney Lindsey Ruzza under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys John Kosinski, Bureau Chief, Karen Ross and Jonathan Selkove, Deputy Chiefs, 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.

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