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**FAR ROCKAWAY WOMAN INDICTED ON MURDER CHARGES IN
FATAL SIDEWALK HIT AND RUN**

Defendant Faces 25 Years-to-Life in Prison if Convicted

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced today that Kiani Phoenix, 26, has been indicted by a Queens County grand jury on murder and other charges for allegedly fatally striking a 59-year-old man with her vehicle as she drove onto the sidewalk outside of a deli convenience store on August 27th in Far Rockaway. The defendant allegedly intended to hit a woman with whom she had an ongoing dispute. After striking the man, who was sitting on his walker, the defendant then backed up, allegedly hit another pedestrian, and sped away from the scene of the incident.

District Attorney Katz said, “The blatant disregard for human life allegedly displayed by the defendant is incomprehensible. An entire neighborhood continues to mourn the senseless loss of a community member because of these criminal actions. The defendant has now been indicted on murder charges and will be held accountable.”

Phoenix, of Beach Channel Drive in Far Rockaway, was indicted yesterday by a Queens grand jury and is pending arraignment on the indictment in Supreme Court. The defendant was previously arraigned on August 30, 2022 before Queens Criminal Court Judge Jessica Earle-Gargan on a complaint charging her with murder in the second degree, attempted murder in the second degree, assault in the second degree, leaving the scene of an incident without reporting and criminal possession of a weapon in the fourth degree. If convicted, Phoenix faces 25 years-to-life in prison.

According to the charges, on Saturday, August 27, 2022, at approximately 7:00 a.m., the defendant encountered a 27-year-old woman at a convenience store on Beach 20th Street near New Haven Avenue in Far Rockaway, Queens. An argument ensued and the two women became embroiled in a physical altercation outside the convenience store near a parked Honda Accord. Several onlookers watched the women including 59-year-old Milton Storch who was seated on his walker in front of the deli. The bystanders attempted to separate the women and they stopped striking one another.

Continuing, said DA Katz, video surveillance footage shows the defendant enter the driver’s seat of a Honda Accord. She then moves the car in reverse and turns sharply to the right allegedly at and toward the 27-year-old woman, accelerating forward onto the sidewalk. Several people, including the woman, darted from the path of the car escaping inside the deli. The defendant drove forward striking Mr. Storch who was unable to rise from his walker. The car then stopped and accelerated in reverse hitting a 36-year-old pedestrian behind the car. The defendant then sped away from the scene of the incident.

Mr. Storch was taken to a local Queens hospital where he was pronounced deceased. A second man was taken to the hospital and treated for back and hip injuries.

The investigation was conducted by Detective Brendan Hannon of the NYPD's 101st Detective Squad of the New York Police Department.

Senior Assistant District Attorney John Esposito and Assistant District Attorney Christine Occhiogrosso of the District Attorney's Homicide Bureau are prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Peter McCormack III and John W. Kosinski, Senior Deputy Bureau Chiefs, and Karen Ross, Deputy Bureau Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Daniel A. Saunders.

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

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