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DELI WORKERS INDICTED FOR ALLEGEDLY ASSAULTING CUSTOMER
Face Up to 15 years in Prison on First Degree Strangulation Charges

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that Saber Abuhmra and Jorge Hernandez were each indicted and arraigned today on a charge of strangulation in the first degree and other crimes for allegedly coming out from behind the counter of a Rockaway Park deli and attacking a customer in a dispute about his food order.

District Attorney Katz said: “A grand jury has weighed in and these defendants stand accused of a brutal attack and will be held to account.”

Abuhmra, 34, of Beach 116th Street in Rockaway Park, and Hernandez, 23, of Cornaga Avenue in Far Rockaway, were arraigned on a four-count indictment charging them with strangulation in the first degree, strangulation in the second degree, assault in the second degree and assault in the third degree. Queens Supreme Court Justice Toni Cimino ordered them to return to court on August 3. They each face up to 15 years in prison if convicted of the first-degree strangulation charge.

According to the charges:

- On June 11, between 4:50 a.m. and 5:15 a.m., Hernandez, a worker at the Pickles and Pies Food Market and Deli at 202 Beach 116th Street, punched 31-year-old James Keena of Arverne and pushed him, causing him to hit his head on a counter. Hernandez then put his arm around Keena’s neck and held him on the floor while Abuhmra punched and kicked him in the head and stomach.
- Hernandez kept his arm around Keena’s neck and Abuhmra continued punching and kicking the victim for several minutes after he lost consciousness and until he began seizing and shaking.
- Keena was taken to the hospital in critical condition and placed on life support for several hours because he was unable to breathe on his own.

Assistant District Attorney Hugh McCann of the District Attorney’s Felony Trials II Bureau is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Mark Osnowitz, Bureau Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Supreme Court Trials Pishoy B. Yacoub.

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

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