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**D.A. BROWN: BROOKLYN MAN CHARGED WITH MURDER 1°**  
**IN FATAL THROAT SLASHING OF RAPE VICTIM**

*Alleged to Have Killed Victim to Keep Her from Testifying At Trial*

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown today announced that a 29-year-old Brooklyn man has been charged with slitting the throat of a Hollis woman – who he had allegedly raped – in order to prevent her from testifying at his upcoming trial. The woman died of her injuries.

District Attorney Brown said, “This is a terribly sad and tragic case – not only in terms of the victim’s violent death but also because of the degradation and humiliation that she had allegedly previously suffered at the hands of the defendant. The charges against the defendant will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.”

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Hemant K. Megnath, 29, of 914 Hart Street in Brooklyn. Megnath, who is employed as a lab assistant, is being held pending arraignment in Queens Criminal Court in Kew Gardens on charges of first- and second-degree murder and fourth-degree criminal possession of a weapon. If convicted, he faces up to life without parole in prison.

The District Attorney said that, according to the charges, as 20-year-old Natasha Ramen left for work at approximately 8:20 a.m. on March 15, 2007, the defendant came up behind her, steps from her 186<sup>th</sup> Street house, and slit her neck and throat with a knife. The victim was taken to a local Queens hospital where she died later that day. The defendant, who was about to stand trial in Brooklyn for raping Ms. Ramen, allegedly killed her to prevent her from testifying.

The investigation was conducted by Detective James Lusk of the NYPD’s 103<sup>rd</sup> Precinct Detective Squad under the supervision of Lieutenant Salvatore Salerno, Commanding Officer.

Assistant District Attorney Marissa B. Gillespie, of the District Attorney’s Homicide Investigations Bureau is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Peter T. Reese, Bureau Chief, Peter J. McCormack III, Deputy Bureau Chief, and Richard B. Schaeffer, Senior Trial Attorney, and the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Charles A. Testagrossa and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Daniel A. Saunders.

It should be noted that a criminal complaint is merely an accusation and that a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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