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**D.A. BROWN: YOUNG MOTHER CHARGED WITH MURDER**  
**IN SUFFOCATION DEATH OF FOUR-MONTH-OLD SON**

*Faces Up to Life in Prison*

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown today announced that a 21-year-old woman residing at one of the City's temporary homeless shelters in Queens has been charged with intentional murder in the suffocation death of her four-month-old son yesterday morning

District Attorney Brown said, "The suffocation death of this innocent and helpless child soon after his life began is a terrible tragedy. Like all children, the child deserved the opportunity to have a full and rewarding life."

District Attorney Brown identified the defendant as Yoneli Rodriguez, 21, who is staying at the Lincoln Motor Inn located at 90-35 Van Wyck Expressway in Jamaica, Queens. The defendant has been charged with second-degree murder and endangering the welfare of a child. If convicted, the defendant faces up to 25 years to life in prison.

The District Attorney said that, according to the charges, while at the Lincoln Motor Inn during the early morning hours of March 30, 2007, the defendant smothered her four-month-old son, Darnel Angel Rodriguez, by pressing a pillow down with both hands over his face and body for three minutes, preventing him from breathing. Despite the fact that the Lincoln Motor Inn is directly across the street from Jamaica Hospital Medical Center, the defendant allegedly took the baby by cab to Elmhurst Hospital Center, where he was pronounced dead.

According to the District Attorney, the defendant was arrested yesterday by Detective Richard Johnson of the New York City Police Department's 103<sup>rd</sup> Precinct Detective Squad. The defendant is scheduled to be arraigned later today in Queens Criminal Court in Kew Gardens.

According to the charges, the defendant is alleged to have said after her arrest, "I killed my baby . . . I wanted the baby to disappear . . . I had an argument with my mother . . . I was angry and upset . . . I put the pillow on the baby as he was sleeping on the bed."

The case is being prosecuted by the District Attorney's Special Victims Bureau, which is under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Marjory D. Fisher, 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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