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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**D.A. BROWN: BRIARWOOD MAN CHARGED**  
**IN STABBING DEATH OF HIS CHILD'S MOTHER**

*Faces Up to Life in Prison*

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown announced today that a 21-year-old Briarwood man has been charged with second-degree murder for allegedly slashing the throat of a woman with whom he had a child. An limited order of protection had been issued earlier this year prohibiting the defendant from stalking and harassing the victim.

District Attorney Brown said, "This brutal and senseless stabbing leaves two young children – ages nine years and seven months – without their mother. This case will be vigorously prosecuted to ensure that justice is served for the victim and her family. "

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Pedro Ayala, 21, of 84-42 151 Street, in Briarwood. Ayala has been charged with second-degree murder, aggravated criminal contempt, endangering the welfare of a child and fourth-degree criminal possession of a weapon. The defendant, who was hospitalized as a result of a knife wound to his hand, has not yet been arraigned because of his injury. If convicted of the charges, the defendant faces up to 25 years to life in prison.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the criminal charges, the defendant slashed the throat and repeatedly stabbed the victim in the neck, face and arm. The victim has been identified as Veronica Rivera, 32, with whom the defendant has a seven-month old son. The victim is also the mother of a nine-year-old daughter. It is alleged that the victim and her children were visiting the defendant at his basement residence at about 7:30 p.m. yesterday so that he could see his son. The couple had lived together until approximately a week ago, despite a limited order of protection issued on February 15, 2008. The slashing allegedly occurred in the presence of the victim's daughter, whose identity is being withheld.

Veronica Rivera was pronounced dead at the scene; the defendant was taken to Queens General Hospital and is being treated for nerve and muscle damage to his hand. Ayala was previously arrested on January 23, 2008, for allegedly grabbing Rivera by her shoulders, pulling her hair, throwing her into a wall and then onto the floor. He was also accused of breaking her cell phone into two pieces. She was pregnant at the time. Ayala pleaded guilty to disorderly conduct in February and received a conditional discharge, the condition being that he stay away from Rivera.

The investigation was conducted by detectives assigned to the NYPD's 107<sup>th</sup> Precinct Detective Squad.

Assistant District Attorney Dietrich Epperson, 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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