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UNLICENSED TEENAGE DRIVER SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR DOUBLE-FATAL CRASH

Sped Through Red Light and Broadsided Another Vehicle, Killing Its Occupants

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown announced today that a Forest Hills teenager has been sentenced to 2½ to 7½ years in state prison for a fatal high speed crash caused when he plowed through a steady red light and broadsided another vehicle, splitting it in two and instantly killing its two occupants – a married Forest Hills couple on their way to work.

District Attorney Brown said, “Though the car crash occurred in a split second when the defendant ignored a steady red light and drove through an intersection, he made many reckless decisions that morning which greatly contributed to the crash – including taking a vehicle without permission, driving while unlicensed, speeding and disobeying other traffic laws. The end result of his actions was the untimely death of two innocent people. The defendant has now been held accountable for his crime and will serve serious prison time, giving him time to reflect on his misdeed.”

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Jacob Chubalashvili, 18, of 108-50 62nd Drive in Forest Hills, Queens. The defendant pleaded guilty to first-degree vehicular manslaughter on May 11, 2009, before Queens Supreme Court Justice Pauline Mullings who imposed today’s indeterminate sentence of 2½ to 7½ years in prison.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the charges, the defendant was traveling eastbound on the Grand Central Parkway service road at about 5:30 a.m. on August 5, 2008, when he swerved around a car waiting for the red light to change at 69th Road and plowed through the intersection, striking an Acura traveling southbound on 69th Road. The force of the impact drove the Acura into a guardrail and light pole, causing the vehicle to split in two and killing its two occupants, Ki Kim, 55, and his wife, Hyekung Kim, 53, a supervisor at the city’s Administration for Children’s Service.

The District Attorney also said that, according to the charges, the defendant did not have a valid New York State driver’s license when he operated the Mercedes Benz that he had taken without permission of its owner, a family friend.

Assistant District Attorney Leigh Bishop, of the District Attorney’s Special Victims Bureau prosecuted the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Marjory Fisher, Bureau Chief, and Kenneth Appelbaum and Lucinda Suarez, Deputy Chiefs, 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.

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Note to Editors: Press release e-version posted on www.queensda.org